**Periodic Review Reflective Document Guidance**

This template is provided as an example layout and content for the Reflective Document which is written by departments/schools prior to a Periodic Review. Departments must ensure that they reflect upon each level of study under review (UG/PGT/PGR) within each section. Departments could submit one Reflective Document for each level of study under review, if appropriate.

The Reflective Document should take the form of a critical commentary around the areas covered by Periodic Reviews and should identify those issues the department would find it helpful to explore in greater depth. The focus of this document is to highlight future direction and actions, drawing upon staff reflection and student feedback, as well as outcomes. Internal and external monitoring and review, including quality assurance and enhancement, should be embedded into each section (i.e., reflection and actions for Annual Review of Courses, Periodic Reviews, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, internal education/research strategy/actions) and please also cross-reference any other action plans in place (such as employability, continuation, Student Surveys, Education Action plans). Departments are also encouraged to highlight any areas of good practice to share more widely.

The areas listed under each heading are an indication of what to cover and what Periodic Review Panels will be looking for. The lists are not designed to be used as a strict checklist, or to be exhaustive in terms of what to include – so more or fewer items might be included. Please tailor the report to suit the department but be mindful of using acronyms and abbreviations which will not be accessible to external and student panel members. The Quality and Academic Development (QUAD) team in liaison with Organisational Development can provide reflective writing session/proofreading and feedback of the reflective document and/ or additional training, as required, by the department. Please also see preparation and writing for the [Periodic Review guidance](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/academic-standards-and-quality/pr-preparation-and-writing).

The Reflective Document should be submitted to QUAD ([quad@essex.ac.uk](mailto:quad@essex.ac.uk)) 6 weeks before the initial Panel meetings, along with the Periodic Review documentation.

*Where this document refers to ‘students’, this encompasses all learners, including students undertaking flexible or part-time study, and apprentices.*

**[Undergraduate or Taught/Research Postgraduate] Programmes in the [Name of School/Department]**

## Introduction to the department

1. **Department aims, strengths and any distinctive features**
2. **Overview of staffing (including significant changes) and link to department staff webpage**

* What technical and administrative support is available to students?
* Have there been any staffing changes since the last Review, and what impact have they had on the delivery of the course?
* How does the department support Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)/Assistant Lecturers (AL)? (include number; roles and workload; support for professional development, arrangements for training, mentoring, and monitoring; compliance with the Code of Practice on GTAs/AL)
* What staff development opportunities are there to support staff in terms of their professional development and scholarly activity?
* Where employers or others from outside the University are contributing to the delivery of the course(s), how are these contributions designed and integrated?
* *For Research provision* - What training is available for supervisors? How does the department organise allocation of research students? How many research students are allocated to each supervisor and what is the department’s approach to workload allocation? How many new and experienced supervisors are there in the department?

## Teaching, learning and assessment

1. **Course design and curriculum**

*General overview*

* Summarise the distinctive features of the courses, including any aspects which might be considered non-standard for the University.
* How has the curriculum been influenced by the research interests of the teaching team?
* How do you ensure courses balance and integrate between aspects of the course(s), for example, academic and practical elements, the breadth and depth of the curriculum, employment related skills and academic study?

*Reflect on significant changes and impact of student and external engagement*

* Have there been significant changes since the last Periodic Review?
* How has the course developed over the last five years to reflect major developments in the discipline?
* How does the department engage with students in developing their provision?
* How have changes in student and employer demand influenced course design?
* How have external examiners/employers/industry experts been involved in the ongoing development of the course(s) under review and what impact has this had?

*Alignment to external reference points:*

* How has the department ensured that learning outcomes reflect published QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, qualification benchmarks (for example for master’s or foundation degrees), the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies (Qualifications Frameworks), national occupational standards, including apprenticeship standards and any relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements?
* Have changes to the course(s) since the last Periodic Review enhanced the course and ensured that the course design, title, and curriculum remained appropriate and aligned with internal and external reference points?
* How does the design of the curriculum enable academic and intellectual progression (for each stage of the course) by imposing increasing demands on the learner in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the capacity for conceptualisation, and increasing autonomy in learning?

