

## QUALITY FRAMEWORK SECTION 2b PROGRAMME REVIEW

### CONTENTS

<b>Outline of the procedure .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Engaging students in programme review .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Developing a proposal to review formally a taught award or credit-bearing programme .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The programme review panel.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Meetings of the programme review panel.....	4
Selecting the programme review panel .....	5
The programme review programme.....	5
Information to be made available to a programme review panel .....	6
Points to be taken into account during the review of a taught programme.....	7
Recording the outcome of a programme review event .....	7
<b>Appendix 1 .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Programme review panel: Key dates and activities .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix 2 .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Indicative programme review event programme .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix 3 .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The programme review checklist.....</b>	<b>11</b>

## Outline of the procedure

1. Programme review has been designed to meet the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education [Part B: Ensuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review](#) and Indicators 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in particular. In addition programme review is the University's methodology for ensuring that all provision is reviewed on a cycle of not more than six years in accordance with Scottish Funding Council key characteristics of institution-led review.
2. All taught award or credit-bearing programmes must be formally reviewed in accordance with this procedure and within five academic years from the date of initial approval or, where applicable, the previous formal review event.
3. Programme review is undertaken to judge whether taught award or credit-bearing programmes continue to meet the academic standard for an award of the University as defined in academic regulations, that the proposed learning, teaching and assessment approaches continue to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes and that the programme continues to provide students with access to a high quality learning experience.
4. Programme review has been designed to facilitate the consideration of individual programmes and suites of programmes. However, it is highly unlikely that proposals from more than one subject area will be able to be considered at the same programme review event.
5. Programme review is evidenced-based and therefore takes full account of the outcomes of any internal or external audit, monitoring or review activities which have taken place since the date of initial approval or, where applicable, the previous formal review event.
6. All programme review proposals must be subjected to school-level scrutiny before being submitted for scrutiny and consideration by a review panel. See Quality Framework Section 1c: Academic approval of taught award or credit-bearing provision for detailed information on the school scrutiny.
7. All compulsory modules and all option modules which a student is required to achieve in order to gain an award title will be submitted for review as part of the programme review process.
8. The successful outcome of a programme review will be that the programme and the constituent modules are re-approved. The programme review panel will agree the period of approval which must not exceed five academic years from the date of the review event.

[Back to Contents](#)

## Engaging students in programme review

9. The University is committed to ensuring that students are provided with opportunities to engage in formal and informal dialogue on the enhancement of their learning experience.

10. Programme teams need to consider how best to involve students during the development of the programme review information set. For on-campus students, good practice identified during University subject review was utilising student focus groups or student-staff liaison committee meetings to review and receive feedback on programme material. Where appropriate, programme teams are strongly encouraged to reflect on how to ensure that off-campus students are given an opportunity to contribute to and comment on the programme review information set.

11. Students' views gathered during the preparation for programme review will form part of the evidence base made available to the review panel.

[Back to Contents](#)

## Developing a proposal to review formally a taught award or credit-bearing programme

12. As the programme is being reviewed formally it will have been delivered to students for a period of up to five academic sessions. It therefore follows that there will be a body of existing evidence to underpin a rationale to support the re-approval of the programme. Programme leaders should review and reflect upon, for example, this evidence when preparing for a formal programme review which is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive:

- a) module and programme monitoring outcomes
- b) amendments made to modules and programmes
- c) minutes from Programme Boards of Examiners and Boards of Studies
- d) records of formal student staff liaison events and other informal and formal student feedback
- e) external examiner reports and reports resulting from professional, statutory or regulatory body external monitoring or review activities and informal feedback
- f) analysis of National Student Survey or Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey results and internal student survey data
- g) analysis of internal and external student progression and achievement data
- h) feedback from alumni, employers and other stakeholders
- i) comments from internal peers who have contributed to teaching delivery.

