HIGHER EDUCATION
PERIODIC REVIEW PROCEDURE
Issue 10

Introduction

UCB has a well-developed and established annual quality monitoring and enhancement system at the level of the School and Programme (HE Teaching Excellence Framework Procedure). The Periodic Review has been introduced to place this annual monitoring cycle in context with meta level issues of currency, validity and relevance that all programmes must address at certain periods in their life cycle.

All higher education programmes in UCB's portfolio will be subject to Periodic Review. This is a formal review of a programme's purpose and performance every five years, which will ensure that the programme continues to be relevant, effective, well managed and to provide appropriate value to students and stakeholders. For all qualifications, whether owned or accredited by external or partner institutions, or owned by UCB itself, Periodic Review will lead to a subsequent re-validation of the programme with judgements concerning conditional or recommended approval (or otherwise) for a further period as appropriate.

Periodic Review will utilise existing UCB quality strategies and systems in providing evidence and information in line with the UCB's approach of involving students, staff and external partners in evaluative judgements and decision-making wherever possible. The review, evaluation and enhancement planning process emphasises the importance of the partnership with students, employers and external academics in the identification of enhancement opportunities and the maintenance of academic standards. Periodic Review is a constructive process that encourages in-depth reflection and evaluation by programme stakeholders to identify enhancement, to maintain academic rigour and promote a quality experience and outcome for students.

Aim

To ensure that programmes remain relevant, current, and valid over time.

Objectives

To determine the appropriateness of aims and outcomes in light of current discipline knowledge and developments.

To optimise the effectiveness of curriculum content, delivery, and assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes.

To comment on the consistency of application of UCB quality systems and procedures in maintaining and enhancing standards.

To identify good practice for possible dissemination to other programme and School teams.

To identify opportunities for development and enhancement

Responsibilities

The Academic Board, through its Validation and Approvals Committee, is responsible for approving the Periodic Review in line with its remit of receiving proposals and submissions for programme approval, re-validation and amendment.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (HE Curriculum and FE Principal) or nominee, as Chair of the Validation and Approvals Committee, will agree the protocol of the Periodic Review event as relevant to the size and nature of the programme(s) under review and as recommended by the Officer to the Validation and Approvals Committee. Any such decision will comply with the requirements of this procedure and the Validation and Approvals Procedure.

The Quality Team is responsible for identifying the programme schedule for Periodic Review, coordinating the review event and for notifying all relevant bodies of the outcomes.

The Academic Management Team is responsible for coordinating the programme documentation required for Periodic Review and identifying the Programme Team to undertake the evaluation and take part in the Review event.

Periodic Review Overview

The Programme Team will prepare a written evaluation of the programme to include supporting evidence, as the basis of their Periodic Review submission to the Validation and Approvals Committee. This Periodic Review Report will draw upon the outcomes of existing quality systems and processes and programme performance information since the last Periodic Review or Validation (whichever is the most recent). However, the timing of the Review may be influenced by factors such as changes in the curriculum, programme operation and delivery or an external review event, for example. This may result in the Review taking place before or slightly later than the five-yearly target schedule when necessary.

In preparing their Periodic Review Reports, Programme Teams may judge that one or more programmes might be submitted for continuation or that large revision is needed. Such judgements may result in a proposal within the Report to this effect, which could be considered by the Validation and Approvals Committee when it receives the Report. If the Programme Team judges that a proposal for a new programme is likely as a result of their Periodic Review, it should consult with Deputy Dean who will discuss the matter with the Chair of the Validation and Approvals Committee to decide on the most appropriate course of action.

In determining the Periodic Review schedule, the Quality Team will require the Schools to agree and commit to the framework timetable for individual programmes, taking into account operational and externally set requirements.

Where relevant and where agreed by the Officer to the Validation and Approvals Committee the Review may consider more than one programme within the Periodic Review Report. This may be appropriate in the case of related programmes, which demonstrate linked or progression opportunities, for example.

Programme Team Evaluation Report

The Programme Team will submit the Periodic Review Report to the CQ Unit at least 10 days before the date of the Review Meeting. The Quality Team will issue copies of the Report to the members of the Validation and Approvals Committee. In considering the content and presentation of the Report, Programme Teams should address and be guided by the following headings, questions and required content. The Report should make clear the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the review process (students, employers, staff, and external examiner performance commentary).

1. Evaluation of Learning Outcomes in relation to the Aims of the Programme

   a. What are the intended learning outcomes for the programme and to what extent are they still relevant? What new/revised outcomes are proposed?
   b. How do existing or proposed learning outcomes relate to subject benchmark statements, the qualification framework and industry/professional requirements?
   c. Are they appropriate to the programme aims?
   d. How are students, staff and examiners/verifiers informed of the intended outcomes?

