QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES
PROCEDURE, GUIDANCE NOTES & TEMPLATES

These guidance notes and procedures have been prepared with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and their aim is to ensure that the University of Buckingham sets and maintains threshold academic standards for its awards.

The QA Office can provide further guidance on the application of this policy and procedure as required. Any deviation from the agreed procedures would require the agreement from the Chair of the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

GUIDANCE NOTES

A. Agreeing a timeline

Schools of Study are required to undergo a Quinquennial Review every five years. It should be timed so that five sets of annual reviews have been completed since the previous Review, when the next review is called. The process is designed to take around eight months from the call of the review to the completion and submission of the External Panel’s Report to Senate. An expected timeframe is that programme and Overview reports are completed within the first four to five months; the printing and distribution of reports and the allowance of reading time for panel members occurs in months five to six; the External Panel Meeting taking place in month seven and the report finalised and agreed with factual corrections made in month eight. The Sub-Committee is responsible for agreeing, in consultation with the QA Office, a timeline for review, including the expected external panel date and deadlines for the receipt of reports.

B. Scope of Procedure

This procedure covers all taught undergraduate and postgraduate modules and programmes, and all research programmes that lead to the award of academic credit and/or contribute to a higher education award at Level 4 or above in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). Programme delivered in conjunction with others (collaborative provision) are required to carry out quinquennial reviews to the agreed procedures within the Collaborations Handbook. However, Schools are required to provide a reflective commentary on their collaborative provision as part of the Overview Report. Schools are also required to provide a report on their research and collaborative provision for the review, submitted alongside the Programme Reports.

Quinquennial review is carried out at School level, with reports for each programme area. Where programmes share a common major or where there are large numbers of shared modules, they can be aggregated for reporting. Where minor streams exist that are not offered as a major, programme reports should still be completed.

C. Professional, Statutory, Regulatory Bodies (PSRB’s)

Professional, Statutory, Regulatory Bodies (PSRB’s) often regulate at the subject area. For example, the General Medical Council decides which bodies are entitled to award UK primary medical qualifications (PMQs), and the Solicitors Regulation Authority is the regulator responsible for the validation of Qualifying Law Degrees (QLDs). If the programme or module requires accreditation by a PSRB, then you must ensure in any revisions to it, that the criteria of that body are met.

The University recognises that for some of its provision that is recognised by PSRBs, this procedure will be read in conjunction with any requirements from those bodies. Where the programme monitoring and review procedure of other regulating bodies affects the extent to which the University’s procedure can be followed, or where there is likely to be unnecessary duplication of work, the Quality Assurance Office and the Chairman of the University Learning and Teaching Committee should be consulted to agree how such requirements should interlock with this procedure.
D. The Purpose of Quinquennial Review

The QAA Expectation for programme monitoring and review is:

"Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and review of programmes."

Programme monitoring and review provides an opportunity to reflect on the learning opportunities that students have experienced, the academic standards achieved, and their continuing currency and relevance in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and practice in its application.

The process is an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which the learning outcomes of programmes are relevant and are achieved by students. Learning, teaching and assessment strategies are also reviewed, to ensure these are best placed to support the delivery of the relevant learning outcomes.

The process should be used to identify strengths and weaknesses with a view to improvement, and ensure that appropriate action is taken to remedy any identified shortcomings, and enhance the student experience.

The process is intended to be reflective ('looking back'), as well as developmental ('planning ahead'). Quinquennial review provides an opportunity to consider the extent to which the School has met the recommendations of the previous quinquennial and annual reviews, as well as set long-term plans and objectives for the coming years; and identify themes across the School that are examples of good practice or areas of concern.

Programme directors and the Chairman of the Sub-Committee are encouraged to be analytical in their reports, by reflecting on the reasons behind the success of initiatives or the challenges faced. Where issues have arisen, or student performance is below expected, action will need to be identified. Where performance and satisfaction are high, reflecting on the reasons for this will help to identify and share good practice across programme areas.

