

Quality & Standards Handbook

Chapter 3

Annual programme review (taught programmes)

Process owner: Academic Policy & Quality Office
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1. INTRODUCTION TO ANNUAL REVIEW

- 1.1 Oxford Brookes is committed to excellence in the management of the academic programmes leading to its awards, wherever they are delivered. One of its four strategic goals (OBU Strategy 2020) is to be *a university that enables a student experience of the highest standard possible*, and the University's Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience sets out how this will be achieved. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018) also sets out the expectations that programmes should *provide a high-quality academic experience for all students* and that the *value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards*. The annual programme review process therefore aims to provide a framework both for the assurance of the quality and standards of the University's awards, and to promote activities for enhancing the student experience.
- 1.2 This chapter aims to be an accessible and comprehensive guide to procedural requirements for the annual review of taught programmes leading to Oxford Brookes awards, especially for:
- staff (in Faculties, Directorates and partner organisations) responsible for the quality management of academic provision;
 - professional bodies and other external quality agencies with an interest in the quality and standards of the University's academic provision.
- It covers all undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision leading to Oxford Brookes credit or awards, including programmes delivered through collaborative partnerships, and programmes which form part of a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship.
- 1.3 The purpose of annual programme monitoring is to enable the University to consider the effectiveness of programmes in meeting their stated aims, and reflect on the success of students in attaining the intended learning outcomes. Annual monitoring also has a key role to play in facilitating action to continuously enhance the provision, and create a supportive and effective learning environment. The annual monitoring and review process is therefore an evidence-based process, drawing on a range of relevant qualitative and quantitative evidence. It is intended to enable academic staff and managers to easily identify issues affecting the learning experience that require action, and therefore to take timely action at the appropriate level to improve quality and standards. The process should also highlight areas of good practice and make recommendations for the enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment.
- 1.4 It is recognised that programme monitoring is a continuous activity, managed by Subject/Programme Committees, that takes place throughout the year. The purpose of the annual reports at programme and Faculty level is to provide assurance to the Quality & Learning Infrastructure Committee (QLIC) of the quality and standards of the University's academic awards, and to facilitate timely action at the appropriate level to remedy any shortcomings and enhance the quality of the student experience. An important feature of the annual review process is that it should be evaluative, action-focused and forward-looking, and should promote discussion between key players, including:

- Programme team members
- Students
- Service users, and other stakeholders
- Professional bodies
- Heads of Department/School – via Programme Leads
- Associate Deans (Student Experience) – linking to Faculty Executive Groups
- Faculty AESC/QLICs and University QLIC
- Directorates

2. THE ANNUAL REVIEW CYCLE

September-November

Programme Leads prepare Annual Programme Review reports for undergraduate programmes. Partner Programme Managers and Brookes Liaison Managers prepare reports for collaborative provision. ACP annual review meetings are usually held in September.

November-January

Programme Leads prepare Annual Programme Review reports for postgraduate taught programmes. Partner Programme Managers and Brookes Liaison Managers prepare reports for collaborative provision.

November-January

Subject/Programme Committees hold annual review meetings, at which programme teams - in consultation with student representatives and any other relevant stakeholders - should agree the action plan.

Programme Annual Reviews considered at Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committees/QLICs. Heads of Department/School should provide FAESC/QLICs with a short report to either assure the committee that all Programme Annual Review reports have been received, or describe any action being taken to remedy the situation where reports have not been submitted (this should be formally recorded in the committee minutes).

FAESC/QLICs should provide feedback to Programme Leads on action being/to be taken at Faculty level to address any issues raised in Programme Annual Review reports. Issues outside the remit of FAESC/QLIC, for example, those with resource implications - should be referred to Faculty Executive Groups.

January-March

Associate Deans (Student Experience) prepare Faculty Annual Review reports (for home and collaborative provision) for consideration and approval by Faculty AESC/QLICs.

March-April

Faculty Annual Review reports considered by QLIC, who must be assured that the annual programme review process has been completed satisfactorily within each Faculty. The Committee will identify and prioritise any issues that have emerged for action at institutional level, and the Chair will request responses to specific points from the relevant Directorates.

