



Senate

Paper title	Programme Review
Outcome requested	The Senate is asked to consider this update on a revised approach for programme review that is being piloted this academic year.
Points to note and further information	<p>Following discussions with the Education Quality and Standards Board and the Faculty Vice-Principals, a revised approach to programme review is being piloted to address the challenges with previous formats. The revised approach will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• build more consistent engagement in review processes across Schools and Institutes to monitor Strategy delivery and provide necessary assurance Senate, Council and SET;• address feedback from Schools and Institutes that annual and enhanced / periodic review processes represent an additional burden and take place at the wrong time;• introduce a more agile, data-informed and risk-based approach made possible under the OfS regulatory framework, working with Schools and Institutes to develop internal monitoring processes that add value, provide assurance and reflect the needs of the discipline. <p>The principles of the revised approach are that programme review at Queen Mary will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• focus on Strategy delivery and compliance with the OfS Conditions, giving due regard to the UUK Framework for Programme Reviews;• depend as far as possible on routine data to give baseline assurances and only use a dialogic approach to investigate areas that are flagged in the data, collect impact case studies for the TEF, and undertake deep dives in relevant areas or themes;• reduce perceptions of additional burden or bureaucracy since inter-related monitoring and review activities (including initiatives to improve Strategy KPIs) will be consolidated into existing management and assurance mechanisms in the

	<p>Faculties. Engagement will be at relevant points in the year, when data become available and plans are being made for the future, rather than once after the end of the cycle;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require the Faculties to give biannual assurance to EQSB (chaired by the Vice-Principal for Education) and thence to Senate and Council. The assurance process will draw on routine data, the Strategic Risk Register (also considered by SET), institutional thematic enquiries and a summary of outcomes from dialogue with Schools and Institutes; • end the cycle of repeated enhanced/periodic reviews, as these are no longer a requirement under the OfS. Instead, there will be a defined mechanism for SET to approve terms of reference and panel membership for bespoke reviews as required, on a recommendation from the relevant Faculty Vice-Principal or the Vice-Principal (Education). • consider the administrative resources and data that are available in Schools, Institutes and Faculties to support the proposed activities.
Questions to consider	Does Senate have any comments on the new approach or areas for thematic enquiry during the pilot census point in spring 2024?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	OfS Conditions of Registration Ofsted regulatory requirements
Strategy and risk	Aligns with Strategy 2030 Aligns with risks related to potential noncompliance with the requirements of our regulators. Effective programme review procedures will mitigate any risks in that area.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Education Quality and Standards Board 22 November 2023
Author	Adam Streames, Deputy Head of Academic Quality and Standards
Sponsor	Jane Pallant, Director of Governance and Legal Services

Background

Programme review is a fundamental part of the assurance of academic quality and standards and allows the University to identify areas of risk or scope for improvement, make agile interventions where necessary, share areas of good practice, and gather relevant information for assurance and reporting purposes. Queen Mary must be able to evidence compliance with the Office for Students' Conditions of Registration, of which programme review forms a part, as a way to ensure that students registered on our programmes receive a high-quality academic experience. This includes, but is not limited to, programmes that are: up-to-date; provide educational challenge; are coherent; effectively delivered; and require students to develop relevant skills.

Queen Mary has carefully considered its approach to programme review to ensure that it adds value, aligns with our strategic objectives and external requirements, and allows us to demonstrate assurance across our portfolio. The focus of the new approach will be on routine, ongoing monitoring and enhancement rather than review 'events', which are no longer a standard external regulatory requirement. The approach will be more agile, data-informed and risk-based, working constructively with Schools and Institutes to develop internal monitoring processes that add value and reflect the needs of the discipline. A dialogic approach will be used only to investigate areas that are identified as requiring attention; to collect impact case studies for the TEF; and to undertake deep dives in relevant areas or themes.

Expectations for the new approach

Schools already undertake many activities as part of their normal business which, when viewed under a quality and standards lens, map to the OfS Conditions of Registration and feed into programme review. These include:

- Enrolment
- Module registration
- External examiner reports
- Subject and Degree Examination Boards
- Programme and module development and portfolio review
- PSRB accreditation and related activities
- Delivery of assessments
- Graduation and monitoring completion rates

In addition to these activities, further consideration of work in the following areas will that we are aligned with the sector and are meeting our OfS obligations through the enhancement of our provision:

- Academic integrity and misconduct
- Engagement with and review of student appeals, complaints, and disciplinary cases
- Suspensions of regulations
- Thematic reviews
- Student voice – SSLCs and internal and external survey results
- Review of subject benchmarks

Operation of the new approach

Throughout the year, data snapshots will be made available from dashboards that Schools and Institutes can usefully interrogate against internal benchmarks and OfS benchmarks and thresholds, with the aim of identifying areas below agreed baseline requirements, potential risks, or areas for improvement across the range of educational activity. Schools and institutes will discuss their data with the relevant Faculty which will monitor local action plans and provide academic assurance to the Education Quality and Standards Board, Senate and Council.