E. The Cyclical Nature of Review

The quinquennial review procedure is one part of a continuous cycle of engagement by students and staff. There is a direct linkage between the annual monitoring process of programmes and modules and the quinquennial review process. This linkage should reduce the burden on Schools of Study as much of the evidence to support the five-yearly reviews will already be available from the annual monitoring process. The reports completed during annual programme monitoring will help to support the identification of longer term trends and themes, and the development of strategic planning during the Quinquennial Review.

The School Overview Report in the Annual Monitoring process is also used to report on progress against the recommendations arising from the Quinquennial Review.

Annual Monitoring is an internal process undertaken each year by School Learning and Teaching Committees under delegated authority from the School Boards, whereas periodic review is an institutional process involving an external panel. Senate has overall responsibility and authority for Annual and Quinquennial Review.

F. Data and Documentation

Data and information are key parts of quinquennial review. External examiner reports; feedback from staff, students, alumni and PSRBs or employers; and progression, retention and achievement data are all important sources of information and data that should be reflected on during the process. Where possible data from groups with protected characteristics (e.g. additional learning needs) should be analysed to identify where there may be additional trends or support required.

The Sub-Committee Secretary has responsibility for the collation and storage of this information and making it readily available for staff as part of the quinquennial review. Support should be established in such a way as to reduce the administrative burden on staff completing the reviews.

The core set of documentation required for Quinquennial Reviews is:

- External Examiner reports and responses
- Student feedback reports and responses, including module feedback and NSS results and action plans
- Programme and module specifications
- Module Maps and Assessment Matrices
- Annual Programme and Module Monitoring Reports
- Annual School Overview Reports
- Statistical data on student Recruitment, Retention, Progression and Performance
- Academic Misconduct Reports
- Programme/Departmental Handbooks
- Special Programme Regulations
- Departmental/School Policies and Procedures
- Subject Benchmark Statements
- Collaborative Agreements and Visit/Partner Reports and Reviews
- Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements and accreditation reports plus action plans/responses
- SLTC, Board, School Research Committee, Ethics Committee minutes where relevant
- Research Documentation – research environment document, Research Degrees Handbook, staff publication lists/CV's; special regulations for research programmes; student handbooks

G – Reviewing Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

Reflecting on whether the learning outcomes - and then the learning, teaching and assessment strategies used to deliver those learning outcomes - are still relevant and appropriate, is an important part of the quinquennial review process.

Some questions programmes directors may wish to consider during this process may include:

1. Are the learning outcomes still relevant for the topic? Have there been any changes in the discipline, or in the benchmark statements/or industry practice that require these to be amended? If so, how?
2. Do your learning, teaching, and assessment strategies link well with the intended learning outcomes, and are students achieving how they should be?
   a. Are your learning and teaching strategies still relevant for the topic? Are the students achieving well or could changes in this area support students learning better?
   b. Is the way you are assessing the module/programme supporting the achievement of the learning outcomes? Are there more relevant or suitable assessment methods that could be used to support the achievement of those learning outcomes?
3. Are there any particular methods of assessment that have tried recently that you think work particularly well? If so, why? Perhaps you have introduced a method of assessment that you think fits the description ‘assessment for learning, not assessment of learning’?
4. Have you perhaps introduced a method of supporting students through their assignments, projects, research or exams that has been well received by students, or has seen a significant improvement in grades? What has been the outcome of this?
5. Are there any particular teaching methods that you have tried recently that you think work particularly well? If so, how and why? Your changes might have helped to boost attendance at lectures and seminars, seen students noticeably more engaged in lectures, or you might have seen an improvement in the student feedback scores.
6. Have you introduced any new initiatives to support students learning?
7. Are you making use of new technology?

