



BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

Document Administration

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## Introduction and Rationale

1. This Code of Practice sets out the process of annual monitoring of all academic programmes whereby Senate, as part of its overall responsibility for academic standards and quality, requires programme teams to carry out an appraisal of their provision at the end of each session and provide a report on the outcome. The University has ultimate responsibility for the quality assurance of programmes delivered by partner institutions; therefore this code and the processes within it are applicable for collaborative provision. Annual Monitoring is concerned with reaching an evidence-based judgement on the effectiveness of a programme in achieving its stated aims and the success of its students in attaining the intended learning outcomes. It is to be distinguished from the complementary process of Periodic Review, which is conducted on a five-year cycle and which, in addition to requiring an assessment of quality and standards over that period, involves a consideration of the continuing validity of the aims and learning outcomes themselves. The arrangements for Periodic Review are set out in the *Code of Practice for the Periodic Review of Programmes*.
2. These provisions are designed to follow the precepts and guidance contained in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, specifically *Chapter B8 – Programme monitoring and review [2013] (2015)* which stipulates that *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 for review of programmes*.
3. Academic Co-ordinators (throughout this document the title of Academic Co-ordinator is used to indicate the leader of the programme team, the role may have an alternative title within collaborative provision), in association with their teams, are responsible for undertaking Annual Monitoring for their respective programmes (throughout the document, programme can refer to an award or a subject). Although the formal process takes place at the end of each academic session and requires the production of a summative report, it should be borne in mind that the consideration of quality and standards cannot be restricted to one point in the year. Both staff and students are encouraged to respond promptly to difficulties at the time that they arise by bringing them directly to the attention of the person who is best able to deal with them. Moreover, the effectiveness of Annual Monitoring depends upon the collection of evidence relating to standards and quality and this should be undertaken on a continuing basis. Programme Teams delivering BGU validated programmes in partner institutions are expected to undertake the same process and produce a summative report on the relevant BGU proforma.
4. Academic Co-ordinators and their teams are also reminded that Annual Monitoring is not merely retrospective but has as its central purpose the enhancement of standards and quality. The process is intended to lead to action and in scrutinising reports, Heads of School and the School Boards should take a particular interest in the clarity and appropriateness of action plans for the coming year and the extent to which the actions identified in the previous report have been completed.
5. The annual monitoring of Professional Support Services (PSS) is not covered by this Code; procedures for the monitoring of PSS are contained within a guidance document produced by Quality Assurance and Student Data (QASD).

## **Annual Monitoring Report**

6. An Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will be produced in respect of each programme or subject. The structure of the AMR will ensure that standards and quality are monitored in discrete areas of provision as appropriate to the award structure. In programmes that are made up of a number of discrete subject courses, the Executive Dean: Learning, Teaching and International will determine the pattern of reporting which is to be adopted and, in making this decision, will seek to ensure that all aspects of the provision are adequately represented including programmes delivered by partner institutions. The format will be approved by the Executive Dean: Learning, Teaching and International and will cover, as a minimum:

- academic standards, including appropriate outcomes where professional recognition is part of the programme;
- the quality of students' learning opportunities.

In addition, an integral action plan will cluster and flag actions which:

- relate to actions arising from external examiners' reports;
- are part of wider enhancement plans being deployed by the programme teams, School or University;
- are aspects of good practice which may be worthy of wider dissemination or development into an institutional enhancement plan;
- are issues that need addressing at School or University level.

7. The Annual Monitoring Report will be prepared by the appropriate Academic Co-ordinator at the end of the academic session under review. The report should be analytical rather than descriptive and draw upon a range of evidence regarding the standards set and achieved and the quality of the learning experience and environment which is offered to students. Statements in the report should be clearly referenced to the evidence which supports them. Qualitative evidence should normally include external examiners' reports, reports from accrediting or other external bodies, feedback from staff and students including minuted discussion in committees and team meetings and analysis of student evaluations at programme and institutional level, and feedback from placement partners, former students and their employers. The report should also draw upon quantitative information regarding admissions, retention, progression, awards and employment and any additional relevant information related to public reporting (e.g. the Key Information Set). In preparing the report, programme teams should take full account of equality and diversity issues related to gender, age, disability and ethnicity. Key statistical data will be provided by Quality Assurance and Student Data for this purpose.

## **Feedback from Students**

8. Programme teams are responsible for ensuring that feedback is collected from students in the form and with the frequency required by the Academic Enhancement Committee. Academic Co-ordinators should ensure that students are advised of the arrangements for the completion of questionnaires.