13. The following is an indicative list of topics which programme teams may wish to consider when developing a proposal to support programme review; it is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive:

- a) the continuing purpose of the programme within the context of the University's Academic Strategy and the school strategic plan
- b) the continuing currency and validity of the programme in light of developments in research, professional and industry practice and pedagogy (including the use of technology in learning and teaching)
- c) the continuing effectiveness of the mechanisms to enable students to provide the programme team with systematic feedback on their student learning experience
- d) the continuing availability of learning resources including provision of information technology, library or specialist equipment
- e) changes in the external environment such as requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- f) continued alignment with the school and University strategy and mission
- g) whether students are attaining the intended learning outcomes and whether the assessment regime enables this to be appropriately demonstrated
- h) where improvements are possible in order to enhance the student learning experience and encourage the development of more inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
- i) ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes
- j) the effect of changes made to the programme since its formal approval and how student learning has been enhanced as a result
- k) further changes being proposed as part of the re-approval process.

[Back to Contents](#)

## The programme review panel

### Meetings of the programme review panel

14. The school Academic Quality point of contact will liaise with School Academic Leads for Quality and appropriate school support officers to agree dates for programme review events. Quality & Standards Committee will oversee the planned schedule of programme review activity to ensure that all taught award or credit-bearing programmes are reviewed systematically over a five year period.

15. The convenor of the review panel, in liaison with the Convenor of Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee, the Convenor of the relevant School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee and the Head of Academic Quality, reserves the right to cancel a programme review event should inadequate or incomplete documentation be available 14 working days before the agreed date for the event.

16. A planning template of key dates and activities associated with the programme review process for taught award or credit-bearing provision is attached as [Appendix 1](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

### Selecting the programme review panel

17. The School Academic Lead for Quality will appoint a review panel to consider programmes from their school. The School Academic Lead for Quality will liaise with the school Academic Quality point of contact to arrange for individual review panel members to be briefed on their role.

18. A standard programme review panel will consist of:

- a) a convenor (typically a member of an Academic Board sub-committee but not from the proposing school)
- b) at least one external academic peer with subject expertise relevant to the proposal
- c) an academic peer from another school (typically a member of an Academic Board sub-committee)
- d) a professional service colleague (typically a member of an Academic Board sub-committee)
- e) a member of Academic Quality
- f) an elected student representative nominated by the Napier Students' Association (typically a member of an Academic Board sub-committee)
- g) a clerk from the sponsoring school support team.

19. Given the purpose of programme review the event will always be arranged as a physical meeting. However, individual panel members may contribute to the event through video conferencing, teleconferencing or other electronic media. In such cases the individuals concerned must provide comment and feedback by email before the event. The clerk will ensure that all panel members have the opportunity to consider all comments made by each panel member before the event as part of the collective decision-making process.

[Back to Contents](#)

### The programme review programme

20. A typical programme review programme will, as a minimum, include:

- a) a meeting with current students
- b) a meeting with the programme team and school representatives as appropriate to clarify any points arising from panel members' initial scrutiny
- c) a tour of specialist learning and teaching facilities relevant to the proposal as appropriate
- d) a meeting of the panel to discuss and agree the outcome of the review
- e) a meeting with the programme team to provide initial feedback on the outcome of the review.

21. The actual programme for each University Approvals Board will be agreed by the school Academic Quality point of contact and the School Academic Lead for Quality based on the indicative visit programme attached at [Appendix 2](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

### **Information to be made available to a programme review panel**

22. The clerk to the programme review panel will circulate the following information set to panel members a minimum of 14 working days before the agreed date for the review event:

- a) an agenda for the meeting of the programme review panel
- b) a list of panel members
- c) the following documents which have been approved for circulation by the School Academic Lead for Quality:
  - i) a programme specification which meet University expectations
  - ii) a brief and concise academic rationale to support the re-approval of the programme which clearly describes the following topics not included in the programme specification:
    - the ways in which the programme continues to map to the University's Academic Strategy and school strategic plan
    - evidence to underpin the continuing viability of the programme based on an analysis of student recruitment and achievement data during the approval period
    - the continuing management and administrative arrangements to support the mode of delivery
    - the outcome of the assessment of any potential risk that could affect adversely the University's reputation and standing as a result of continuing to deliver the proposal
    - any other areas of interest that the programme team wish to bring to the attention of the scrutiny panel.
- d) the report on the outcome of the school scrutiny
- e) the University Approvals Board report from the original approval event or, where applicable, the outcome of the previous programme review event
- f) electronic access to module descriptors within the programme structure
- g) electronic access to the current school strategic plan
- h) a draft programme handbook
- i) the [programme review checklist](#).

