

The Annual Evaluation Process

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The preparation and subsequent discussion of Annual Evaluation Reports (AER) enables course teams, Schools, Colleges, and the University to evaluate the academic health of the educational programmes of the University. This includes identification of good practice, strengthening accountability and taking action to address shortcomings or to provide enhancement of the student experience, based on informed review and analysis.
- 1.2 The AER process is central to ensuring that University awards meet the requirements of the [OfS Quality and standards general ongoing conditions of registration](#) as well as more generally the overarching expectations of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) to ensure:

- the academic standards of courses reflect the requirements of [OfS Sector-recognised standards](#) and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ)¹.
 - the value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.
 - students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.
 - the standards of awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them, when working in partnership with other organisations.
 - courses are up-to-date, provide educational challenge, are coherent, effectively delivered and require students to develop relevant skills.
 - courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and ensure all assessments are valid and reliable enabling students to be assessed effectively.
 - the provision of sufficient resources, including appropriately qualified staff and physical and digital learning resources and other specialist resources, and support that ensure a high-quality academic experience and enable students to succeed in and beyond higher education.
 - all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.
 - students are actively engaged, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
- 1.3 More generally, AERs 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 Schools to establish a 'live' Enhancement Plan, the process contributes to continuous improvement of the quality of provision across the University.
- 1.4 The University is moving towards a continuous evaluation and monitoring process, where courses and Schools reflect on data and evidence sources as they become available and identify actions on an ongoing basis, with regular monitoring of progress and impact.

¹ Part A: Threshold standards for qualification at all levels is drawn from 'The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies' published in October 2014, and **updated February 2024**. See <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>.

2 Aims

2.1 The AER process aims to:

- a. ensure genuine critical reflection and evaluation on all aspects of the delivery of the curriculum and support for student learning.
- b. secure continued systematic improvement in the overall quality of provision and the student experience.
- c. develop live Enhancement Plans which can be effectively implemented and progress mapped throughout the academic year.

3 Key Principles

3.1 The process therefore is based on the following key principles:

- a. self-critical reflective consideration of evidence
- b. accountability at all levels throughout the University
- c. evaluation for forward Enhancement Planning
- d. dissemination of good practice.

3.2 As an integral part of the process, it is expected that good practice is shared and that feedback is provided to students, external examiners and other stakeholders such as employers or practice-based mentors, on issues raised in reports, surveys or via other means. For instance, it is expected that staff communicate with students via Course Management Committees and the virtual learning environment (VLE). A copy of the agreed Course Annual Evaluation Report is sent to the external examiner.

3.3 The process is designed to complement Periodic Review. This occurs in two key ways: Review Panels will consider the effectiveness of Departments and Schools 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 School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan and Course Annual Evaluation Report Enhancement Plans as appropriate.

4 Collaborative Provision

4.1 Annual Evaluation Reports are produced for every course (or accredited module) that results in a UW award or credit, including those offered by partner institutions. However, by negotiation² partners can submit reports in the format normally used by that institution provided that required elements of the Annual Evaluation 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 Annual Evaluation process should be made available to Schools alongside submission of the annual report. This may for

² 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 about any additional requirements.

example include PSRB Reporting and the results and response to any surveys of students or other stakeholders.

- 4.2 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 Annual Evaluation Report (using the Course Annual Evaluation Report template) drawing together the key themes from each individual submission.

5 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)

- 5.1 Where PSRBs require an annual monitoring report, the School should discuss with AQU how this will relate to the University AER processes. Schools should keep AQU informed of all correspondence from PSRBs regarding quality assurance processes.
- 5.2 Where issues have been raised by a PSRB, the action being taken to address such issues should be included explicitly within the Enhancement Plan of the Course Annual Evaluation Report.

6 AER Process

- 6.1 The process takes an evidence-based approach with outcomes clearly based on evaluation and enhancement. 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.
- 6.2 The Course Annual Evaluation Report template is an aide memoire to reflection on key data sets and evidence sources to identify success, achievement, limitations, and issues. It includes a RAG rated summary related to outcome data and the production of a short SWOT analysis.
- 6.3 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 they have been achieved).
- 6.4 Heads of Department have a role in working with course leaders to ensure that the Annual Evaluation 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.
- 6.5 Enhancement Plans are “live” documents which are kept under review and updated on a regular basis (for example, via Course Management Committees), including for provision delivered through collaborative arrangements.

