

## Guidance on Annual Monitoring

### Introduction

The continuous monitoring and enhancement of the University's provision are core activities that underpin the University's quality assurance and enhancement processes.

These activities are collectively known as Annual Monitoring and happen in a continuous annual cycle throughout each session punctuated by the reporting phase at the end of teaching. Annual Monitoring can be broken down into component tasks of

- reviewing evidence
- reflection
- planning and undertaking action
- reporting

The aim of Annual Monitoring is to contribute to the maintenance of standards and the enhancement of learning and teaching through the regular scrutiny of our courses. Annual Monitoring also seeks to identify good practice and to encourage staff to reflect on local experience of strategic matters.

All teaching staff should contribute to the review, reflection and action phases of Annual Monitoring. Reporting is the responsibility of Course or Programme Leaders<sup>1</sup> and is co-ordinated by School Quality Officers (SQOs). College Quality Officers (CQOs) oversee and co-ordinate the management of the process across the College and report annually to the University's Academic Standards Committee.

Annual Monitoring is an integral component of the University's Academic Quality Framework (see <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/>) and is in line with the UK Quality Code: Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review.

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<sup>1</sup> It is acknowledged that some areas do not use the term 'leader'. In this document 'leader' is used to signify those with responsibility for a course or programme.

## Reviewing, Reflecting, Planning

Staff who are responsible for provision are best placed, and have the detailed knowledge required, to identify and make effective improvements.

Throughout the year, staff will receive feedback and evidence of how well their courses are operating. This will come from a variety of sources, such as:

- Course questionnaires and other locally used student feedback mechanisms
- Staff-Student Liaison Committees
- Feedback from staff involved in delivery and/or support
- Feedback and advice from external examiners
- Student exam performance (including degree classifications)
- External Student Surveys, e.g.
  - National Student Survey (NSS),
  - Student Barometer (ISB),
  - Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
- Complaints

As each set of data becomes available, there should be review, reflection and discussion of any action required. A note of key points, positive and negative, and the outcomes should be made and kept for reference and use at the reporting stage. The outcome should be reported back to the individual or group that provided the comments to “close the feedback loop”.

At the end of teaching, feedback received during the past session should be gathered and reviewed to inform an overview of the delivery of learning and teaching. This should take place as soon as possible after teaching finishes while the experience is still fresh in the mind.

Some information relevant to the current session will not be available at this time, for example, external examiners reports, complete student exam results including resit information etc. A flexible approach is therefore required. Informal indicators can be used where they are available, e.g. verbal comments from external examiners; early indicators or unconfirmed results, or data from the previous session. It is important not to delay the review and reflection process to wait for these items.

Things to consider when reflecting:

- The effectiveness of assessment methods
- The currency of the course or programme
- Evidence of good practice and/or innovation; might it be useful to disseminate to other areas? (Contact details may be requested to take this forward)
- Opportunities for improvement
- Barriers that prevent changes being made
- Actions that require input from the School/RI, College or University
- Feedback relating to Equality and Diversity
- Progress made on actions identified in the last cycle.

*Please note:* If any actions are determined that can be raised with the appropriate body directly (e.g. issues of AV/IT or minor issues of Estates and Buildings) then these should be taken forward immediately. If the issue persists and has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the Course or Programme Leader, it can be brought to the attention of the School/RI, College or University via annual monitoring reports. The issue should be clearly stated in the relevant section of the report form along with a note of action taken to date.

## Reporting

The reporting element of annual monitoring is required to assure Schools/RIs, Colleges and the University that ongoing reflection and enhancement is taking place at course and programme level.

Reports are considered at School/RI level before onward reporting of a summary overview and issues that require input at the wider College/University levels.

The reporting schedule is separated for UG and PGT programmes because of their different timetables. Quality Officers have agreed that the UG reporting should not be delayed until the PGT information is available; therefore UG programmes aim to report to Academic Standards Committee in November, PGT in January.

### Reporting at School/RI

In recognition of the diversity of local organisational structures, there is a degree of flexibility in the application of the process. It is the responsibility of the Head of School/RI and the School Quality Officer to consider and identify the most appropriate way of gathering information on annual monitoring activity in each area.

The Head of School/RI, in consultation with the School Quality Officer and Programme Leaders, will need to:

- determine appropriate Units of Learning<sup>2</sup>
- determine the reporting approach: minuted meeting(s) or paper-based
- determine if there are any areas where a more detailed record of scrutiny is required, e.g. for a new course, for collaborative provision, or where there are known issues. In such cases, an individual Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) should be completed.

### *Approach*

Where Schools/RIs have been using a paper-based approach effectively, they can, of course, continue to use it. However, an alternative approach, which has been found to work well is meeting based whereby staff responsible for Units of Learning meet in groupings appropriate to the local structures (school, subject, discipline etc) to collectively review provision, including collaborative provision where applicable. This method should foster greater discussion and engagement with the process and increase flexibility for Schools in how they run annual monitoring locally.

Meetings are called and chaired by the Head of School/RI/Subject/Discipline or his/her nominee<sup>3</sup>.

The Annual Monitoring Report Form (AM1) contains a number of headings that can be used as an outline agenda. Discussion should include identification of issues/good practices, including those with wider relevance, and discussion on how they might be resolved or disseminated.

Any member of staff responsible for a "Unit of Learning" that cannot attend the meeting should provide their input to the meeting by submitting an individually completed Annual Monitoring Report (AM1).

Any member of staff responsible for a "Unit of Learning" where a more detailed record of scrutiny is required should complete an Annual Monitoring Report (AM1).

