

**The Annual Evaluation Process**

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**Section 1: Introduction, aims and key principles**

**Introduction**

1. The preparation and subsequent discussion of Annual Evaluation (AE) Reports enables course teams, Institutes and the University to evaluate effectiveness, identify good practice, strengthen accountability and take action on the basis of informed review and analysis.
2. In this respect the process supports the ongoing quality enhancement of course provision and the student experience, and meets the overarching expectations of the UK Quality Code for HE to:
	* ensure that programmes remain current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and practice in its application
	* evaluate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are being attained by students, as evidenced through retention, achievement, progression and employment statistics
	* evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes
	* ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings and the impact of changes and/or enhancement initiatives are assessed
	* take deliberate steps to bring about continuous improvement in the learning experience of students.
3. More generally, AE Reports provide the University with the evidence it requires to enable it to discharge its responsibility for the standard of each award made in its name, and to be assured that the quality of education provided for students is at least satisfactory or better. The process identifies issues requiring attention and a mechanism for ensuring that they are addressed, and highlights examples of good practice for wider dissemination. In also asking course teams and Institutes to establish a ‘live’ Enhancement Plan, the process contributes to continuous improvement of the quality of provision across the University.

**Aims**

1. The process aims to:
	* ensure genuine critical reflection and evaluation on all aspects of the delivery of the curriculum and support for student learning
	* secure continued systematic improvement in the overall quality of provision and the student experience
	* develop live Enhancement Plans which can be effectively implemented and progress mapped throughout the academic year.

**Key Principles**

1. The process therefore is based on the following key principles:
	* self-critical reflective consideration of evidence
	* accountability at all levels throughout the University
	* evaluation for forward action planning
	* dissemination of good practice.
2. As an integral part of the system, it is expected that good practice is shared amongst staff, and that feedback is given to staff, students, and external examiners on issues raised in reports at all stages in the system. For instance, it is expected that Heads of Institute and Institute Quality Committee (IQC) Chairs report back to staff, and staff communicate with students via Course Management Committees, notice boards and the VLE. In addition, the minutes of Course Management Committees are made available for students, and a copy of the Course AE Report is sent to the external examiner, normally following the IQC meeting at which such reports are discussed.
3. The process is designed to complement Periodic Review. This occurs in two key ways: Review Panels will consider the effectiveness of Departments and Institutes in managing and developing the quality of the student learning experience, maintaining academic standards and developing the curriculum of the associated courses. In addition, outcomes from Periodic Review inform the Institute and Course AE Report Enhancement Plans as appropriate.

**Collaborative Provision**

1. AE Reports are produced for every course (or accredited module) that results in a UW award, including those offered by partner institutions to their students. However, by negotiation[[1]](#footnote-1) partners are able to submit reports to the format normally used by that institution provided that required elements of the AE process are present. (This will normally be the Enhancement Plan, Link Tutor reports and the response to the external examiner report(s)). In such cases, additional information pertaining to the AE process should be made available to Institutes alongside submission of the annual report.[[2]](#footnote-2)
2. For provision taught at more than one site, a report should be produced for each site. An overview report will then be compiled in the same manner as a Course AE Report (using the Course AE Report template) drawing together the key themes from each individual submission. This overview report will be considered, with individual Course Reports, by the IQC and will, as appropriate, be referenced in the Institute AE Report.
3. All Course AE reports should include a list of award titles covered by the report.

**Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies**

1. IQCs are primarily responsible for considering and endorsing Course AE Reports relating to provision subject to external (PSRB) requirements. Where issues have been raised by a PSRB, the action being taken to address such issues must be included explicitly within the Enhancement Plan of the Institute AE Report.