There are a number of resources available in this area:

1. The JISC Design Studio – this provides a number of different tools to support technology-enhanced teaching and learning practices: [link]
2. How to Use Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria – SEEC: This document is a ‘how to do it’ booklet to be used by practitioners in Higher Education, and includes guidelines on how to help you improve your current course design and assessment practices. You can find this document at [link].
3. Assessment of Students and Accreditation of Prior Learning – Chapter B6, QAA UK Quality Code. Available at: [link]

5. **QAA Subject Benchmark Statements.** These provide subject specific guidance on choosing assessment mechanisms, and can be found on the QAA website

**H – Good Practice**

The quinquennial review is a way in which good practice can be identified. Good practice doesn’t *necessarily* have to be ‘innovative’, but it should contribute to the enhancement of student learning opportunities. Further information on good practice can be found in the Guide to Good Practice: N:\Quality Assurance\UNIVERSITY POLICIES and PROCEDURES\Programme and Module Monitoring and Review

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. **The Sub-Committee**
   
   a. Membership includes a Chairman, relevant Programme Directors, the Research Officer, any Academic Link Tutors for collaborative provision, a junior member of staff, a Sub-Committee Secretary and student representatives from each programme area.
   
   b. The Sub-Committee should consider and agree:
      
      i. The structure and scope of the review, including consideration of the involvement of PSRBs and the aggregation of subject areas for reports.
      
      ii. A timeline for review, including expected external panel date and deadline for receipt of reports
      
      iii. Arrangements for document storage - all reports and documentation should be saved on an accessible drive for all.
   
   c. Programme reports are written by programme directors and considered by the Sub-Committee.
   
   d. The Sub-Committee identifies appropriate Student Representatives to be part of the Sub-Committee. These students are consulted during the drafting of programme reports and their comment invited during Sub-Committee meetings. The Sub-Committee can also nominate other students from the School of Study to meet the External Panel on the day of their meeting.
   
   e. The Sub-Committee is responsible for considering the Overview Report that is written by the Chairman
   
   f. There should be regular, formally minuted meetings at agreed intervals, with deputies sent for absence, and deadlines set for the receipt of reports.
   
   g. The Sub-Committee Secretary is responsible for collecting the standard set of documentation and any additional items to support the review.
   
   h. Reports should be submitted to a Special Board of Study meeting to approve.
   
   i. The Sub-Committee propose appropriate external review panel members, for agreement by ULTC.
   
   j. The Sub-Committee should provide available dates for a meeting of the External Panel to the QA Office, and attend the External Panel meeting for discussion of the reports.
   
   k. The Sub-Committee can provide clarification of factual errors within External Panel’s report.
   
   l. The Sub-Committee are responsible for drafting an action plan on the recommendations and submitting this to the Board of Study.

2. **The Quality Assurance Office**
   
   a. The QA Office are responsible for providing a briefing to involved staff and student representatives explaining the procedure and their roles; and offering suggestions about the organisation of the Sub-Committee and its meetings as well as an appropriate timeline.
   
   b. The QA Office attend meetings of the Sub-Committee to advise on procedural issues and guide the scope of the review
   
   c. The QA Office provide advice to the Sub-Committee Secretary as to the organisation and format of documentation on N Drive
   
   d. The QA Office may provide guidance and comment on the content of programme reports, edit as necessary, and compile and format reports into final document.
   
   e. The QA Office update the Sub-Committee as to the progression of the external panel arrangements; take responsibility for setting a date for the meeting, getting approval of panel members from ULTC; make the approach to reviewers and provide written briefings to panel members on the process and their purpose and role.
f. Students who are involved in the review either as a member of the Sub-Committee, a lunch guest of the panel or as a panel member from another School of Study are approached by, and provided with a full briefing from the QA Office.
g. Final documentation, appendices and reports are checked and sent electronically and in hard copy by the QA Office to all panel members.
h. The QA Office drafts and distributes to the External Panel and the Sub-Committee the Agenda for the External Panel Meeting; and provides briefings to all as to the format and expectations for the day.
i. Logistical arrangements for the day are made by the QA Office including the room booking and room layout, catering and dietary requirements, name badges and place settings, hotel bookings, transport arrangements, contact information, expenses, and internet access.
j. The QA Office acts as the External Panel Review Secretary, taking detailed notes on panel’s discussions throughout the day including their comments, meetings with students, and interviews with staff.
k. The QA Office coordinates thank you emails and fees for panel members, vouchers to student panel members and lunchtime volunteers.
l. The QA Office compiles the External Panel Report to Senate, and confirms this with the Chairman and external panel, before the Sub-Committee clarifies any factual errors. The report is then prepared for Senate.

