Chapter 4 - Ongoing Management and Monitoring of Programmes

# Policies

# Procedures

# Forms

MODULE EVALUATION (QA1)

PROGRAMME/STAGE EVALUATION (QA2)

PROGRAMME EVALUATION (QA3)

PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT (EAP7)

# Documents

## Introduction

Once a programme has been validated and approved for delivery, the process of monitoring the on-going delivery needs to be enacted. This provides a formal mechanism for quality assurance and facilitates two way communications between staff and students, maintaining a high level of engagement with programme operational issues. The programme monitoring process also includes a formal channel for feedback to be provided by students and staff into programme design, development and delivery.

## Scope

This chapter deals with the quality assurance systems that are in place to continuously monitor programmes in the Institute. It details the operational aspects that ensure:

* Programmes remain current and academically valid (i.e. that the curriculum and its assessments as currently delivered are appropriate to both the learner and to the programme/programme objectives)
* Programmes that are no longer relevant are removed
* New programmes are identified and developed.

The Chapter describes the role of the Programme Committee and School Policy Committee in programme monitoring and review.

## Academic Quality Structures

Academic quality structures have been streamlined across the Institute and consist of:

* Programme Committees
* School Policy Committee.

The establishment and operation of these are mandatory.

## Programmes

A programme may comprise the totality of the modules delivered in stages (or years) that lead to a single award, or all of the modules culminating in a degree level award. The following possible programmes are identified:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Possible Programme** | **Level** |
| Higher Certificate | 6 |
| Bachelor Degree (Ordinary) | 7 |
| Bachelor Degree (Honours) | 8 |
| HC with add-on Ordinary and add-on Honours Bachelor Degree | 6, 7, 8 |
| Ordinary Bachelor Degree with add-on Honours Bachelor Degree | 7, 8 |
| Higher Diploma | 8 |
| HC with add-on Ordinary and add-on Honours Bachelor Degree and Higher Diploma | 6, 7, 8 |
| Graduate Diploma | 9 |
| Taught Masters Degree | 9 |
| PG Dipl and Masters thesis | 9 |
| Research programmes | 9/10 |

## Programme Committee

### Purpose and Functions of Programme Committees

The Programme Committee is intended to provide a structure for:

a) Routine monitoring of a programme to ensure that it is being delivered according to the approved programme schedule and to identify any impediments to student learning

b) Feedback from staff, students and other stakeholders regarding the programme design, development and delivery.

While these activities are not necessarily mutually exclusive, for the purpose of clarity and describing the functionality of Quality Assurance it is useful to outline them separately.

The remit of a Programme Committee is to:

1. **Monitor programme delivery and monitor student performance:**

* Identifying on-going issues related to delivery and student progress on current programmes
* Planning, organising and reviewing student induction
* Analysing examination results
* Responding to External Examiner Reports
* Identifying resource requirements
* Monitoring student progress
* Documenting actions and decisions.

A primary function of a Programme Committee is student performance analysis. This is key to the identification of necessary programme modifications, programme terminations and new programme development. A programme monitoring report (EAP7) prepared for each year of each programme and submitted to the Head of Department annually on or before 31st October.

The inclusion of key performance indicators (KPI) to allow five year trend analysis is an important part of the monitoring process. The EAP 7 report includes:

1. CAO Applicants
2. CAO Average Points
3. Registrations (at 20th September)
4. Census (at 31st October and 31st March)
5. Pre-Exam Attrition
6. Pass and Retention Rates
7. Student Feedback
8. Feedback from External Examiner reports

The Programme Committee is required to analyse the data and recommend actions to be taken (with persons responsible identified). The Head of School, together with the Heads of Department review Programme Monitoring Reports and prepare a summary of actions for the School. This is presented to Academic Council for approval.

1. **Review Feedback:**

* Soliciting student feedback via surveys[[1]](#footnote-1), from student representatives on the Programme Board, and from, ad hoc focus groups
* Identifying attrition/retention initiatives
* Documenting actions and decisions.

In respect of student feedback, the School Administrative Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Lecturers are issued with the three survey forms for completion by students (QA1andQA2) and by staff (QA 3)**.** Lecturers are responsible for ensuring that these forms are completed and that the relevant findings are discussed by the programme board.

The Admissions Office requests each student who formally withdraws from a programme to complete a student exit questionnaire. In practice it is very difficult to collect this information since many students do not formally withdraw. However, it provides the Institute with valuable information on the reasons why students withdraw[[2]](#footnote-2).

1. **Programme Planning and Development:**

Programme development is by definition an on-going activity. It is included as an agenda item for the operational meetings, but occasionally “single item agenda” meetings dealing solely with programme modifications may be held. At certain times, for example when developing a new programme, several

Programme Committee meetings may be required over a relatively short timescale. Typically, the following need to be considered:

* Changing, updating and revalidating programmes
* Reviewing/updating existing modules and developing/introducing new modules
* Evaluating quality of facility/resource provision
* Developing new programmes
* Documenting actions and decisions.

### Membership of the Programme Committee

The membership generally comprises all of the lecturers who deliver the programme modules, as well as two elected students with limited attendance rights. The Head of Department is an ex-officio member.

### Programme Committee Chairperson

The chairperson is a member of the lecturing staff teaching on the programme and all staff should undertake the role of chairperson as required. The Programme Chair and year co-ordinators are proposed and elected by the members of the Programme Board at its first meeting, which is typically undertaken for a period of one to three academic years. The Chairperson will arrange meetings and set the agenda in consultation with the Head of Department. All members should contribute to the operation of the Programme Board to assist the Chair. Previous Chairs should assist in the handover periods.