*Employability and work-based or work-related learning:*

* What are the arrangements for management, supervision, and assessment of workplace learning?
* How do the courses continue to enable students to acquire skills and knowledge which will be of use to them in their future careers and future studies?
* How are work-based or work-related elements relevant to the courses and aims?
* How do learning outcomes integrate work-based or work-related learning and academic study?
* For apprenticeship delivery, how do the knowledge, skills and behaviours integrate with the learning outcomes and on the job training?
* What engagement has there been with appropriate Sector Skills Councils?
* Is work-based learning embedded in the programme of learning, and how does work based learning contribute to the overall coherence and integrity of the course?
* What guidance is given on how the specific outcomes intended for the workplace learning will be defined and monitored, including the responsibilities of the employers, students, mentors, and academic tutors? For example, are Learning Agreements in place?
* How are mentors and employer representatives supported in understanding their roles and responsibilities?
* What checks are carried out to ensure the work-based learning/placement provider provides the learning opportunities necessary for the student to meet the intended learning outcomes?

1. **Reflection on the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Overview**

* How do you use the Teaching, learning and assessment overview and how do you ensure it remains up to date?
* What works well and what doesn’t work quite as well? What changes to the overview are you planning to make to address these?
* How have developments in learning and teaching (either generally or in the particular discipline concerned) affected teaching on the courses under review over the last five years?
* What are the department’s plans for future development of teaching, learning and assessment, including any initiatives to support new and transformational curriculum developments and the University’s Strategic plan?

1. **Student support**

* Describe the arrangements for induction and on-going academic support for students and how these meet the needs of all students.
* What ongoing academic support are students provided with?
* What arrangements are in place for personal tutoring and how is student engagement with personal tutors monitored?
* What arrangements are in place to ensure that any additional needs of students are identified, and reasonable adjustments are put in place to meet them?
* Where there are health and safety risks, how does the course design provide students with suitable information, instruction, and training?
* What support are students provided with by the University and Work-based Learning/placement provider during their placement?
* Describe the arrangements for Tripartite reviews for apprentices.

1. **The research environment (PGR provision)**

* Describe the arrangements for monitoring progress, Supervisory Boards / Progress Committees, and information on progress guidelines and milestones.
* Describe the research methods and skills training, including transferable skills training (e.g. communication, IT, employability)
* How is a research culture created for research students?
* What financial support is available for research students?

## Student outcomes

1. **Recruitment**

* What is the department marketing/recruitment strategy?
* How does the department guide students on their course choice?
* What are the recruitment and admissions procedures, and how does the department ensure these are fair and transparent, including those for dealing with AP(E)L?

1. Highlight trends and actions taken in response, including what impact/improvements have been introduced, using the following data sets (in all cases, consider all students (equality, diversity, and inclusivity)):
   * Progression, continuation (HESA), and retention (please draw on any existing action plans)
   * Research degree completion and awards
   * Degree outcomes
   * For Apprenticeships: Outcomes including completion of End Point Assessment
   * Employability and Graduate Outcomes
   * For Apprenticeships: Destination data for apprentices e.g., promotion within current employment, promotion within a new employer
   * Equality, diversity, and inclusivity: outcomes across student groups
2. **Student feedback and satisfaction**

* Is there evidence of effective consideration and action in response to student feedback?
* How have regular student questionnaires and other forms of student feedback contributed to enhancement in relation to the courses under review?
* Are students and staff provided with information about student feedback and subsequent actions?

## Opportunities and enhancements for the future

* Include any key themes that the department wish to highlight to the Panel and seek feedback on.

**Guidance for additional documentation to be provided by department:**

List of courses and their current status

* List of courses, indicating their current status and the ongoing status recommended by the department – QUAD will provide the list of courses and their current status – departments are asked to populate the remaining information.

Summary of the quality assurance/enhancement activities within the department

* Department level structures in place - Overview of department committees / groups that support academic standards and quality, including Student Voice Groups, PGR.
* Summary of how these committees/groups in the department feed into wider University committees.
* Mechanisms and evidence of systematic monitoring, review, enhancement and sharing good practice. Please share any case studies/examples evidencing students driving change.

**Document review information**

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| Document owner | Quality and Academic Development Team |
| Document last reviewed by | Aminah Suhail, Quality and Academic Development Manager |
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