

## THEMATIC REVIEW

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## Overview and purpose

- 1 The thematic review process has been developed to provide a means by which the University can quickly and effectively ensure academic standards are secured and deliver improvements to the student experience.
- 2 It is enhancement-led and focused, and designed to be agile and responsive. Its duration should be proportionate to the topic under review, but in general each review should be concluded within one month.
- 3 The topic for review may be proposed by any member of the University community, and is approved by the Convenor of the University's Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Student Experience Committee and Head of Quality & Enhancement, in consultation with the Edinburgh Napier Students Association (ENSA). It is informed by the outcomes of the University's quality processes and student feedback, and is aligned to institutional learning and teaching priorities.

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## Ownership and management

- 4 The procedure is overseen, managed and led by the Head of Quality & Enhancement on behalf of the University's Quality & Standards Committee.

## Outline of the procedure

- 5 Thematic review is characterised by 4 phases: **Identify & initiate; Conduct review; Report & agree actions; Closure.**

- a. **Identify & initiate**

The topic for review will be informed by an evidence base such as University student surveys, annual monitoring of professional service or academic areas, institution-led review, external examiner reports, recommendations from sub-committees of Academic Board, but a topic may also be brought to the attention of the Head of Quality & Enhancement or Convenor of University's Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Student Experience Committee by any member of the University community on a more ad hoc basis, e.g. in response to specific challenges faced during the academic year in relation to academic standards and the student experience.

Appropriate stakeholders are identified to contribute to the review, such as, but not restricted to, students, academic or professional services colleagues, external examiners, employers, alumni, colleagues and students at the University's partner institutions.



b. **Conduct review**

The Head of Quality & Enhancement appoints a review lead, typically a Quality & Standards Manager, who conducts a desktop review of processes related to the topic under consideration. Supplementary information may be obtained through meetings if required. Areas of strength and areas for development are identified and recommendations are drafted for consideration. Any immediate areas of concern may be notified to the Head Quality & Enhancement without delay.

c. **Report & agree actions**

The review lead produces a succinct report for consideration by Quality & Standards Committee, to include an overview of the topic and rationale for selection, detail of stakeholder consultation, areas of good practice identified during the review, areas for development, and recommendations for action. The report is produced in consultation with appropriate stakeholders to ensure that all key elements have been considered and correctly reflected.

Quality & Standards Committee considers the report<sup>1</sup> and agrees actions. These are likely to vary in their scale, with some achievable in a short time-frame, and others requiring longer with input from a number of colleagues. For this reason, it may be appropriate for the Committee to establish a short-life working group, the remit and timeframes for which should be agreed at the time, with the group reporting back to the subsequent meeting of the Committee.

d. **Closure**

The outcomes of the review will be shared widely, including areas for development and good practice, so that stakeholders are aware of the findings, agreed actions, and the enhancement role of thematic review. Where a short-life working group has been established, this should also be communicated. Quality & Standards Committee has oversight of progress towards actions and may intervene if agreed timeframes are not being met.

The final stage of the review is to evaluate the outcomes to establish whether actions have had the intended impact on practice, whether further enhancements are required, and to close the loop by providing feedback to stakeholders and to the Quality & Standards Committee.

The thematic review process will be reviewed annually, with a summary provided within the annual review of the effectiveness of the Quality Framework, considered at the final Quality & Standards Committee meeting of

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<sup>1</sup> This will generally be at a scheduled meeting of the Committee, but may also exceptionally be by correspondence.



the academic year. The summary will record each thematic review undertaken, and highlight good or innovative practice, strengths and achievement, actions taken, and an evaluation of their impact, and thus ensure that the thematic review process continues to meet University needs and expectations.

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## **Monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the Quality Framework**

- 6 The process for monitoring the effectiveness of the Quality Framework including the effectiveness of the implementation of thematic reviews is set out in the [Introduction to the Quality Framework \(Section 0\)](#).

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### Thematic review report guide

- 1 The outcome of each thematic review will be a report from the review lead to Quality & Standards Committee. The following list is provided as an indicative contents list for the review report and is not intended to be prescriptive:
  - i) the thematic review topic selected by the Convenor of the University's Learning, Teaching Assessment & Student Experience Committee and Head of Quality & Enhancement
  - ii) the stakeholders who have contributed to the review and an outline of their contributions during the review
  - iii) a brief explanation of the approach to the review
  - iv) the areas of the University included within the scope of the review
  - v) the findings of the review within each area of the University included with the scope of the review in the form of recommendations covering:
    - (1) any good or innovative practice, strengths or achievements identified which are worthy of dissemination to other areas of the University
    - (2) recommendations for improving the management of the areas under review, either University-wide or in specific areas of the University.
  - vi) a draft action plan to ensure that any recommendations are managed effectively to a successful conclusion which identifies: an individual with responsibility for implementing the recommended action; a timescale for completing the recommended action; and a means of monitoring the effectiveness of the action once completed
- 2 In making recommendations, the thematic review lead must clearly indicate:
  - a) the factors that have given rise to the recommendation/s
  - b) the action to be taken by the area/s of the University concerned to address the factors relating to the recommendation/s being made.

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**Thematic review flowchart**