6.6 The Enhancement Plan covers the following areas:

- a. issue or objective to be addressed.
- b. actions to be taken.
- c. key dates for achievement of actions.
- d. key person responsible for action.
- e. criteria for success or impact.
- f. progress updates.

6.7 The following process should be followed by all Schools:

- a. Academic Quality Unit (AQU) will issue a spreadsheet of approved School provision. The spreadsheet will be saved on SharePoint and a link to the information will be sent to the School Quality Administrators and Coordinators, for dissemination to key School staff. The spreadsheet should be used as a reference for which courses are expected to complete the Annual Evaluation process. The School Quality Administrator will be responsible for ensuring that reports for all awards within the School, including in relation to each partner, have been received. Quality Administrators will complete the spreadsheet, recording when reports have been received and the process is completed. The completed spreadsheet should be appended to the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan.
- b. Key data sets and Course Annual Evaluation Report templates will be saved on SharePoint.
- c. Each School will have its own AER folder on SharePoint. Within each School folder there is a folder (titled "Draft") for Course Leaders and teams to work on the draft Annual Evaluation Reports.
- d. Schools should make use of a range of data to support their review. QED will continue to provide Schools with information on course performance, drawing on data and where possible, external benchmarking.
- e. Quality Coordinators (supported by Deputy Heads of School and Directors LTQE) will facilitate workshops for Course Leaders and relevant academic partner staff. These workshops will support staff in relation to writing AERs, analysis of data and the drafting of enhancement plans. Workshops are held in **July and early September**.
- f. Course Leaders, Quality Coordinators, relevant academic partner staff and Heads of Department will attend a peer supported scrutiny and development workshop to complete Course Annual Evaluation Reports and Enhancement Plans in mid to late September.
- g. Following the workshops, Heads of Department should receive completed Course Annual Evaluation Reports by the end of **October**. The Head of

Department's role is to confirm the Course Annual Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan is complete and of appropriate quality to:

- i. evidence the evaluation process has been carried out robustly.
 - ii. address issues, improve outcomes and enhance the student experience as part of a robust Enhancement Plan.
 - iii. identify any course in need of monitoring and additional support.
- h. Heads of Department should have completed the review of all Course Annual Evaluation Reports within their department and signed-off the reports and enhancement plans by **mid-November**.
- i. Following Head of Department sign-off, Course Annual Evaluation Reports are uploaded by School Quality Administrators to the AER SharePoint site and are shared with students via Blackboard and forwarded to external examiners.
- j. Alongside this process, the School Learning, Teaching & Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan should be written by nominated individual(s) in the School. Schools do not need to wait for courses AERs before working on their own development plans. The Evaluation and Development Plan should be agreed by the Head of School and the School Senior Management Team in good time to be presented to the College Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement (LTQE) Committee in December.

7 Course Annual Evaluation Reports

7.1 Course leaders use the following evidence base as the primary source for compiling the Annual Evaluation Report:

- a. statistical data related to applications and admissions, student characteristics and student outcomes including graduate destinations, retention, continuation, completion, progression and achievement data.
- b. external examiner reports and response³.
- c. student feedback including the National Student Survey (NSS) and the University Course Experience Survey (CES), including response rates.
- d. Course Management Committee minutes or equivalent.
- e. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body Reports.
- f. Link Tutor reports.
- g. Internal/external review reports (for example, Periodic Review).
- h. Employer/stakeholder feedback.
- i. Engagement with University and/or School quality enhancement initiatives or projects.

³ If an external examiner's report has not been received, a course AER should still be produced. Any additional Actions required because of the external examiner's report should be included in the Enhancement Plan upon its receipt.