2. Evaluation of Curriculum Design, and Development in relation to the Learning Outcomes

   a. How is the curriculum structured to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes?
   b. Has the curricular content been developed and informed by research/scholarship? By developments in teaching and learning technologies/techniques? By changes in industry/professional practice? (Address answers in relation to knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, subject/professional skills, progression to employment, preparation for further study, transferable skill development and personal development).

3. Evaluation of Learning and Teaching

   a. How effectively does teaching deliver the curriculum and contribute to programme aims?
   b. How has teaching benefited from recent research and scholarship?
   c. How are standards of teaching maintained and enhanced?
   d. Are students engaged and motivated by programme teaching strategies (comment on the results of satisfaction monitoring activity)?
   e. In what ways does the team use formative assessment activities?

4. Evaluation of Assessment and Verification

   a. How do assessment strategies which are proportionate and equitable, enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes?
   b. How is consistency achieved in the application of the assessment and verification procedures?
   c. Do the assessment criteria enable examiners to identify different standards of achievement? How is this confirmed?
   d. How are transferable skills and graduate attributes developed and assessed?

e. Is there a balance between formative and summative assessment and feedback to enable learners to take responsibility for their learning and development?

5. Evaluation of Student Progression and Programme Performance

    a. Evaluate the yearly trends in enrolment, cohort profile, retention, module performance, achievement (classification) and student satisfaction.
    b. Are the strategies for academic support effective?
    c. Are the needs of all students addressed by the tutoring, and guidance and support arrangements?

6. Evaluation of Learning Resources

    a. Are the numbers and expertise of staff sufficient for the effective delivery and development of the curriculum and the achievement of the learning outcomes?
    b. How effective has staff development been in pedagogic, subject/industry updating and development?
    c. How effectively are appropriate learning resources utilised and introduced into teaching and learning strategies?
    d. Is the subject book and journal stock sufficient and kept current to support recent knowledge and subject developments?

7. Summary of the effectiveness of Quality Systems and Programme Enhancements

    a. How successful have the application of quality systems been in maintaining academic standards and enhancing the effectiveness and 'value' of the programme?
    b. How have students contributed to the development of the programme?
    c. How have external examiners and professional industry bodies contributed to the development of the programme?

8. Summary of the Outcomes and Changes since the last Review or Validation

It is suggested that these changes may be most appropriately listed in a table showing changes and enhancements, the reasons for these changes and the system or process that identified the need for change or enabled enhancement to take place.

9. Action Plan

The Programme Team should clarify the actions they have identified as necessary to carry the Programme or Programmes forward over the subsequent period. This should clearly state the reasons for the action, the responsibilities and timescale for completion, expected outcomes, implications for resourcing, and any possible implications for other Programmes and their delivery. Actions could include proposals to continue the programme(s), make revisions or introduce one or more new programmes.

10. Evaluation Process

The Periodic Review Report should contain a brief explanation of how it was produced and approved. This should show the consultative process used whereby the views of programme staff, students, employers and External Examiners were invited and the value of their contributions. Reference should also be made to the quality systems and committee structures that provided performance evidence and identified issues to be addressed. The Validation and Approvals Committee will require clear evidence in particular that extensive use has been made of student comment and external academic contributions.

Periodic Review Process

On receipt of the Periodic Review Report and any supporting evidence, the Quality Team will distribute copies to the members of the Validation and Approvals Committee. The Committee will be constituted as normal with senior and academic managers independent to the programme or programmes being reviewed. Membership will also include student representation and appropriate external specialists (refer to the *Validation and Approvals Procedure*).

The Review Meeting will normally include a presentation by the Programme Team setting the context of the Periodic Review, evidence base, findings and action points identified. The Review protocol will require the Programme Team representatives to answer questions from the Validation and Approvals Committee and explain practice and performance based on the content of the Report. In effect, the Committee will be testing the rigour and accuracy of the Report process, content and its conclusions.

The outcome of the Review meeting will be a decision by the Committee presented by the Chair of the Committee for the Programme Team representatives. This could be to endorse the Periodic Review Report (usually with one or more conditions and/or non-binding recommendations which will inform the Action Plan for revalidation) or request further information on the Report before endorsement. Whereas conditions are binding and must be addressed, the Committee may also make recommendations which are not binding but are made in the interests of potential quality improvement and should be investigated and adopted by the Programme Team where possible. The Committee may also defer a decision and request additional evidence or information from the Programme Team. The Committee may require more fundamental changes to be made to the programme or it may decide that the programme be replaced or suspended from UCB's portfolio with appropriate notice being given.

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