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<sup>2</sup> The term "unit of learning" is used to allow schools or subject areas to group courses in the most appropriate way e.g. by year, by programme that they contribute to, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Practice in Engineering is to hold the Annual Monitoring meeting immediately before the Board of Examiners to maximise staff involvement.

A note of the main points discussed at the meeting, including a list of actions directed as appropriate, is recorded on the Annual Monitoring Report Form (AM1)<sup>4</sup>. This must be completed promptly after the meeting. Discretion may be applied in the recording of discussions that have a personal or business element.

*Following the Annual Monitoring meeting(s):*

The School Quality Officer will receive the notes of meetings<sup>5</sup> and will collate a School Annual Monitoring Summary (SAMS)<sup>6</sup>.

Where Schools/RIs have opted to retain the paper-based approach annual monitoring forms for all Units of Learning **must** be completed promptly by the deadlines set by the School Quality Officer to enable onward reporting deadlines to be met. The School Quality Officer will use these to collate their SAMS.

The SAMS is submitted to the School Learning and Teaching Committee, to allow actions within School remits to be taken forward in a timely fashion at the appropriate level, and to the College Quality Officer for inclusion in the College Annual Monitoring Summary (CAMS).

In order to close the feedback loop, a report should be made to the relevant Staff Student Liaison Committees. This may be a verbal or written summary or a copy of the Annual Monitoring Report Form. Its receipt should be recorded in the SSLC minutes. Any progress made on issues should also be reported, given that some time will have passed between the preparation of the report and the next SSLC.

A copy of the AMRs and the School AM Summary should be retained by the Subject/Discipline and the School/RI. They will be requested as part of the documentation for Periodic Subject Review and may also be required for other quality processes e.g. accreditation reviews, ELIR.

### **Responsibilities of College Quality Officers**

College Quality Officers will agree the AM Forms with the Senate Office. The Quality Officers Forum will be consulted on any substantial changes.

College Quality Officers will set deadlines for receipt of School AM Summaries that allow them time to collate the information into a College Annual Monitoring Summary (CAMS).

The College Quality Officers will submit their CAMS to Academic Standards Committee in November (UG) and February (PGT) for consideration of University wide actions. The PGT CAMS may take the form of a separate report or an addendum to the UG CAMS depending on the similarity of issues noted.

### **Hot Topics**

One or two “hot topics” will be identified each year by the Vice Principal (Academic and Educational Innovation). College Quality Officers may add college specific topics. Suggestions are welcomed and can be submitted via the Senate Office or the Quality Officers Forum. Schools will be asked to comment on these as part of their AM reflection and discussion. The comments will be collated and provided to the Vice Principal (Academic and Educational Innovation) to inform development and strategic planning.

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<sup>4</sup> This is distributed by the College Quality Officer towards the end of the session along with deadlines for receipt of School Annual Monitoring Reports or Summaries.

<sup>5</sup> The School Quality Officer may wish to attend subject/discipline meetings.

<sup>6</sup> Where the Annual Monitoring meeting has taken place at School level, the notes of that meeting will constitute the School Annual Monitoring Summary.

## Notes

### *Annual Monitoring – why we do it*

Annual monitoring contributes to:

- Setting and maintaining academic standards
- Monitoring and enhancing the management of assessment and of feedback to students
- Monitoring student performance and progression
- Evaluating the quality of the student experience and identifying enhancements
- Evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching resources and identifying matters requiring attention
- Identifying, promoting and disseminating good practice
- Gathering evidence of local initiatives and progress in relation to College and School Learning and Teaching Plans and the University Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Monitoring developments from PSR and PSRB reports (where appropriate)
- Informing the School/RI, College and University of matters requiring attention

### *Units of Learning*

The term 'unit of learning' is used to allow schools/RIs or subject areas to group courses in the most appropriate way. A Unit of Learning may be an individual course, a coherent group of courses that, for example, make up a programme or represent a subject's provision at a particular level. In determining this,

- where a student cohort is similar, e.g. A & B courses at levels 1, 2 and 3;
- fixed curriculum programmes where a single composite report for each level of study may provide more comprehensive information;
- Honours courses.
- In the case of postgraduate taught provision, it is likely that all aspects of the programme will be considered together.

### *Collaborative provision*

The School/RI and College have responsibility to monitor, and review all collaborative arrangements. Therefore, all courses and programmes offered in collaboration with others should be included in annual monitoring, irrespective of whether UoG is leading the course/programme. The level and focus of monitoring is dependent on the nature of the arrangement but, as far as possible, it should fit with standard University process.

The completed AMR should be discussed with collaborating institutions to ensure that it presents an accurate reflection of the course or programme as a whole and that matters requiring attention are directed appropriately. Schools/RIs collaborating in courses and programmes should ensure that all participants receive a copy of the completed AMR.

For example: The delivery of a UoG programme by UoG staff using the premises and facilities of another organisation physically and geographically distanced from UoG campuses (often another Higher Education Institution) is known as 'distance delivery'. The University's standard requirements for annual monitoring will apply. The annual monitoring process should be completed for the programme and feed into School/RI annual monitoring at the same time and in the same way as other and equivalent programmes offered by the School/RI. If the same programme is offered on the home campus, a comparison should be made between the two, particularly in relation to student performance, student feedback and feedback from staff and the external examiner.

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For example: The University also delivers joint/dual degrees. Annual Monitoring for a joint degree should be conducted by the Joint Management Board. The JMB should meet regularly and report at least annually to the relevant College Committee. The College will then submit a composite report on all its collaborative arrangements.

For more information on the process for collaborative provision please see the Framework for Academic Collaborations at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/academiccollaborations/framework/>

### **College Quality Officers**

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### **Other resources**

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/annualmonitoring/>

