Course Monitoring: Code of Practice

August 2014

Version I

Next Review in August 2015

Key Purpose and Objectives

This document outlines the processes and procedures by which a course team keeps under review, via the Course Team Meetings, the effective operation and currency of its course. The Code allows the College to assure itself that its requirements for the assurance and enhancement of learning opportunities reflect its commitment to good practice, transparency, and innovation, as principles in themselves and as means of maintaining public confidence in the higher education provision.

For further advice on how the code of practice works, you should contact the HE Office.

Key Responsibilities

Curriculum Manager HE/Head of HE
- Establish and review policy
- Advise on guidelines and procedures
- Facilitate the HE Curriculum and Standards Board

Heads of School
- To assure that consistency and compliance with approval processes are occurring

Curriculum Managers & Teaching Staff
- Follow guidelines and procedures

Policy and Legislative Connections

Additional guidance can be obtained by visiting www.qaa.ac.uk and referring to UK Quality Code: Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review (2012).

Further references to other sources of information can be found at the end of this document.

Policy reference: QHB2 CM

1. Course monitoring

> **Course monitoring is a continuous process by which a course team keeps under review, via the Course Team Meetings, the effective operation and currency of its course.**

Requirements

1.1 Course monitoring involves reflecting on and evaluation of a range of evidence about the course. Through this process, course committees **evaluate** the course curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment approaches; **ensure that standards and quality are being maintained, and outcomes met;** and **manage the enhancement of courses and learning opportunities,** in the light of these evaluations.

1.2 Course monitoring informs changes made to courses that will enhance outcomes, delivery or operations.

1.3 Course teams should undertake monitoring across the year. This is primarily carried out through the Course Team Meetings which inform the completion of interim and final phases of the Course Standards & Quality Report (CSQR)

Explanatory notes

- The HE Quality Handbook Supplement QHS B3 provides a framework for course committees which ensures that appropriate monitoring activity takes place throughout the year.

2. The principles of course monitoring

> **Course monitoring and reporting is an inclusive and evidence-based process.**

Requirements

2.1 Course monitoring involves the full course team (including academic and administrative staff), students, external examiners, and School Curriculum Managers.

2.2 Students are key contributors to the process through their ongoing feedback opportunities, representative participation in course team meetings and/or contribution to the CSQR.

2.3 Feedback from external examiners during the examination board and the annual reports of external examiners are critical inputs into course monitoring.

2.4 Data relating to student progression and achievement also inform course evaluation.

2.5   The inputs and views of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) may have an important role, depending on the course.

2.6   Other external reference points may be appropriate, for example subject benchmarks, and changes to the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.

3. Course annual reporting

Annual reporting is the process by which the College is assured of the on-going currency and health of its provision.

Requirements

3.1   An outcome of the annual monitoring process at course level is the development of a Course Standards and Quality Report (CSQR) that covers the out-going academic year (1 August – 31 July each year) and articulates the range of reflections and evaluations that have taken place throughout the year. Its emphasis is on evaluation and quality enhancement.

3.2   Course leaders take responsibility for engaging all contributors to the delivery and development of their courses in evaluating the provision. They are also responsible for the oversight of the CSQR (see below) and ensure that action is taken and enhancements achieved.

3.3   The CSQR should cover all aspects of the template. This template is presented in separate sections in order that different parts can be discussed at different course committees throughout the year and completed in interim and final phases.

3.4   CSQRs are considered by the ASQC and inform the development of the HE Self Evaluation Document (SED) – see below.

3.5   The CSQR is to be submitted to the ASQC on the last Friday in September.

Explanatory notes

- Given that monitoring is an on-going process, the CSQR is compiled and considered over the year.
- CSQRs do not need to report on routine or minor issues identified by staff, students and others.
- The College makes a distinction between course monitoring (which is a continuous process) and the submission of the CSQR to the ASQC (for annual reporting purposes). Thus, the rolling action plan contained within the CSQR should be monitored and up-dated on a continuous basis, but the annual CSQR is produced at a fixed point in time for the purposes of the production of the VCSQR and College annual report).

- A separate CSQR is required for each course of study except that courses clustered together in one course management/operational framework may be reported on in a single CSQR. A CSQR cannot cover courses that are not linked in this way (i.e. a subject CSQR is not permitted).

4. Evaluation of student data

Timely access to high quality data relating to student outcome (progression, attainment, withdrawals etc.) services three key purposes:

    (a) To permit the analysis of trends and patterns in student outcome over time and across courses.

    (b) To provide up-to-date information about how well students in a particular cohort are doing in order that action planning can happen in a timely fashion

    (c) To inform the process of annual monitoring and reporting.

Requirements

4.1 Summary data for modules and student progression and achievement are evaluated by courses as part of the annual monitoring and reporting process.

4.2 Summary progression and achievement data across courses are evaluated at college level on an annual basis and reported to the Academic Board.

4.3 For reporting and monitoring purposes, the form of the data summaries and evaluations are consistent across courses.

4.4 Course teams are also required to reflect annually on outcomes of the evaluation of equality and diversity and widening participation.

4.5 Equality and diversity monitoring is not expected to happen routinely at course level. Reflections on the potential impact of gender, ethnicity and disability on progression and achievement is considered at College level and reported in VCSQRs and Annual Reports. Where the College identifies something that needs more detailed investigation, courses may be asked to specifically reflect on this aspect at an appropriate course committee (which would then be reported in the CSQR).

Explanatory notes

- In order to enable the accurate and consistent reporting of student achievement across Schools and the College for quality assurance purposes, there is a standard 'window' in which the analysis of data takes place. This ensures that comparisons made between courses and Schools are appropriate, accurate and consistent. In September of each year, data sets on student progression and achievement across HE courses are made available on the Course Standards and Quality Reports SharePoint site ('Course Data' folder).
- The College's Management Information Systems (Reporting) Department prepares course-specific evaluations of equality and diversity and widening participation (ED&WP) data during the first term of the academic year. At the same time, a College-level ED&WP report is prepared.
- The Academic Board prepares a draft report that is disseminated to Curriculum Teams in September of each year. These reports inform the subsequent course data analyses which contribute to interim CSQRs submitted at the end of October.