## **Formal Consideration of the Annual Monitoring Report**

9. Each AMR will be reviewed by the Head of the School (or nominee) in which the programme is located and either approved as ready to go forward for consideration by the School Board, or



referred to the Academic Co-ordinator for revision. Before approving the report, the Head of School (or nominee) should assure themselves that the process of Annual Monitoring has been conducted with rigour and integrity and that the report has been the outcome of discussion within the programme team and has been considered and agreed by its members.

10. At this stage, a student representative from the Students' Union (SU) should read, comment and check that all appropriate action has been taken as indicated in the AMR. Once satisfied, the SU representative is required to sign-off on the AMR.
11. In preparation for the School Board, a copy of the AMR should be forwarded to Quality Assurance and Student Data (QASD). QASD will make it available to the heads of relevant professional support departments and will also check that all matters raised in the relevant External Examiner's report have been flagged in the action plan.
12. The AMRs for each programme will be considered at the Autumn meeting of the School Board. The Board should:
  - determine whether the content of the individual reports is such as to support the Head of School's (or nominee) judgement with regard to the overall health of provision and the conduct of the Annual Monitoring process;
  - identify instances of good practice which might lead to the enhancement of provision if adopted more widely as well as matters giving rise to concern with regard to standards and quality;
  - pay particular attention to the enhancement action plans appended to the reports and members should consider whether they are satisfied that the plan is comprehensive in its coverage of the issues raised in the report and that the actions themselves are appropriate and clearly formulated, assigned to a named individual who will be responsible for carrying them out, and that they are achievable within the time indicated;
  - review the extent to which actions identified in the previous year have been successfully completed and, where it appears that progress has been limited, the relevant Head of School (or nominee) should be asked to investigate and report to the next meeting of the Board;
  - refer for revision a report or action plan which is, in its view, not fit for purpose;
  - identify any specific matters which it believes should be included in the Head of School's report including those to be flagged for university attention.

### **School Report**

13. Following the approval of the individual reports by the School Board, the Head of School will prepare a School Report on the outcomes of Annual Monitoring. The report should provide an analytic commentary on the salient issues arising from the individual AMRs, noting any matters which require attention at university level. It should also consider the quality of reporting and analysis within the School and the extent to which there can be assurance that the process of Annual Monitoring has been undertaken with rigour and integrity. The Report should include a School Enhancement Action Plan, including a section on actions requiring resolution at university level and a statement on the progress made on actions identified in the previous year's report. A summary of key statistical indicators should be appended to the report. The School Report will be considered by Academic Enhancement Committee (AEC).

14. Following their approval by AEC, the School Reports will form part of the evidence base for the Annual Report on the Academic Health of the Institution.

### **Reporting the Contributions of Professional Support Departments to Academic Annual Monitoring Reports**

15. The Registrar and Secretary will gather responses from the relevant Heads of Sections in relation to issues relevant to the student experience that are pertinent to professional support departments. This may include responses to issues raised by programmes/subjects in their AMR or developmental/enhancement activities planned by the relevant professional support department that may impact upon the student experience. The Registrar and Secretary will collate relevant issues and actions into an overview action plan that will in turn form part of the evidence for the Report on the Academic Health of the Institution.

### **Report on the Academic Health of the Institution**

16. The Report on the Academic Health of the Institution will provide an evaluative overview of key quality assurance and enhancement matters, identify good practice along with a strategy for their dissemination and identify strands which should be explored as possible areas for future development and enhancement. This will be prepared by the Registrar and Secretary in liaison with the Executive Dean Learning, Teaching and International, Executive Dean Research Knowledge and Exchange, Heads of School and Quality Assurance and Student Data. The report will draw upon the following evidence base:

- School Reports on the outcomes of Annual Monitoring;
- Issues identified by the Registrar and Secretary in relation to the responses of professional support departments to Annual Monitoring Reports;
- External Examiner Reports;
- Periodic Review reports;
- Validation Event reports;
- Reports related to external inspections and audits (for example QAA, Ofsted, PSRBs);
- Institutional-level management information related to progression, achievement, diversity/equality information as appropriate, and Key Information Set data;
- National Student Survey and the institution's internal survey (currently known as the BGUSSS).

It will include an enhancement action plan for any matters not already being addressed elsewhere. The report will be presented to Senate following presentation to AEC.

### **Collaborative Provision**

17. Partner institutions are expected to abide by this Code.