Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

QUALITY FRAMEWORK SECTION 2c
SCHOOL REVIEW

CONTENTS

Outline of the procedure

1.   School review has been designed to take account of Scottish Funding Council key characteristics of institution-led review and to enable the University to be confident that the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review Expectation has been met.

2.   School review is a University responsibility undertaken on behalf of Academic Board by a review panel at a formal event. School review is a scheduled, evidence-based peer review activity running over a five year cycle and culminating in a report to Quality & Standards Committee on the effectiveness of the management and quality of the student learning experience.

3.   This process has been developed to supersede University subject review which was implemented at school-level University-wide during the period 2009/13. An evaluation of University subject review indicated that it was ineffective when reviewing large or aggregated subject provision in that there was insufficient time to re-affirm that threshold academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities continue to be met for all taught provision being reviewed. This has been addressed by introducing a process of cyclical programme review.

4.   School review provides an opportunity for the school to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the mechanisms in place to manage the overall student learning experience within the context of the University's Strategy 2020, Academic Strategy and operational plans. Programme review is the University's methodology for ensuring that all provision is reviewed on a cycle of not more than six years. See Quality Framework Section 2b: Programme review.

5.   A minimum of six months prior to the scheduled review event the school Academic Quality point of contact will meet with the School Academic Lead for Quality to agree an outline programme for the review visit and potential topics to be discussed in the reflective commentary.

6.   Self-evaluation and reflection are key features of school review. The process provides each school with a focussed opportunity to reflect on their overall management of the quality of learning experience offered to all students. Outcomes from internal or external audit, monitoring or review activities which have taken place since the date of the previous internal school-level review process, that is, University subject reviews completed during the 2009/13 cycle, will provide evidence to support the reflective commentary.

7.   An important feature of the process is providing schools with an opportunity to reflect on their plans and intentions for engaging with the strategic objectives set out in Strategy 2020 and associated operational plans.

8.   Each school will produce a short reflective commentary to inform the review. The reflective commentary will be distributed to a review panel of internal and external peers. The review panel will visit the school for one day to meet with staff and students.

9.   The outcome of school review will be a report and enhancement plan setting out achievements, strengths and areas of good or innovative practice which are worthy of dissemination University-wide. Where appropriate, the panel will make recommendations regarding areas where further enhancement would be of benefit.

Engaging students in school review

10.   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.

11.   School Academic Leads for Quality need to consider how best to involve students during the development of the school review reflective commentary. 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 the reflective commentary. Where appropriate, School Academic Leads for Quality are strongly encouraged to reflect on how to ensure that off-campus students are given an opportunity to contribute to and comment on the reflective commentary.

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

Points to be considered when developing the reflective commentary

13.   School review is based on a school's reflective commentary. This document is an opportunity for the school to evaluate the effectiveness of its management of the quality of the student learning experience across its entire provision and an opportunity to reflect on their plans and intentions for engaging with the strategic objectives set out in Strategy 2020 and associated operational plans. Given this holistic aim, the commentary will not be subject-specific but will draw on examples from all subject groups to ensure that the commentary is fully representative of the school's activities and is evidenced-based.

14.   In common with sector expectations the self-evaluation should reflect on the effectiveness of the school's management of the quality of the student learning experience by setting out:

    a)   what the school is doing

    b)   why the school is doing it

    c)   how the school is doing it

    d)   how the school knows that what it is doing works

    e)   how the school can improve what it is doing.

15.   The reflective commentary should not involve the production of new material. Descriptive text should be avoided by referring to information available from other sources. It is unlikely to be a single document and should take the form of a portfolio of existing documents accompanied by a short commentary that refers to evidence contained in those documents, for example:

    a)   module and programme approval and monitoring

    b)   internal and external mechanisms for gathering and acting upon feedback from students, graduates and employers

    c)   thematic quality audits

    d)   professional or statutory body accreditation activities.

