

**University of Essex**  
**Partner Institution - Annual Review of Courses**  
**Guidance Notes (reflecting on 2019-20)**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** All Partner Institutions are required to write and submit to the University of Essex (the University) an Annual Review of Courses (ARC) report for all levels of provision that the Partner Institution offers.
- 1.2** The ARC is the focus for a reflective evaluation of curriculum, delivery, student experience and the achievement of students. ARC reports also look forward to the next delivery of the curriculum, building on the experience and evidence.
- 1.3** ARC reports draw on a variety of data sources including the National Student Survey (NSS) or internal/other student surveys (as appropriate); progression, retention and success statistics; employability information and the student voice.
- 1.4** The ARC report enables the Partner Institution to:
- Reflect on course(s) and modules with respect to key internal and external metrics.
  - Develop action plans that ensure the enhancement of the courses and modules under review.
  - Ensure excellence in the quality of education.
  - Identify and share good practice.
- 1.5** ARC reports allow the University to have oversight of themes that are emerging across Partner Institutions that need to be acted upon, and to share good practice across the institution.
- 1.6** Undergraduate ARC reports are submitted in the autumn term and Postgraduate ARC reports are submitted in the spring term for consideration at the University's Partnerships Education Committee. The Deputy Dean reviews the reports and provides an oral report to Committee. This is followed by a written report to the next Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Feedback will be provided to each Partner Institution individually through Partnership Quality and Development Committees.
- 1.7** ARC reports are key supporting documents for Periodic Reviews and External Reviews and demonstrate to external auditors the currency, validity and security of the University's awards

## **2. DEADLINES AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **2.1 Deadlines for submission of reports:**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Submission Date</b>	<b>Email</b>
Undergraduate	11 November 2020	<a href="mailto:quad@essex.ac.uk">quad@essex.ac.uk</a>
Postgraduate Taught	27 January 2021	<a href="mailto:quad@essex.ac.uk">quad@essex.ac.uk</a>
Postgraduate Research	27 January 2021	<a href="mailto:pgresearch@essex.ac.uk">pgresearch@essex.ac.uk</a>
Professional Doctorate	27 January 2021	<a href="mailto:pgresearch@essex.ac.uk">pgresearch@essex.ac.uk</a>

## 2.2 University of Essex Committee Reporting:

Level	Partnerships Education Committee
Undergraduate	2 December 2020
Postgraduate Taught	2 March 2021
Postgraduate Research	2 March 2021
Professional Doctorates	2 March 2021

## 3. DATA AND EVIDENCE FOR UNDERGRADUATE, POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT, RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE ARCs

### 3.1 Courses and Modules

- Reports should cover all courses and any modules that are not part of a course within a level.
- Suspended or discontinued courses should be included if there are still students on “teach out”. Reflection on these courses is likely to be focussed on the student experience.
- Courses with no students due to a failure to recruit should be highlighted.
- Administering departments should liaise with other department(s) about the management of joint courses in the ARC report (as appropriate).
- Partner Institutions may wish to produce reports at course level for internal purposes. Where this is done, these should be combined into relevant groups or departments in line with the institution’s structures before sending on to the University. If you require an exception from this (as a result of an accrediting body, for example) please contact your Partnership Manager for advice.

### 3.2 Partner Institution Data Sources

Partner Institutions should consider the following evidence to inform the ARC report:

- Entry Profile – demographics
- Entry Profile – Highest qualification on entry
- Equality and Diversity
- Student progression (all and split by mode of study, e.g. full-time, part-time)
- Thesis submission and completion - postgraduate research students
- Degree classifications
- Student numbers
- Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) report (if applicable)
- National Student Survey (NSS) or internal/other student survey results
- Student module evaluation outcomes
- External Examiner reports
- Student Staff Liaison Committee minutes (or equivalent)
- Employability Action Plan or equivalent (if applicable)

### 3.3 Additional evidence Partner Institutions should consider

Partner Institutions should also consider any action plans, minutes from meetings or action taken in response to the following areas:

- Internal influences (such as the institution’s strategic plan)
- University of Essex influences (such as the University’s strategic plan)
- External influences including the [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement\(s\)](#)
- Requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
- How issues of disability are addressed and integrated in the Partner Institution
- Any Partner Institution monitoring systems in place.

## **4. WRITING THE ARC REPORT**

**4.1** The Head of Higher Education at the Partner Institution will agree the arrangements for writing the ARC report. Sections may be delegated to relevant staff and then combined and discussed at an internal meeting which should include student representation.

### **UNDERGRADUATE & POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT ARC**

#### **4.2 Section 1: Update on Action Plan from last year's ARC**

Partner Institutions should make clear that:

- All actions from last year have either been completed or exceptionally will be carried forward and included in new Action Plan.
- Issues raised in the action plan are cross-referenced in the later sections of the report as appropriate.
- Objectives and actions should be given a unique ID to allow progress to be clearly highlighted and tracked across reports. This should be in the form Serial Number/Year of Origin. The ID for the first action during 2019 would be 1/19. Where there are multiple actions linked to an objective these should be referenced as 1A/19 and 1B/19. The unique ID should be used where the action or objective are referred to in other documents.