May-July

Faculty AESC/QLICs consider any themes and actions that have arisen from the annual review cycle to inform their plans for enhancement, and provide feedback to Departments on action taken at University level in response to Faculty recommendations.

July-September

ACP Programme Managers – with Brookes Liaison Managers - prepare Annual Programme Review reports.

September - October

Head of APQO prepares first stage of Annual Quality Review (of approval and periodic review activity in the preceding year) for consideration by QLIC. The second stage of Annual Quality Review (summary of external examiners reports for the preceding year) is prepared for consideration by QLIC in February.

3. ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW – HOME PROVISION

- 3.1 The annual programme review process covers all undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision leading to an Oxford Brookes University award or credit, including those which form part of a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship, and those which are delivered by 'flying faculty'. It is designed to enable Programme Leads, Subject Coordinators and Faculty AECS/QLICs to demonstrate how well their programmes meet sector, professional/industry and institutional expectations for academic standards and the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- 3.2 An annual review report must be produced for each programme of study leading to a University award, including those delivered by distance learning or flying faculty. Where appropriate, a single report may be produced for a cluster of cognate programmes, but this must be agreed in advance with the Associate Dean (Student Experience). Where possible, credit-bearing short courses should be included as part of the report on a programme or group of programmes in a related subject area.
- 3.3 The annual programme review process is evidence-based, and reports should be evaluative and focused on action to improve the student experience. In evaluating the success of their programmes, academic teams must draw on a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence, including: student achievement data, external examiners reports, feedback from students, internal QA reports, outcomes of the implementation of University enhancement initiatives, reports from PSRBs and other relevant external bodies, and, where relevant, feedback from alumni, employers and service users. The process of evaluation should also highlight areas of good practice in learning, teaching and assessment, for further dissemination across the Department/School or Faculty.
- 3.4 Quantitative data on a range of performance indicators is provided via the Academic Performance Tracking Tool (APTT). The data is presented so as to enable Programme Leads to easily assess potential areas of risk to the provision, and therefore to take timely action to address them. Guidance on how to use the APTT and on how to extract your Annual Review statistics is also provided by the Strategic Change & Planning Team - contact Georgina Spary, the Business Intelligence Manager, for details, on gspary@brookes.ac.uk
- 3.5 The format of the programme annual review report is intended to enable programme teams to link the performance of their provision with the University's strategic objectives for quality enhancement and portfolio development, as well as to help them focus on the academic quality and standards issues relating to individual programmes. The templates for annual programme review reports (T3.1 should be used for home UG and T3.2 for home PGT provision) can be downloaded from the APQO website.
- 3.6 The following documents should be appended to the report before submission to the Faculty AESC/QLIC:
- a copy of the action plan from the previous year's annual review report, including an update on progress with each planned action;
 - the external examiners' report received during the academic year to which the report relates, and a copy of any responses sent to the examiner by the Programme Lead/Subject Coordinator;
 - the National Student Survey (NSS) action plan for the programme/s under review, if applicable;
 - a list of any in-year changes that have been made to the programme.
- 3.7 Although the focus of the annual programme review process is primarily on *academic* quality and standards, issues relating to the quality of central support services may be raised by staff and students during the year. To enable timely and effective resolution of specific problems, any concerns about the quality of central service provision should be reported directly to Heads of Department or Associate Deans (Student Experience) for referral to the relevant Director. Any general themes relating to the provision of central support for learning may also be recorded in the relevant section of the annual programme review report.

4. ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW – COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