**Section 2: Process**

1. The process takes an evidence-based approach with outcomes clearly based on evaluation and enhancement.
2. The value of this process lies in all participants taking an honest, reflective and evaluative approach. Issues are highlighted without apportioning blame and the focus is always on how to address issues and identify action that will result in quality enhancement.
3. The following key points therefore apply:
	* AQU will identify to all Institutes those courses where performance indicators suggest that the course has particularly strong outcomes and courses where the outcomes suggest concerns
	* the Course AE Report template is an aide memoire to reflection on key data sets and evidence sources in order to identify success, achievement, limitations and issues. It includes the production of a short SWOT analysis
	* the Enhancement Plan should clearly be derived from evidence sources (see below)
	* this leads to more focussed actions that are easier to address, whether these aim to rectify issues or progress opportunities – actions have an anticipated date of completion (or milestones) and demonstrable criteria for success (i.e. when it is clear that they have been achieved)
	* Heads of Department have a role in working with course leaders to ensure that the AER process is completed effectively and that the enhancement plans will address any issues or challenges identified and result in clear improvements to the student experience. Additionally, they have a role in ensuring dissemination and transfer of good practice.
4. The Enhancement Plan covers the following areas:
* issue or objective to be addressed
* actions to be taken
* key dates for achievement of actions
* key person responsible for action
* criteria for success or impact
* progress
1. Enhancement Plans are considered to be “live” documents which are kept under review and updated on a regular basis (e.g. via Course Management Committees), including for provision delivered through collaborative arrangements.
2. Course AE Reports are confirmed by Heads of Academic Department as complete and of appropriate quality before being reviewed by IQCs to:
* assure the Committee that the process has been carried out appropriately
* identify any course in need of monitoring and additional support
* support quality enhancement by providing feedback to the course team and identifying good practice and any issues that need to be addressed at Institute or University level.

**Course AE Reports**

1. Course leaders use the following evidence base as the primary source for compiling the AE Report:
	* statistical data (see Appendix 1 for full list of data normally provided)
	* Link Tutor report(s)
	* external examiner reports and response[[3]](#footnote-3)
	* student feedback including the National Student Survey and the University Course Experience Survey
	* Course Management Committee minutes or equivalent
	* Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body Reports
	* internal/external review reports (e.g. Periodic Review)
	* employer/stakeholder feedback
	* analysis of the response rate for module evaluations and UWSS
	* engagement with University and/or Institute quality enhancement initiatives or projects
2. Academic Quality Unit (AQU) will issue, annually, a course database of current provision. IQCs will be responsible for ensuring that reports for all awards within the Institute, including in relation to each partner, have been received. Institutes will determine, through consultation with AQU as necessary, whether Course AE Reports can appropriately cover multiple awards.
3. Course AE Reports should therefore be produced for :
	* each course or group of related courses leading to a UW award
	* every course or accredited module, or group of modules, run by a partner institution.
4. Reports are normally drafted by the course leader (or equivalent) but are the outcome of discussions with the course team and student representatives through course management committees or other appropriate meetings.
5. Course AE Reports will comprise the following:
	* Action Plan from the previous year, with report on progress and commentary as appropriate
	* Enhancement Plan for current year
	* commentary on the evidence informing the Enhancement Plan including a short SWOT analysis
6. The following are also appended:
	* Data summary report (tbc once being produced centrally)
	* Course management committee minutes
	* external examiner reports including response
	* PSRB report(s) as applicable
	* Link Tutor report (in cases of collaborative provision)
	* partner Overview Report (see paragraph 9).
7. Approved Course AE Reports are shared with students via Blackboard and forwarded to external examiners.