Training should be provided each year for Chairperson in the operation of the meetings.

### Frequency and Focus of Programme Committee Meetings

Four meetings of each Programme Committee must be held each academic year. Attendance by all members is mandatory. If in exceptional circumstances or due to a clash with another board a member is unable to attend they must give apologies and supply the required information in advance of the meeting. Minutes must be recorded and forwarded to the School Policy Committee. Any subgroups/work-groups established by the programme committee must provide a record of minutes before any consideration of their outputs and any recommendations need to be approved by the programme committee. Student members of the committee are required to leave the meeting when matters pertaining to individual students are under discussion.

In general, the focus of meetings will be as follows:

* *1st Meeting* (generally in October*)*: review of student induction process, resource requirements, analysis of examination results for the previous year, review of reports from external examiners, review of staff and student feedback, review of student progress, completion of EAP 7.
* *2nd Meeting* (generally in November*)*: Review of on-going delivery and issues pertaining to completion of coursework by the end of the Semester.
* *3rd Meeting* (generally in late January): analysis of retention/attrition initiatives, outstanding issues related to current student group
* *4th Meeting* (generally in late April): Review of on-going delivery and issues pertaining to completion of coursework by the end of the Semester, planning of student induction for next year.

It is recognised that many lecturers are involved in more than one Programme Committee. Where a number of lecturers are teaching on a range of related programmes joint Programme Committee meetings may be held. However lecturers who teach on a number of programmes should be facilitated by not holding all programme boards at the same time.

### 4.5.5 Meeting Organisation

### There should be standard templates for agenda, with envisaged timings and minutes for all Programme Committee Meetings, notwithstanding the topics of focus above. There shall be administrative support from the school to record minutes.

Suggested Agenda

1. Minutes of previous meeting.

2. Matters arising.

3. Update on student numbers.

4. Student Issues.

5. Research and Innovation

6. External examiner comments (EAP7).

7. Student Progress (Student Representatives not present).

8. AOB.

Minutes

Attendees

Apologies

Not Present

* 1. It was decided that XXXX Action XXXX

### Conduct at Meetings

Meetings will be chaired by the Programme Chair. All members have an equal voice at the programme boards and are encouraged to participate fully. This may result in robust discussion and the expression of differing opinions and this is a normal part of the process. All participants should be treated with respect and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions, and critiquing ideas rather than individuals, with due regard to academic freedom. The role of the chair is to manage the process.

## School Policy Committee

### Purpose and Functions of the School Policy Committee

The School Policy Committee is concerned with overseeing and implementing the School Plan. Because it is not concerned with operational issues it confines its business to actions required to ensure implementation of strategic initiatives.

The tasks include, but are not confined to:

* Interpretation of the Institute Strategic Plan in respect of School activities
* Appraising academic developments
* Advising the School on physical resource implications
* Advising the School on likely staff recruitment and development of specialist discipline areas.

### Membership of the School Policy Committee

* Head of School
* Heads of Department
* Chairperson of each Programme Committee in the School
* Senior Lecturers of the School
* Two undergraduate student representatives, who have been nominated by the body of class representatives for the School.
* One post-graduate representative, nominated by the body of postgraduates from the School.
* One member of the Technical Support Staff
* School Administrative Manager.

### School Policy Committee Chairperson

The Head of School is Chairperson of the School Policy Committee. The Chairperson will arrange meetings and set the agenda in consultation with the Heads of Department.

### Frequency and focus of School Policy Committee Meetings

There should be four meetings each academic year, which will occur following the meetings of the Academic Programme Committees. When a Programmatic or Institutional Review occurs additional meetings may take place.

Among other topics, the School Policy Committee will have as agenda items:

* Minutes of Academic Programme Committees
* Review of progress of School Strategic Plan
* Proposed new, and changes to existing programmes
* Research activities and development
* School resource requirements.

## Documentation Flow and Reporting Structures

Proposals that are made by the Programme Committees usually cluster around (i) resource requirements for current programme to ensure alignment with student needs; (ii) induction and retention initiatives; (iii) changes to programmes or new programme proposals and development.

Proposals made by the Policy Committee will typically be related to School strategic direction, new programme proposals and resource requirements.

All proposals made by these committees are channelled through the Head of School who will decide on the appropriate action and the route required for approval of the proposal, i.e. for action by one more of the following:

* School Policy Committee
* Head of Department
* Head of School
* Executive Committee
* Committees of the Academic Council
* Academic Council
* Governing Body.

A diagrammatic representation of the communication process is shown in [Figure 4.1](#Figure41)

It should be noted that feedback is an essential requirement for the success of any quality assurance process. Inherent in the reporting structures outlined in Figure 4.1 is a requirement that each function feeds back a response to a proposal to the appropriate committee or function head. This may be done in the form of a:

* Formal written response
* Minuted response or
* *V*erbal response.

Where appropriate, the HOS will consult with the Education Development & Quality Manager on matters arising from the Programme or Policy Committee meetings.

Programme Committee

Proposals

Head of Department

Proposals

Minutes/ Proposals

Proposals

Executive Committee

School Policy Committee

Head of School

Governing Body

Academic Council

Recommendations

Proposals/summary of minutes of committees

Committees of Academic Council

Recommendations

**Figure 4.1 Reporting Structure for Programme Committee and School Policy Committee.**

1. There are two surveys completed by students: (i) Module Evaluation (QA1) and (ii) Programme/Stage Evaluation (QA2). There is also a Programme Evaluation (QA3) survey completed by staff. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. There is now in place on selected programmes a student mentoring programme intended to assist students at risk, to find out why students leave and to take the necessary steps to retain these students in college, where appropriate. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)