- 7.2 Course Annual Evaluation Reports should therefore be produced for:
- a. each course or group of related courses leading to a UW award including research degrees and apprenticeships.
 - b. each course or accredited module, or group of modules, delivered by a partner institution.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 Course Annual Evaluation Report is comprised of the following:
- a. The completed report template and evaluative commentary.
 - b. Enhancement Plan from the previous year, with report on progress and commentary as appropriate.
 - c. Enhancement Plan for current year.
 - d. Commentary on the evidence informing the Enhancement Plan including a short SWOT analysis.
- 7.5 The following are appended:
- a. Course management committee minutes.
 - b. External examiner reports including response.
 - c. PSRB report(s) as applicable.
 - d. Link Tutor report (in cases of collaborative provision).
 - e. Partner Overview Report (see paragraph 10).
- 7.6 Course Annual Evaluation Reports should be reviewed by Heads of Department to ensure they are complete and have appropriate Enhancement Plans. Heads of Department in liaison with the School Quality Co-ordinator are responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the AER process at course level, including the quality of enhancement planning, and for maintaining an overview of quality and standards across provision (including collaborative programmes). They are also responsible for managing risk and ensuring that actions and recommendations from internal or external review activity (for example, Departmental Reviews and PSRB reviews) at course and departmental level are addressed.
- 7.7 Course AERs are shared with students via Blackboard and forwarded to external examiners.
- 7.8 The completed Course Annual Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan should be a standing item at the Course Management Committee. It is the role of the Course Management Committee to consider the course Annual Evaluation report and monitor progress in relation to the Enhancement Plan

8 School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Enhancement Plan

- 8.1 The Head of School and School Senior Leadership Team (SLT) should take responsibility for the formulation and agreement of the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan. Schools do not need to wait for course AERs before working on School development plans.
- 8.2 Schools should use the following evidence base as the primary source for compiling the Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan:
- a. OfS statistical indicators for student outcomes and student experience for subjects linked to the School.
 - b. Internal data related to key performance indicators at School and subject/course level, derived from PowerBI.
 - c. Student feedback, including CES and NSS outcomes, and module evaluations, including response rates and outcomes at School level.
 - d. Any common themes from external examiner, PSRB, Link Tutor and other external reports – for example, from employers.
 - e. Impact of developmental and enhancement activity, associated with Learning and Teaching Strategy priorities.
- 8.3 The emphasis for the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan is on managing risk and planning for continuous improvement across the School's programmes. It is expected that School Management Teams will have a good understanding of the quality of their courses, and where there are issues to be addressed at School/Departmental or course levels.
- 8.4 Schools are expected to identify all OfS indicators at subject level where performance is below threshold and/or benchmark, ensuring that there are robust plans in place for improvement.
- 8.5 Schools are also expected to identify any courses that are in need of additional support to make improvements and/or are at risk of not meeting quality or standards requirements. There are no set criteria for the identification of courses identified as in need of additional support, but may include concerns related to:
- a. Performance: weak performance in relation to OfS thresholds or benchmarks: care should be taken to consider indicators for all modes and levels of study.
 - b. High fail rates or poor degree outcomes in terms of degree classification.
 - c. Significant gaps in student outcomes for specific student groups.
 - d. Recruitment: potential to impact on course viability and, where recruitment is low, to student experience.
 - e. Withdrawals: high withdrawals/low retention impacts on the student experience and judgements relating to quality.

- f. Adverse student feedback: for example, through module evaluation, course evaluation or course management committees and through student surveys which is below benchmarks or in bottom quartiles.
 - g. Adverse feedback from External examiners, PSRBS or other stakeholders.
- 8.6 The specific support requirements should be identified and agreed by the School SLT, in discussion with the Head of Department and Course Leader. The agreed support should form part of the Course AER enhancement plan when completed.
- 8.7 The School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan will have a short statement of evaluation, for each section, together with any planned developments as appropriate. Specific actions should be identified, indicating who is responsible, the key dates/milestones for achievement and the intended success criteria/impact. It is not necessary to identify actions in relation to every heading in each section, and it is assumed that course level actions are identified in the Course Annual Evaluation Reports. The School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan is to identify what is to be done at School or Departmental level.
- 8.8 The School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan should also include actions and evaluation/impact of initiatives related to key priorities of University strategy (for example, embedding graduate attributes, improving student outcomes). Schools have the opportunity to identify any matters of significance that they wish to refer for consideration at University level.
- 8.9 The enhancement plan should be regularly updated in relation to progress on actions by the SLT on at least two occasions in the academic year. A mid-year progress review by the College LTQE Committee will be undertaken in March.
- 8.10 A key part of the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan is updating the previous year's Enhancement Plan and providing commentary on progress and impact and/or addressing any barriers to achievement. The updated Enhancement Plan should be appended to the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan for consideration by the College LTQE Committee.