**Institute AE Reports**

1. Institutes use the following evidence base as the primary source for compiling the AE Report:
	* Institute-level statistical data (see Appendix 1)
	* Institute-level student feedback, including NSS outcomes
	* Course AE Reports (including external examiner reports and responses) and Link Tutor reports
	* Discussions at IQC meetings.
2. The focus for Institute reports is on the performance of the Institute in terms of comparisons with previous years and with the University as a whole, and other relevant data. It is not expected that reference to each and every Course AE Report is made in the Institute Report, although attention should be drawn to excellent performance or courses where there may be challenges or issues. Supported by AQU and, typically via IQC, Institutes themselves determine how best to ensure that key issues arising from Course AE Reports are identified through IQC. The emphasis for the Institute Report is on managing risk, and planning for continuous improvement.
3. The report therefore comprises the following:
	* brief evaluative commentary on quality indicators and initiatives
	* brief evaluative comment on the Course AER process and monitoring of courses requiring additional support or which have undergone significant modification
	* brief commentaries on student engagement, placement and work-based learning and collaborative provision
	* Action Plan from previous year, with report on progress and commentary as appropriate
	* Quality Enhancement Plan for current year\*
	* good practice to be disseminated more widely[[4]](#footnote-4)
	* issues to be referred beyond the Institute
	* a completed spreadsheet (template to be supplied by AQU in July 2017) giving details of course names, reports received and process completed. Any courses closed, planned for closure or temporarily suspended where agreed by Course Scrutiny Group should also be listed. The spreadsheet should be appended to the Institute AER.
4. \*Whilst the Institute Annual Evaluation Report (Quality) and the Institute Annual Learning and Teaching Report are produced separately, the Institute Enhancement Plan is developed jointly, as a central Institute document.
5. As deemed appropriate, Institute AE Reports may also include key information required in relation to key priorities of University strategy (e.g. to gather evidence on external engagement, student success, etc.).

**Indicative Schedule**

1. Institutes are advised to utilise (adapting as appropriate) the following indicative schedule for the process:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Early September 2017 | \* Link Tutor report submitted to UW Course Leader for inclusion with Annual Evaluation Report |
| Late September 2017 | Course Annual Evaluation Reports reviewed by Heads of Department |
| October 2017 | Course Annual Evaluation Reports submitted for Institute Quality Committee attention |
| Mid November 2017 | Institute Quality Committee meetings to discuss reports and agree Institute Annual Evaluation Report. Learning and Teaching Leads should be invited to this meeting to discuss the combined enhancement plan  |
| 24th November 2017 | Institute Annual Evaluation Reports and Institute Quality Committee minutes submitted to Academic Quality Unit for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee |
| 10th January 2018 | Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement Committee agrees Institutional annual report on quality and standards |
| 31st January 2018 | Academic Board receives report from Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement Committee |

*\* The Link Tutor report should also be sent to the HE Manager (where appropriate, the Course Leader (or equivalent)) at the partner organisation, the Head of Collaborative Programmes and the Head of Institute.*

**Section 3: Roles and responsibilities**

**Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee**

1. The Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) retains responsibility for reporting annually to Academic Board on academic standards and the academic health of the University’s portfolio of taught programmes and the quality of the student learning experience (see ASQEC Terms of Reference). This includes monitoring of progress in relation to University level enhancement and development projects related to educational and student experience matters.
2. ASQEC maintains oversight of academic standards and quality through consideration of regular reports pertaining to
* Statistical indicators for retention, progression, and achievement
* First destinations and employment outcomes
* External examiner and PSRB reports
* Course approval and periodic review reports
* Results of student surveys, including NSS
1. In addition ASQEC receives all Institute AE Reports for critical scrutiny
2. The Head of Academic Quality will present to ASQEC a report collating the above information and commenting on the completeness and effectiveness of the process.
3. Additionally, ASQEC is responsible for following up actions beyond Institute level and reporting outcomes back to Institutes.