16.   Achievements, strengths and areas of innovative or good practice, supported by the evidence which identifies it as such, should be included. Any areas identified by the school where further development work is required to meet University, faculty or subject expectations should also feature. This will include an indication of plans for implementing such work and the proposed mechanism for monitoring its effectiveness in enhancing the student learning experience. In this way the reflective commentary will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's implementation of University, and subject-specific policies and strategies and show how these contribute to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

17.   An evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's engagement with professional service areas such as Student and Academic Services, Information Services, the Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement and the University Secretary's Office should be included. The ways in which this might be achieved will be discussed and agreed at the initial planning meeting.

18.   As many staff as possible should contribute to the development of the reflective commentary. However, it is for each school to decide how this might be achieved.

19.   Schools should plan that the reflective commentary and supporting evidence will be made available electronically either through the virtual learning environment, SharePoint, usb or similar.

20.   An indicative structure has been developed to assist schools in completing their reflective commentary and is attached at Appendix 1.

The school review panel

Meetings of the school review panel

21.   The school Academic Quality point of contact will liaise with School Academic Leads for Quality and appropriate school support officers to agree dates for school review events. Quality & Standards Committee will oversee the planned schedule of school review activity to ensure that all schools are reviewed systematically over a five year period.

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

23.   A planning template of key dates and activities associated with the school review process for taught award or credit-bearing provision is attached at Appendix 2.

Selecting the school review panel

24.   The School Academic Lead for Quality will appoint the school review panel in liaison with the school's Academic Quality point of contact. 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.

25.   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

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.

26.   Given the purpose of school 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.

The school review programme

27.   As a minimum the programme for a school review event will include:

a)   a meeting with the school executive to set the review in context

b)   a meeting with a representative sample of students

c)   a meeting with programme leaders and other teaching staff

d)   a meeting to cover specific topics raised by the school for discussion in their self-evaluation

e)   a meeting of the panel to discuss and agree the outcome of the review visit

f)   a meeting with the school executive to provide initial feedback on the outcome of the visit.

28.   The actual programme for each visit 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 3.

Information to be made available to a school review panel

29.   The clerk to the school 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)   a programme for the meeting of the school review panel

  b)   the names, appointment and home institution of panel members

  c)   the school's reflective commentary

  d)   electronic access to all evidence and supporting information referred to within the reflective commentary

  e)   the current school operational plan

  f)   a copy of this procedure.

30.   A minimum of seven working days before the visit, panel members will provide the clerk with a brief written commentary of points they wish to explore with the school during the visit. This commentary will be developed using the school review checklist which is attached as Appendix 4.

31.   Panel members' written summaries are not shared with the school. Where practical, the clerk to the school review panel will aim to circulate to the School Academic Lead for Quality a summary of panel members' comments on the proposal a minimum of five working days before the day of the review event.

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Points to be taken into account during the school review event

32.   Using the school review checklist the panel will assess, using their academic experience and judgement, the overall appropriateness of the school's management of the quality of the student learning experience and their plans and intentions for engaging with the strategic objectives set out in Strategy 2020 and associated operational plans.

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Recording the outcome of a school review event

33.   The panel provide a report to Quality & Standards Committee setting out its findings. The report will address the key objectives set for school review at the initial planning meeting, the points raised by panel members in their written commentaries and the feedback provided by students and staff during the visit to the school.

34.   The clerk to the panel in liaison with the school Academic Quality point of contact will aim to provide the School Academic Lead for Quality with a draft report within two weeks of the visit. The School Academic Lead for Quality will liaise with colleagues to ensure that the draft report provides an accurate record of the review. Points of factual accuracy will be provided by the School Academic Lead for Quality to the clerk to the panel within four weeks of the end of the review visit.

35.   The report will give the panel's opinion of the extent to which the measures taken by the school to manage and enhance the quality of the student learning experience are effective and meet University expectations. The report will include:

   a)   the names, appointment and home institution of panel members

   b)   a commentary on the points discussed during the event

   c)   comment on the school's plans and intentions for engaging with the strategic objectives set out in Strategy 2020 and associated operational plans

   d)   any recommendations made for enhancing the management of the student learning experience for consideration by the school

   e)   areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements or areas for development identified by the panel

   f)   a brief reflection by panel members on the design and development of the documentation and the effectiveness of the school review process more generally.