- 4.1 All collaborative provision is also subject to the University's annual programme review requirements - see Quality & Standards Handbook, Chapter 5 for more details about collaborative provision. Reporting requirements for collaborative arrangements are similar to those for home provision (*note*: flying faculty arrangements are subject to the same monitoring requirements as for on-campus provision); however separate templates are available for use by collaborative partners: template T3.3 should be used by members of the Associate College Partnership, and template T3.4 should be used by UK partner organisations who are not members of the ACP, and by international partners. Where an articulation agreement is in place alongside a franchised or validated programme leading to a Brookes award, it should be included in the annual programme review report for the programme/s to which it leads.
- 4.2 APTT data is available only for collaborative arrangements in which the students are enrolled with the University as well as the partner organisation. Most non-ACP collaborative partnerships confer registered status on the students, and responsibility for keeping the data therefore lies with the partner organisation at which they are enrolled; however, annual review reports must still refer to the relevant data to evaluate the quality and standards of the programme/s concerned (as indicated in each section), and these statistics should be incorporated into the report.
- 4.3 Annual programme review is a self-evaluative exercise, and reports should therefore be completed primarily by the Programme Manager at the partner organisation. The Liaison Manager may need to provide advice on the information required, and should provide input into the report in a number of sections, where indicated (they are required to provide a report on their activities as LM in section 6.2), but they should not compromise the independence of their role by completing the whole report.
- 4.4 Annual programme review reports for collaborative provision should be considered by the Programme Committee, approved by Faculty AESC/QLIC and, once approved, should be submitted to the APQO. Annual review is the point in the year at which programme teams should reflect on the effectiveness of delivery arrangements as set out in the Operations Manual; and the risk register governing the collaborative arrangements should also be reviewed and updated at the same time. The updated Operations Manual should be lodged with the APQO, and the updated risk register should be monitored by the Faculty Executive.

5. FACULTY ANNUAL REVIEW (This section is currently under review)

- 5.1 The Faculty Annual Review report is split into two parts: a report on home provision (including the annual report on the operation of the Academic Guidance Framework); and a report on collaborative provision - both are considered by QLIC. The report on collaborative provision may also be used to provide context for the annual report received by LPAG on the financial performance of the University's collaborative partnerships.
- 5.2 The purpose of the Faculty Annual Review is:
- to assure the University that the annual programme review process has been properly conducted within the Faculty and by its partners; and that either the exercise is complete, or appropriate action is being taken to ensure that any missing reports are submitted within an appropriate timescale;
 - to provide assurance to the University that academic (and professional) standards and quality are being assured and maintained across the full range of the provision for which the Faculty is responsible, including collaborative provision;
 - to identify issues that require action at Faculty and University level in order to address any risks to the academic quality and standards of the provision managed by the Faculty;
 - to highlight good practice in teaching and learning within the Faculty – in particular, where it is making a demonstrable contribution to the delivery of the SESE and other University enhancement initiatives - and propose action for dissemination.
- 5.3 Faculty Annual Review reports are authored by the Associate Deans (Student Experience); and they provide a mechanism for reporting back to Heads of Department/School, Programme Leads, partner organisations, students, and PSRBs on action being taken at Faculty level to address issues identified in Programme Annual Review reports.

- 5.4 The Faculty Annual Review report should draw on evidence from Programme Annual Review and external examiners' reports for all provision, including collaborative arrangements, within the Faculty, and should also be informed by the ADSE's knowledge of relevant external (sector and discipline) developments. The reports should also provide an analysis - against relevant (internal and external) benchmarks, targets and KPIs - of the quality and standards of the academic provision within the Faculty.
- 5.5 Quantitative data on a range of institutional performance indicators is made available to report authors via the APTT using the annual review data report, which can be used to view data at programme level (for Programme Annual Review) and also by subject area and by programme type (for Faculty-level analysis). Authors should make particular reference to the achievement data for students who fall within the OFFA categories, and for international students.
- 5.6 As with programme-level annual review reports, the Faculty report should be evidence-based, concise and evaluative. The reports should identify priorities for action within the Faculty - making recommendations also to the University - which are required to ensure that the provision for which they are responsible continues to meet institutional and, where relevant, external performance indicators in respect of the quality of the student experience and the standards of achievement.
- 5.7 The reporting templates are available on the APQO website at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook/annual-review/forms/>

6. ANNUAL QUALITY REVIEW

- 6.1 The Annual Quality Review is prepared by the Head of APQO each year, to provide the Quality & Learning Infrastructure Committee with an overview of the outcomes of the University's quality assurance processes, and any themes that have emerged, during the academic year under review, and to enable QLIC to identify priorities for institutional-level action for quality enhancement in the following academic year. The Head of APQO prepares the first stage of Annual Quality Review (an analysis of the approval and periodic review activity that has taken place during the preceding year) for consideration by QLIC in October. The second stage of Annual Quality Review (a summary of themes emerging from external examiners reports covering the preceding year) is prepared for consideration by QLIC in February.