3. The External Panel

a. Membership of the External Panel includes:
   i. A minimum of 3 External Reviewers (number dependent on disciplines under review. See below for guidance on selection)
   ii. An elected member of Senate from a School other than that under review, appointed by Senate (to Chair the External Panel)
   iii. Member of staff from another School
   iv. Two students from another School (one undergraduate, one postgraduate)
   v. Secretary to Panel – from the QA Office

b. Selection of External Reviewers
   i. External reviewers who have no formal connection to Buckingham should be sought to ensure impartiality and objectivity in their role.
   ii. Reviewers must not be involved in collaborative research relating to the programme under review
   iii. Reviewers must not have acted as an external examiner for a taught or research programme or have been employed in a permanent, temporary or visiting position at Buckingham in the previous five years.
   iv. There should be no reciprocal arrangements.
   v. If the proposed reviewer has retired from their academic post, his/her curriculum vitae should provide evidence of continued involvement in the academic area in question.
   vi. Consideration should be given to the role of representatives from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) in the selection of external reviewers.
   vii. External examiners can be consulted for suggestions of experts in the field that may be suitable external reviewers.
   viii. Experience in QA processes (including programme design, development, approval, assessment and examining, monitoring and review) is desirable.

c. External Panel members are approved by ULTC. Chairman’s action can be taken if required.
d. The QA Office approaches possible reviewers and outlines their role and responsibilities and possible panel dates
e. The date of the panel meeting is confirmed and circulated by the QA Office to the External Panel and the Sub-Committee.
f. Panel members are briefed by the QA Office as to the process and the purpose of the External Panel; and the format of the day.
g. The QA Office ensures the Panel members receive copies of review reports and documentation; an agenda and panel members list; a copy of this procedure and associated templates; and other logistical information as required.
h. Panel members are asked to provide a short written report in advance of the External Panel meeting outlining initial comments and areas of interest for the meeting.
i. Panel members are required to attend the panel meeting for one or two days (dependent on the size and scope of the review), contribute to the discussion of the programme and School reports, speak to staff and students and input into the content and recommendations within the External Panel Report to Senate.
j. Panel members are provided with a copy of the draft External Panel Report to Senate for amendments and agreement.

k. The QA Office sets the fees for Panel members. Panel member submit their expenses to, and are paid their fees by the QA Office.

4. **Student Involvement**

a. The role of students is key in the periodic review process, both through the preparatory work with the programme directors, and also as part of the external panel meetings. Students are involved in the process in three ways:
   
i. Students from the School of Study sit on the Sub-Committee, and are consulted by the staff preparing the reports as to whether the content is an accurate reflection of provision within the School.
   
ii. Students from the School of Study are asked to meet the External Panel at their meeting over lunch, for an informal discussion about their experiences as a student. So that the review is as constructive as possible, students that meet the panel should give an accurate and honest representation of their time at Buckingham, which includes both good things, but also areas that the University could improve on.
   
iii. Students from Schools other than the one in question sit on the external panel. It is their role to contribute to the panel discussion where they feel they can – this can be anything from sharing an initiative from their own School as a model of good practice, or commending something that they feel should be spread out across other Schools. While students aren’t expected to comment on the technicalities of the academic content of programmes, their input into topics such as student feedback arrangements, careers provision, and assessment arrangements normally prove interesting and useful.
QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW PROCEDURE

Each School will undertake a review at five yearly intervals so the process will be referred to as the Quinquennial Review of Programmes.