23. A minimum of seven working days before the agreed date for the review event panel members will provide the clerk to the programme review panel with a list of points they wish to explore with the programme team during the event. This list will be developed using the programme review checklist which is attached as [Appendix 3](#).

24. Where practical, the clerk to the programme review panel will aim to circulate to the programme team a summary of panel members' comments on the proposal a minimum of five working days before the day of the review event.

[Back to Contents](#)

### **Points to be taken into account during the review of a taught programme**

25. Using the programme review checklist the panel will assess, using their academic experience and judgement, whether University expectations for the academic standard and quality of the student learning experience for a taught award or credit-bearing programmes are met. The panel will also provide comment and feedback on the overall appropriateness, quality and standard of the proposal.

[Back to Contents](#)

### **Recording the outcome of a programme review event**

26. Having scrutinised and discussed the proposal with the programme team the programme review panel will record a decision as follows:

- a) **Approved without amendment** to the programme specification or supporting documentation.
- b) **Approved with recommendations** which the programme team will be encouraged to reflect on in implementing the proposal. Unlike conditions, recommendations do not need to be taken into account before the programme is offered to students.
- c) **Approved with conditions** which must be addressed and the amended programme specification must be signed-off by the review panel convenor before the proposal can be deemed to be approved. In such cases the programme review panel will provide the programme team with precise feedback on the matters to be addressed. Following discussion with the programme team the review panel will agree a date by which the proposal can be amended to take account of each condition which will enable the convenor to sign-off the proposal as being approved.

27. The clerk to the programme review panel will provide a report which includes:

- a) the names, appointment and home institution of panel members
- b) a commentary on the points discussed during the event
- c) a commentary on how comments and feedback from panel members have been addressed
- d) the outcome reached
- e) any conditions set by the review panel
- f) any recommendations made for consideration by the programme team
- g) areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements or areas for development identified by the panel
- h) a brief reflection by panel members on the design and development of the documentation and the effectiveness of the programme review process more generally.



28. The School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee will receive the report on the outcome of each school-sponsored programme review event with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the programme review process within the school. The Committee will discuss identified areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements or areas for further development with a view to disseminating relevant information University-wide through School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee meeting minutes and the school annual summary report to Quality & Standards Committee as appropriate.

29. The report on the outcome of each school-sponsored programme review event must be retained by the sponsoring school support office as a means of informing the report on quality assurance and enhancement activity University-wide produced annually by the Head of Academic Quality and as a means of informing future internal or external audit, monitoring or review activities. The report should be retained until the programme is either formally re-approved or withdrawn, whichever is sooner.

[Back to Contents](#)



## Appendix 1

### Programme review panel: Key dates and activities

This table has been produced to provide a quick reference point of the key dates and associated activities leading up to a meeting of a programme review panel.

DATE	ACTIVITY
A minimum of 28 working days before the date of a programme review panel.	The programme information set is subjected to a process of internal scrutiny overseen by the School Academic Lead for Quality.
A minimum of 21 working days before the date of a programme review panel.	The School Academic Lead for Quality authorises the release of the programme information set to the clerk to the programme review panel.
A minimum of 14 working days before the date of a programme review panel.	The clerk to the programme review panel forwards the programme information set to panel members.
A minimum of seven working days before the date of a programme review panel.	Programme review panel members send their comments on the proposal to the clerk to the panel.
A minimum of five working days before the date of the University Approvals Board.	Clerk to the programme review panel sends a summary of panel members' comments to the programme leader for information.
Day 0.	Programme review panel meeting.
A maximum of 10 working days after the date of a programme review panel.	Clerk to the programme review panel ensures that the report is completed, approved by the convenor and sent to panel members and the programme team for comment on matters of factual accuracy.
A maximum of 14 working days after the date of a programme review panel.	Clerk to the programme review panel ensures that a final report is agreed by all panel members.
A maximum of 15 working days after the date of a programme review panel.	Clerk to the programme review panel publishes the review panel report.