This approach will enable each Faculty to form a clear narrative on the performance, outcomes and priorities for educational provision. The faculties will give assurance (and where necessary raise concerns) at two defined points in the year to EQSB, Senate and Council. This will draw on routine data, the Strategic Risk Register (also considered by SET) and a summary of outcomes from dialogue with Schools and Institutes.

The Directorate of Governance and Legal Services will work closely with the Education and Student Experience Leadership Team (ESELT) and with each Faculty in reviewing the quality of provision, and will ensure that review outcomes are RAG-rated for any further action, including the identification of areas of good practice and reporting on institution-wide themes.

Examples of the data sets that will be considered are:

- Cohort identity – this will enable agile interventions to take place by programme teams dependent on the cohort studying in a current year, for example larger numbers of students with disabilities or additional needs registered with DDS and the type of adjustments that may be needed for that cohort.
- Module performance data – including module pass rates, resit volume, percentage of module reading lists that were refreshed in the past two years.
- Programme progression data – including the percentage of students who progress from one developmental year to the next (relates to KPI 7).
- Programme award data – including breakdown of classifications and attainment gap.
- Programme development data – this will enable us to gauge programme coherency and will include the ratio of core to optional credits, and the ratio of optional modules to students. This would include mapping against the Principles of Programme Design.
- Resources data – this will enable us to whether a programme is effectively delivered, and will include the ratio to large group work, small group work, practical and other learning activities and the volume of assessment in a module.
- Graduate outcomes data – the percentage of graduates going into highly skilled jobs or further study (relates to KPI 8).
- NSS data – looking at key questions will contribute to our investigations, for example “Q9: How well has your course developed your knowledge and skills that you think you will need for your future?”, “Q4: How often does your course challenge you to achieve your best work?” or “Q17: How well organised is your course?”

There may be areas within certain provision where additional datasets will be identified for consideration (for example specific data for apprenticeship programmes). Additionally, thematic elements may be set for a particular year for which bespoke data sets will be identified, for example compliance with marking and feedback turnaround times or identification of best practice in peer observation.

The next stages of the programme review will depend on the outcomes from the data-driven exercise. It is anticipated that there will be potentially three outcomes following each census point:

1. **Area (s) of risk identified.** The identification of risk will trigger a deep dive into the relevant area (s). Dialogue with the School or Institute will take place to discuss time-bound remedial action. In some cases, reviews may be requested by the Vice-Principal (Education) or the relevant Faculty Vice-Principal.
2. **Area(s) with scope for improvement identified.** The identification of scope for improvement will trigger recommendations for programme development work in the relevant area. This may involve referral to the Faculty and School / Institute strategy for adding value that reflects the needs of the discipline, and/or to the Queen Mary Academy to embed the Principles of Programme Design and graduate attributes.
3. **No areas of concern.** Review again at next data census point. Where there are particular examples of good practice, these will be shared across Queen Mary through a good practice digest following each census point.

Improving engagement and resources

To address the need for improved engagement and as an aid to integrate programme review processes across the schools, institutes, and faculties, staff development sessions will be delivered collaboratively by the Directorate of Governance and Legal Services and the Queen Mary Academy. Drawing on successful workshops that have taken place already on programme development, these sessions will build on the programme design workshops and the current activities the Academy offer with a focus on the revised process, effective programme review practices, remedial activities and signposting to resources already available.

Next steps

- The first census point will take place in Spring 2024 and the date, alongside guidance for the revised approach, will be issued before the end of the year.
- Benchmarks will be agreed in discussion with Faculties, the education team and DGLS.
- Data sets are being expanded to link directly to regulatory frameworks (OfS and Ofsted) while also addressing Key Performance Indicators from Strategy 2030, incorporating the collection of impact case studies for the TEF. The data will include NETP, student attainment, graduate outcomes and NSS indicators. For the first census point, the existing dashboards for Annual Programme Review will be used while the new data sets are developed.