1) Request for Review
   i. Eight months before the date of the Review the Quality Assurance Manager will write to the Dean informing him/her of the upcoming Review and this procedure.
   ii. The process is designed to take around eight months from the call of the review to the completion and submission of the External Panel’s Report to Senate. See ‘Timing’ notes for further guidance.

2) Formation of the Sub-Committee, Production of the Reports
   i. The Dean of School, or his/her representative will establish a Quinquennial Review Sub-Committee to coordinate the School’s review. The Review Team’s membership will normally consist of the Programme Director(s), the Research Officer, any Academic Link Tutors for Collaborative Provision, a junior member of staff and student representatives from the School under review and a School Administrator to act as the Sub-Committee Secretary. The Dean appoints the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, whose responsibility it is to oversee the process, draft the Overview Report and ensure action and recommendations are acted upon.
   ii. It will be the responsibility of the Sub-Committee to prepare a self-evaluative analysis for each individual programme (or cognate group of programmes) over the previous five-year period, compiled as a Quinquennial Review Programme Report. The Sub-Committee Chairman is also responsible for preparing a School Overview Report for the period of the review, which is discussed by the Sub-Committee. Reports should be submitted using the standard templates in this procedure.
   iii. Meetings of the Sub-Committee should be formally minuted, a timeline set and arrangements for document storage made. The QA Office will be in attendance to provide advice and guidance on the process. See ‘Roles and Responsibilities: The Sub-Committee’ notes for further guidance.
   iv. The Sub-Committee will consult the staff teaching on the programmes, as well as current and former student representatives and employers of the latter where available, and scrutinise all relevant documentation relating to the programmes being reviewed. The Team will draw upon documentation previously prepared for the Annual Monitoring of Programmes; as well as other School level documentation and statistics. See ‘Data and Documentation notes for further guidance.’
   v. The Sub-Committee proposes appropriate external reviewers to be on the External Panel, and students from the School of Study to meet the panel during the meeting. See ‘Roles and Responsibilities: The Sub-Committee, and External Panel’ notes for further guidance.
   vi. The final Quinquennial Programme Reports and School Overview Report are submitted to a Special Board of Study meeting for approval. The final approved reports and supporting documentation is made available to the QA Office to send out to the External Panel.

3) Formation of the External Panel, Consideration of the Reports and Report to Senate
   i. The External Panel is formed in accordance with the guidance in ‘Roles and Responsibilities: The External Panel’.
   ii. ULTC approve the final panel membership.
   iii. A date is agreed for the meeting of the External Panel. Panel members are fully briefed and sent the review reports and supporting documentation for consideration. They are provided with an agenda for the day and the template for the External Panel report to Senate, and asked to provide a short written report in advance of the meeting outlining their initial comments and areas of interest for the day.
   iv. The External Panel meeting is held according to the standard agenda for the day. The panel discuss the programme reports and School Overview Reports, meet with staff and students from the School of Study under review, and agree the draft content of the report and the recommendations.
   v. The QA Office draft the report according to the standard template for the External Panel Report to Senate; and circulate to the External Panel for amendment and agreement. The Sub-Committee are provided with an opportunity to correct any factual inaccuracies, and the report is submitted to Senate.
4) Action Planning and Monitoring

i. The Sub-Committee drafts an Action Plan (to the agreed template) in response to the recommendations, and reports this to the Board of Study for approval.

ii. The School Learning and Teaching Committee is responsible for monitoring and reporting progress against the Action Plan on an annual basis as part of the Annual Programme and Module Monitoring Procedure.

iii. The University Learning and Teaching Committee will receive a copy of External Panel Reports; and a completed ‘Comparative Analysis of Quinquennial Reviews’ at the end of the cycle of reviews, to share good practice and identify institutional level action.