**Institute Quality Committees**

1. IQCs are responsible for the production of the Institute AE Report. This is normally authored by the Chair of IQC.
2. IQCs are also responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the process at course level, including the quality of enhancement planning, and for maintaining an overview of quality and standards across Institute provision (including collaborative programmes). In addition they are responsible for supporting the continuous improvement of quality and standards through quality enhancement activity, for managing risk and for ensuring that actions and recommendations from internal or external review activity are addressed.
3. IQCs must have a process for the independent review of all course AERs to ensure that they are complete (i.e. all issues have been addressed and all evidence is available), evaluative and contain a clear Enhancement Plan with SMART actions. A Scrutineer’s Report is provided to support this process. It is recommended that Institutes provide opportunities for scrutineers and course leaders to discuss AE Reports and Enhancement Plans in development contexts.
4. In keeping with an approach that supports a lighter touch for lower risk courses, good practice would suggest that enhancement plans are continually reviewed and updated through Course Management Committees. Courses identified as higher risk and/or requiring additional support and/or where there are particular challenges in achieving improved outcomes will be more formally monitored by IQC.
5. Therefore, in relation to the Course AE process, IQCs:
	* ensure:
		+ that a complete and appropriate set of reports (including Link Tutor reports) for all applicable provision within the Institute has been submitted
		+ that all reports provide a full and appropriate response to external examiner(s)
	* discuss:
		+ the academic health of courses managed by the Institute, including the academic health of courses delivered by partner organisations
		+ generic issues arising from the AE process (these might be matters of process/procedure or issues about courses/student experience – including recruitment, retention, achievement, etc.)
	* determine:
		+ those courses that may require specific monitoring or additional support in the current reporting year and the action to be taken to manage any risk or enable any identified opportunities
		+ matters for the Institute (or Department) to address in relation to quality and/or standards issues
	* refer any matters that require University level review or development to relevant professional departments for consideration and/or response as appropriate
	* review progress on actions from previous year
	* agree a set of actions/priorities for the Institute to enhance the quality of courses and the student experience over the next academic year.
6. An IQC Annual Evaluation Scrutineer’s Report template is available from the AQU website to support this work and to record the outcomes.

Link Tutor

1. The Link Tutor has a dual role: providing assistance and support to staff in the partner institution, and providing assurance to UW that the partnership is operating appropriately. During the year the Link Tutor might make a number of visits to a partner organisation, in accordance with the guidance on the [role of the Link Tutor](http://www.worc.ac.uk/partners/657.htm). They are requested to produce a short annual report (normally no longer than two pages) on these visits. These reports are an important feature of the Course AE Report and should be a part of the evidence base for the Enhancement Plan. A template for the Link Tutor report can be accessed via the AQU website.

**Section 4: Guidance notes on completing the process**

**Appendix 1**

**Standard Evidence Base**

1 Normally, the following statistical data is provided by the Data Management Unit for the purposes of the AE process:

* applications and admissions
* student characteristics
* graduate destinations data
* retention and completion data
* progression and achievement data.

2 This data is provided initially at Institute level to enable comparison with other awards as well as identification of trends over a number of years. *It will be available in mid-August (following the examination board process)*.

3 In order to benchmark provision, report authors are also encouraged to make use of the [Unistats](http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/) website.

4 In addition, authors of Course AE reports are expected to draw upon evidence from the following in arriving at their Enhancement Plan:

* external examiner reports[[5]](#footnote-5)
* internal review reports and responses
* NSS and other survey outcomes (where applicable)
* Course Management Committee and/or Staff/Student Liaison Committee minutes
* student module feedback and evaluation
* Link Tutor reports (in the case of collaborative provision)
* external review reports (e.g. PSRB)
	+ module results summaries, analysis of response rate for module evaluations and UW CES
	+ employer (and other stakeholder) feedback

5 Courses must also consider national subject developments (e.g. the publication of an updated subject benchmark statement) and University and Institute development priorities.

**Appendix 2**

**Guide to writing the Course AE Report**

1. The following points provide a step-by-step guide through the process of gathering and evaluating evidence to inform the Enhancement Plan. The nature of the questions to be asked of the evidence will be course specific as well as more general questions as indicated below. Therefore, this guidance aims to be neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.
2. Gather information to create evidence base. The following will be available within this folder: [O:\All Staff Documents\AQU\ANNUAL EVALUATION INFORMATION](file:///%5C%5CStaff.worc.ac.uk%5Cshared%5CAll%20Staff%20Documents%5CAQU%5CANNUAL%20EVALUATION%20INFORMATION).
* statistical data (*this will normally be available in mid-August).*
* external examiner report(s)
* periodic review reports and responses
* CES and other survey outcomes
* NSS outcomes
* module results summaries (as published on the O drive and/or available from exam boards)
1. Other information will be available within your Institute. If you are unsure how to access these items, your IQC Secretary will be able to guide you. This includes:
* Course Management Committee and/or Staff/Student Liaison Committee minutes
* student module evaluation
* external review reports (e.g. PSRB monitoring reports)