36.   Achievements, strengths and areas of innovative or good practice and recommendations are collated to form an enhancement plan the delivery of which is managed by the School Academic Lead for Quality and overseen by the School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee.

37.   The School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee will receive the report with a view to enhancing the management of the student learning experience across all subject groups 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.

38.   Quality & Standards Committee will receive and consider the report to ensure that the school's management of the quality of the student learning experience meets University expectations and as a further means of sharing identified areas of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements or areas for further development University-wide.

39.   Progress in implementing the school enhancement plan will be monitored by the School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee and the outcome reported to Quality & Standards Committee through the school annual summary report as set out in Quality Framework Section 2a: Annual monitoring of taught award or credit-bearing provision.

40.   School review reports will 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.

Appendix 1

Indicative structure for a school review reflective commentary

The following is an indicative list of suggested topics and possible evidence sources to assist School Academic Leads for Quality in preparing a reflective commentary to inform school review; it is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. The production of the reflective commentary should not involve the production of new material. Descriptive text should be avoided by referring to information available from other sources. It is unlikely to be a single document and should take the form of a portfolio of existing documents accompanied by a short commentary that refers to evidence contained in those documents. The final document should be no more than 10 A4 pages in length.

1. **Introduction to the school.**

Suggested topics

- brief background information on the school and its management structure

- distinctive features of the school's provision

- composition of the student population

- a list of taught programmes with full and part-time student numbers, mode and place of delivery

- a list of full and part-time staff.

Possible evidence sources or references

- the current school strategic or operational plan

- organisational diagram for school committees and subject groups

- student profile statistics

- retention, achievement and progression data for all taught award or credit-bearing provision (covering the period since the previous school-level review).

2. **Management and enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience.**

Suggested topics

- effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience

- engaging and supporting students in their learning

- taking account of and responding to the student voice

- effectiveness of student representative scheme across the school

- engagement by school staff with national Enhancement Themes

- engagement by school staff in University initiatives to enhance the student experience

- engagement by school staff with professional service departments.

Possible evidence sources or references

- reports and analysis resulting from National Student Survey, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and other external and internal student surveys

- formal student staff liaison committee meeting minutes

- Boards of Studies meeting minutes

- subject group and school annual overview reports (covering the period since the previous school-level review)

- contributions from school staff to the *Learning Resource Bank*

- list of staff development activities undertaken by school staff.

3. **Engagement with University strategic objectives.**

Suggested topics	**Possible evidence sources or references**
• growing the school's academic reputation	• staff membership of working groups
• build innovation, enterprise and citizenship	• development of school initiatives
• deliver an excellent personalised student experience	• feedback and comment from students and other stakeholders
• internationalise the work of the school.	• growth in overseas collaborative provision
	• development of provision with an international focus
	• increase in international student recruitment.

4. **Published information.**

Suggested topics	**Possible evidence sources or references**
• an effective mechanism and clear responsibilities for assuring the accuracy and completeness of published information	• school policy on publishing information
• process for monitoring the accuracy of information provided to students.	• feedback from students and other stakeholders on usefulness and relevance of published information.

5. **Summary.**

Suggested topics	**Possible evidence sources or references**
• achievements, strengths or features of innovative or good practice the school wishes to bring to the review panel's attention	• all topics referred to in the summary must appear earlier in the reflective commentary.
• areas for development identified by the school to enhance the student experience.	

6. **Appendix 1.** A list of all provision included within the scope of the review (undergraduate, taught master's, collaborative provision, research, continuing professional development and other non-credit bearing provision, etc).

7. **Appendix 2.** A list of all evidence or documents referred to throughout the reflective commentary.

Appendix 2

Key dates and activities associated with school review.

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 school review panel.