[Back to Meetings of the programme review panel](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

## Appendix 2

### Indicative programme review event programme

0900	The review panel convene.	<i>(light refreshments)</i>
0900-0930	The panel meet to confirm the topics to be covered during the visit.	
0930-1030	The panel meet with a representative sample of students and alumni from the programme(s) under review (maximum of 12 individuals).	
1030-1045	The panel meet to discuss the outcome of the meeting with students and to confirm topics to be covered during the meeting with the programme team.	<i>(light refreshments)</i>
1045-1115	Tour of specialist learning and teaching facilities relevant to the proposal if required.	
1115-1230	The panel meet with the programme team to discuss the proposal(s).	
1230-1300	The panel meet to reflect on the outcome of the meetings with staff and students. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• considering whether the matters included in the outline agenda provided by the clerk to the panel prior to the visit to the subject area have been addressed appropriately</li><li>• identifying possible achievements, areas of good and innovative practice and strengths to be included in the review report</li><li>• identifying possible conditions or recommendations to be made in the review report.</li></ul>	
1300-1315	The panel meet with the programme team to provide initial feedback on the outcome of the review.	
1315	Panel and programme team informal lunch.	<i>(working lunch)</i>

[Back to Contents](#)

[Back to Information to programme review programme](#)

## Appendix 3

### The programme review checklist

This checklist provides programme review panel members with a list of topics to be considered when assessing, using their academic experience and judgement, the overall appropriateness, quality and standard of a proposal to re-approve a taught programme. It also provides panel members with a template for setting out the points they wish to discuss with the programme team and students during meetings. A summary of panel members' comments will be shared with the programme team before the review event.

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#### 1. General comment and feedback on the proposal.

- a) first overall impression of the proposal, for example, anything that you think is missing or anything that has pleased, surprised or disappointed you
- b) any perceived areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements
- c) any areas where you consider further development or improvement would be of benefit
- d) any additional information that you would wish to have made available either before the panel meeting or on arrival at the meeting.

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#### 2. Specific comment on the following:

##### a) Contributing to the implementation of Strategy 2020

- i) How effective is the proposal in providing a clear focus on the programme with local ownership and a holistic view of the student journey from enquiry to completion?
- ii) How effective is the proposal in indicating how the programme will contribute towards addressing the following specific key strategic deliverables:
  - developing strong links with business
  - encouraging articulation from partner colleges
  - providing placement and enterprise opportunities for all students
  - providing international study opportunities and increased outward mobility for all students
  - encouraging student engagement with Napier Students' Association to enhance experience, engagement and volunteering
  - encouraging effective programme representation and peer mentoring
  - embracing innovation in learning and teaching and the use of technology to support learning
  - adopting a pedagogic approach based on active learning and principles of assessment for learning.

**b) Academic standards.**

- i) How effective is the proposal in taking appropriate account of external reference points in setting the academic standard of the proposed provision?
  - [The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland](#)
  - relevant qualification and/or subject [benchmark statements](#)
  - professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements where appropriate.
- ii) Comment on the appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes required to achieve the final award and any exit awards available to students who do not complete the programme.
- iii) Comment on the extent to which the proposed learning, teaching and assessment approaches enable students to achieve the programme and exit award learning outcomes.
- iv) Comment on the extent to which graduate attributes internationalisation, research and enterprise are embedded within the programme.

**c) Quality of learning opportunities.**

- i) Comment on the overall quality of the proposed student learning experience including academic and pastoral support and students' wider educational needs.
- ii) Comment on the mechanisms to enable students to provide the programme team with systematic feedback on their learning experience.
- iii) Comment on the mechanisms to ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes.
- iv) How effective is the proposal in supporting the strategic objective of providing students with a personalised learning experience through individual support?

**d) Published information.**

- i) Comment on the appropriateness of the mechanism and responsibilities for communicating information on the proposed provision to potential students and other stakeholders.
- ii) Comment on the appropriateness of the mechanism and responsibilities for assuring the accuracy and completeness of published information that is managed by the school.

[Back to Information to be made available to a programme review panel](#)

[Back to Contents](#)