1. You should also collect any other relevant information, which might include:
* Link Tutor reports (in the case of collaborative provision; provided by the UW Link Tutor[[6]](#footnote-6))
* employer (and/or other stakeholder) feedback
* national subject developments e.g. updated subject benchmarks

**Following the collation of evidence:**

1. Explore the statistical data – guidance on interpreting the data will be made available to coincide with publication in mid-August but would typically include changes from last year including reflection specifically on trend data and comparison with competitor institutions based on Unistats.
2. Review external examiner reports, highlighting key issues and good practice. The report asks you to make a summary response to the external examiner(s). In addition, where issues are raised, these should be entered into the Enhancement Plan. Please bear in mind that upon completion of the AE Report and approval by IQC, the full report is sent to the external examiner and part of the role of IQC is to ensure that there is a full and appropriate response to the external examiner report
3. Note progress made in response to any internal and/or external review reports – are there any changes to the current plans? ***If external (PSRB) reports require action, these MUST form part of the Enhancement Plan.***
4. Review Course Management Committee and/or Staff/Student Liaison Committee minutes – are there common themes relating to student expectation/satisfaction – should any action be taken? Does this relate also to NSS and/or UWSS outcomes, student module feedback, module results, external examiner’s report, etc.?
5. Do Link Tutor reports raise any issues that require action – either in the form of potential developments or the mitigation of risk?
6. Do module results or exam board minutes raise any issues regarding assessment? Does an exploration of these minutes relate to matters arising elsewhere (e.g. external examiner’s report, Course Management Committee minutes/NSS/module feedback)? If there are common themes, what action might be taken to rectify issues or to enhance current practice?
7. Is there other information, arising from stakeholder groups, sector-wide subject development, etc., which might necessitate action?
8. Bearing in mind that these reports need to inform the IQC, and ultimately Academic Board, complete the Course AE Report template, ensuring that all actions noted can be clearly related to the evidence base, have realistic milestones/completion dates, and clearly identify the individual with lead responsibility. Completion dates do not have to be within an academic year, although for longer term plans it is expected that at least annual milestones are put in place in order to track progress.
9. Use the SWOT analysis to identify key strengths, weaknesses, any identifiable opportunities to strengthen the course further, or any threats that may impact on its future viability or quality. Key actions identified through the analysis should normally feed through to the enhancement plan.
10. With regard to progress against previous plans, where actions are not completed it may be appropriate to report progress to date (or reasons for delay), and either amend milestones/completion or amend the action itself in the light of new evidence. In such cases, the changes made should be apparent in order to provide oversight of progress. Avoid use of the term ‘ongoing’.
11. Submit the completed Course AE Report to your Head of Department for review and once confirmed by the Head of Department, submit to the IQC Secretary. IQCs will clarify the expected submission date prior to the start of each academic year.

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1. Such negotiation normally entails the submission of a report or report template to AQU prior to use within the process. AQU will then liaise with partner organisations with regard to any additional requirements. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This policy also applies in cases where action plans are required by external bodies, normally Ofsted. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. If an external examiner’s report has not been received, a course AER should still be produced. Any additional Actions required as a result of the external examiner’s report should be included in the Enhancement Plan upon its receipt. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Good practice typically includes innovative or specifically ‘fit for purpose’ approaches to learning and teaching (in the broadest sense) which would be of benefit to other subject areas or partners. This might include particular methods of delivery, forms of advice/guidance for students or even internal systems/processes for enhancing the student experience. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. If an external examiner’s report has not been received, a course AER should still be produced. Any additional Actions required as a result of the external examiner’s report should be included in the Enhancement Plan upon its receipt. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Details of the role of the Link Tutor with regard to the AE Process can be found in paragraph 42 of the AE Process document. A Link Tutor report template is available on the AQU Annual Evaluation webpages. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)