

# Guidance for course monitoring and reporting

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The principle behind course monitoring and reporting is to provide an effective process which is used by course teams and Schools to ensure that academic standards are secure and that the quality and currency of student learning opportunities are appropriate.
- 1.2 Fundamentally, the process is cyclical, such that courses are engaged in ongoing review, drawing on relevant evidence when it becomes available. The process has also been designed so that opportunities for enhancing standards and quality are considered.

## 2. Course monitoring

- 2.1 Course monitoring is primarily the responsibility of the course committee, led by the course leader. School Academic Standards and Quality Committees (SASQC) are in turn responsible for the oversight of course standards, quality and enhancement. These activities should be evidence based.
- 2.2 The backbone of course monitoring is the three-yearly Periodic Course Review (PCR). It is at that face-to-face meeting of the course team, stakeholders and specialist colleagues that the quality of the course is thoroughly addressed. This is the opportunity for the course team to ensure that the course is offering the appropriate opportunities to its students, supporting all students to success and that standards remain secure.
- 2.3 In order to properly scrutinise the course, the PCR considers a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence (see QH Supplement 6B for details).

## 3. Course reporting

- 3.1 There is no requirement for a formal report as an output of PCR. However, the University requires that careful minutes are taken to record the discussion and decisions.
- 3.2 In addition to the minutes, there must be a Course Development Plan produced which summarises the three-year priorities for the course. Where decisions are made to make a change (or changes) to a course, then this will be noted in the

Course Development Plan and will proceed following the normal course approval process (see QH Supplement 5B for details).

- 3.3 On an annual basis, the course team are required to engage in a relatively small scale 'health check' of the course and confirm that they have done this by completing the Interim Course Report (ICR).
- 3.4 The aim of this aspect of the process is to make sure that the course is 'okay to go' for the start of the next cohort of students, and should therefore be completed before the start of the course's next academic cycle.
- 3.5 This means checking that the published information about the course remains correct (for example, the definitive course and module information in CourseLoop; information on NOW). It also means that student, staff and external examiner feedback should be considered in case there are any immediate measures that need to be taken to address significant concerns.
- 3.6 Progression, module failure and achievement data after the main examination board has taken place should also be considered, again with the aim of ensuring that any significant concerns are able to be addressed before the next cohort of students.
- 3.7 As part of the ICR, the Course Development Plan is also considered and updated where necessary.

## 4. Operational considerations

- 4.1 There are a number of factors which Schools and course teams should consider:
  - a. **The timing of the ICR.** Schools need to agree the best time for ICRs to be completed – and this may vary from course to course, depending on the academic cycle of the course in question. Crucially, this needs to take place in advance of the next cohort of students starting.
  - b. **Consideration of student progression, module failure and achievement data.** At the end of the academic year, the only data available will be outcomes from the main examination board (for undergraduate courses, for example, this is the summer board). Course teams should consider these data in case any changes need to be made for the next cohort. The more significant consideration of these data happens after the referral boards have taken place. The autumn University-wide 'snapshot' dates ensure that progression, module failure and achievement data can be considered in light of School and University benchmarks. Consideration of this wider picture should take place at the next course committee, which may in turn inform amendments to the Course Development Plan. Longer term trends of progression, failure and achievement are considered on a three-yearly basis as part of the PCR.
  - c. **Relationship between the PCR and the ICR.** The purpose of the ICR is outlined above. This checking activity must take place on an annual basis, irrespective of the PCR schedule. If a course's PCR happens to be scheduled at around the time that the ICR would be being prepared, then the School might suggest that the course does not need to complete the actual ICR. However, in these instances the School needs to be assured that the ICR required checks have taken place as part of the PCR.

- d. **The role of the course committee.** The course committee is a key forum in which the ongoing health of the course and the quality of the student learning opportunities are monitored. As such, it plays a key role in the activities being discussed in this guidance. The course committee should contribute to and agree the final ICR and should consider, and keep updated, the Course Development Plan. Data relating to student progression, module failure and achievement should be considered initially at the end of the academic year and then again once the referral examination board data are available.
- e. **SASQC's responsibilities.** The University delegates responsibility for the oversight of course standards and quality to SASQCs. As such, SASQCs need to ensure that monitoring and reporting is effectively taking place at course level. In practice, this means that SASQCs need (amongst other things) to agree appropriate ICR submission dates; agree the PCR schedule; ensure that course committees are effectively monitoring course quality according to the University requirements; support course teams in considering the implications of progression, failure and achievement data and feedback from stakeholders; agree how they will consider ICRs, Course Development Plans and PCR minutes. The extent of the effectiveness of this oversight is tested at Periodic Review.

<b>Policy owner</b>
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