DATE	ACTIVITY
A minimum of six weeks before the date of the school review panel.	The school review self-evaluation document is completed including taking account of comment from internal and external academic peers as appropriate.
A minimum of 28 working days before the date of the school review panel.	The school review self-evaluation document 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 the school review panel.	The Dean of School authorises the release of the school review self-evaluation document.
A minimum of 17 working days before the date of the school review panel.	The clerk to the school review panel forwards the school review self-evaluation document to panel members.
A minimum of seven working days before the date of school review panel.	School 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 school review panel.	Clerk to the school review panel sends a summary of programme or school review panel members' comments to the School Academic Lead for Quality for information.
Day 0.	School review panel meeting.
A maximum of 10 working days after the date of the school review.	In liaison with the school Academic Quality point of contact the clerk to the school review 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 the school review.	In liaison with the school Academic Quality point of contact the clerk to the school review panel ensures that a final report is agreed by all panel members.
A maximum of 15 working days after the date of the school review.	In liaison with the school Academic Quality point of contact the clerk to the school review panel publishes the final report.

Appendix 3

Indicative school review programme.

0900	The panel convene at the school.	(*light refreshments*)

0900-1030   The panel meet to confirm the topics to be covered during the visit.

1030-1130   The panel meet with representatives from the school executive to:
- receive a brief presentation from the Dean of School to set the review in context
- discuss and explore the topics included within the reflective commentary
- discuss general themes arising from the presentation. (*light refreshments*)

1130-1200   The panel meet to discuss the outcome of the presentation with a view to identifying topics that may require further clarification or discussion during the meetings with staff and students.

1200-1300   The panel meet with a representative sample of school students and alumni (a maximum of 12).

1300-1345   The panel meet to discuss the outcome of the meeting with students and to confirm topics to be covered during the meeting with staff.
(*working lunch*)

1345-1515   The panel meet with school staff to discuss matters arising from their reading of the reflective commentary and other documents within the evidence base and the outcome of their meetings with students and alumni. Specific topics to be discussed will be shared with the school as early as is practicable before the meeting.   (*light refreshments*)

1515-1645   The panel meet to reflect on the outcome of the meetings with staff and students. This will include:
- considering whether the matters included in the outline agenda provided by the clerk to the panel prior to the visit have been addressed
- identifying achievements, strengths and areas of innovative or good practice to be discussed in the review report
- identifying possible recommendations to be made in the review report.

1645-1700   The panel meet with representatives from the school executive to provide initial feedback on the outcome of the review.

1700   The panel depart.

Appendix 4

The school review checklist.

This checklist provides school review panel members with a list of points to be considered when assessing, using your academic experience and judgement, the overall appropriateness, quality and standard of a school reflective commentary.

1. **General comment and feedback on the reflective commentary.**
   Provide general comment on your first overall impression of the reflective commentary. This might include anything that you feel is missing or anything that has pleased, surprised or disappointed you. Indicate whether you found the reflective commentary useful or whether you found it to be too descriptive. Throughout your written commentary you are encouraged to identify achievements, strengths and areas of innovative or good practice, any areas where further enhancement would be of benefit and any lines of enquiry you wish to follow-up during the review event.

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

   a) **External panel members.** Are there effective mechanism and clear responsibilities for:

   i) the management and enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience

   ii) assuring that students are supported effectively

   iii) gathering feedback from students on the quality of their learning experience

   iv) providing students with feedback on actions taken or proposed in response to their feedback

   v) providing staff with access to personal development to facilitate the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities

   vi) ensuring that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes

   vii) assuring the accuracy and completeness of published information.

   b) **Internal panel members.** In addition to the above, is there effective engagement with:

   i) University strategies, policies, procedures and initiatives, specifically:

   - growing the school's academic reputation
   - build innovation, enterprise and citizenship
   - deliver an excellent personalised student experience
   - internationalise the work of the school.

   ii) other schools and professional service areas.

   c) **Student panel members.** Are there effective mechanism and clear responsibilities for:

   i) encouraging student engagement with their learning and with quality processes

   ii) ensuring that students find the information provided useful and relevant

   iii) ensuring student feedback and comment is responded to in a timely manner

   iv) encouraging student involvement with the Napier Students' Association.