9 Indicative Schedule

9.1 Schools are advised to use (and adapt as appropriate) the following indicative schedule:

July and September	Course Leaders to attend AER writing workshops
June – September	Course Leaders to draft AERs between June and end of September, focussing on statistical analysis, completing the report, and identifying priorities for an enhancement plan.
Early September	Link Tutor report submitted to UW Course Leader for inclusion with AER*
Mid to late September	Course Leaders, Quality Coordinators and Heads of Department attend a mandatory peer supported workshop to complete Annual Evaluation Reports and enhancement plans.
October	Course AERs received by Heads of Department
Mid November	Course AERs reviewed and signed off by Heads of Department
November	School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan to be agreed at School SMT by the Head of School and School Senior Leadership Team (including the College Director)
December	The School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan considered by College LTQE Committee
January	ASQEC considers AER process
March	Progress on the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan is considered by the College LTQE 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 School.

10 College LTQE Sub-Committee

10.1 The role of the College LTQE is to oversee the annual evaluation process and report to Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) on the AER process and outcomes. This is done by ensuring that each School has robustly carried out the process and that the School has an appropriate evaluation and development plan in place, based on the evidence provided in the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan.

10.2 The College LTQE Sub-Committee:

- Receives the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plan including progress update on last year and spreadsheet showing receipt of course AERs and Link Tutor reports etc.
- Receives written or verbal reports from the School Quality Co-ordinator on the School scrutiny process.
- Reviews key metric and KPI data.

- d. Monitors courses identified as in need of additional support: these are initially identified by the School in their enhancement plan but can also be identified by the College LTQE when considering metrics/KPI data.
- 10.3 In keeping with an approach that supports a lighter touch for lower risk courses, good practice would suggest that course enhancement plans are continually reviewed and updated through Course Management Committees. College LTQE will receive School Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Evaluation and Development Plans once per annum to review and discuss progress against the current plan. The College LTQE will receive metric reports as they are available over the academic year cycle. Courses identified as higher risk and/or requiring additional support and/or where there are challenges in achieving improved outcomes may be more formally monitored by College LTQE Sub-Committee for example via reports or updates against the enhancement actions.

11 Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee

- 11.1 The Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) is responsible 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. This includes in conjunction with Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC) monitoring of progress in relation to University level enhancement and development projects related to educational and student experience matters.
- 11.2 ASQEC maintains oversight of academic standards and quality through consideration of regular reports pertaining to:
- a. Statistical indicators for retention, progression, achievement, and employment outcomes produced by OfS and/or internally.
 - b. External examiner and PSRB reports.
 - c. Course approval and periodic review reports.
- 11.3 College Directors will each present to the January ASQEC a report, evaluating the effectiveness of the AER process, specifically to note:
- a. Commentary on effectiveness of process.
 - b. Commentary on development plans.
 - c. Identification of common themes.
 - d. Identification of courses in need of additional support.
 - e. Identification of course with OfS indicators below threshold.
 - f. Identification of any courses where an AER has not been completed.
 - g. Conclusions and recommendations to ASQEC.
- 11.4 ASQEC will consider all institutional matters referred by Schools with a response prepared/collated by the Chair and Secretary.

Version information

Approval/Review Table

Item	Notes
Version Number	1.2
Date of Approval	21 st June 2023
Approved by	Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee
Effective from	21 st June 2023
Policy Officer	Head of Academic Quality/Director of QED
Department	Academic Quality Unit
Review date	June 2024
Last reviewed	March 2024: minor amendments to key dates and updated terminology
Policy/procedure/guidance superseded by this version	Significant updating to incorporate OfS B3 outcomes data
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	
Accessibility Checked	23 rd June 2023