#### **4.3 Section 2A: Strengths and Enhancements**

Partner Institutions should reflect on the evidence sources listed above to complete this section:

- Describe solutions to issues that have been identified and indicate where good practice has been identified and implemented across the department/institution.
- To show the level and variety of external engagement and influence on course changes and developments and how external feedback has been acted upon.
- To demonstrate how student feedback on the course(s) and modules under review has been considered and acted upon.
- If applicable refer to an employability related action plan and DLHE/other results, to reflect on the effectiveness of employability activities relevant to the level of course(s) and modules under review. Ensure that work-based learning arrangements are summarised and evaluate the effectiveness of their contribution to the student learning opportunities.
- Drawing upon relevant data, provide an analysis of the retention, progression and outcomes of groups of students who share particular characteristics. Identify what actions have or will be taken to promote inclusivity in the future.
- Where Partner Institutions have undergone periodic reviews or validations for courses in the last 12 months, the ARC should include an update on action taken in response to any conditions or recommendations set.

#### **4.4 Section 2B: Staffing and Resources**

This section asks for information about facilities and resources, staffing, and staff development and scholarly activity, setting out any impact these have had on the course design and delivery.

#### **4.5 Section 3: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes**

This is a checklist to ensure the Partner Institution continues to comply with the University's expectation for quality assurance and enhancement. Partner Institutions should ensure that any supporting evidence cited is available on request to the Deans of Partnership, Quality and Academic Development, or Partnerships team as appropriate.

#### **4.6 Section 4: Action Plan**

The Action Plan should summarise all the activities the Partner Institution needs to do over the coming year to address areas identified in the report as requiring enhancement. This section should also include any objectives or actions which have been carried over from the previous year (see also Section 4.2 above). Actions must have:

- An effective way of measuring impact.
- A realistic timescale.
- Someone responsible for ensuring the action is progressed and completed.
- Unique ID.

### **POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE ARC**

#### **4.7 Section 1: Update on Action Plan from last year's ARC**

Partner Institutions should make clear that:

- All actions from last year have either been completed or exceptionally will be carried forward and included in new Action Plan.
- Issues raised in the action plan are cross-referenced in the later sections of the report as appropriate.
- Objectives and actions should be given a unique ID to allow progress to be clearly highlighted and tracked across reports. This should be in the form Serial Number/Year of Origin. The ID for the first action during 2019 would be 1/19. Where there are multiple actions linked to an objective these should be referenced as 1A/19 and 1B/19. The unique ID should be used where the action or objective are referred to in other documents.

#### **4.8 Section 2: Student Data**

Partner Institutions should provide data relating to the students completing research courses during 2019/20. This will include data about admissions, confirmation, submission, completions, withdrawals, intermissions, appeals, complaints, employability and supervision.

#### **4.9 Section 3: Strengths and Enhancements**

Partner Institutions should reflect on the evidence sources listed above to complete this section.

- To describe solutions to issues that have been identified and indicate where good practice has been identified and implemented across the department/institution.
- How successful standard milestones documents have been in supporting students to meet deadlines.
- To demonstrate how student feedback on the courses has been considered and acted upon.

- Drawing upon relevant data, provide an analysis of the retention, progression and outcomes of groups of students who share particular characteristics. Identify what actions have or will be taken to promote inclusivity in the future.
- Where Partner Institutions have undergone periodic reviews or validations for courses in the last 12 months, the ARC should include an update on action taken in response to any conditions or recommendations set.

#### **4.10 Section 4: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes**

This is a checklist to ensure the Partner Institution continues to comply with the University's expectation for quality assurance and enhancement. Partner Institutions should ensure that any supporting evidence cited is available on request to the Deans of Partnership, Postgraduate Research Education team or Partnerships team as appropriate.

#### **4.11 Section 5: Training, Skills, Employability and Learning, Teaching and Supervision**

This section asks for information about the training available to students and employment opportunities. It also asks for details of the staff development arrangements.

#### **4.12 Section 6: Professional Doctorates Only**

Partner Institutions are asked to provide details specifically relating to the delivery and oversight of Professional Doctorates and the training provided to practice and academic supervisors.

#### **4.13 Section 7: Action Plan**

The Action Plan should summarise all the activities the Partner Institution needs to do over the coming year to address areas identified in the report as requiring enhancement. This section should also include any objectives or actions which have been carried over from the previous year (see also Section 4.7 above). Actions must have:

- An effective way of measuring impact.
- A realistic timescale.
- Someone responsible for ensuring the action is progressed and completed.
- Unique ID.

### **5 WRITING THE ARC REPORT**

**5.1** Before submission Partner Institutions should seek feedback on the ARC report from different stakeholders, including:

- Students, via liaison committees/groups, as appropriate.
- External Examiners.
- Academic staff.

### **6 USEFUL CONTACTS**

**6.1** While working on the ARC report, Partners may wish to contact the following teams for additional information, advice or support:

- Partnerships Team ([partnerships@essex.ac.uk](mailto:partnerships@essex.ac.uk))
- Quality and Academic Development Team ([quad@essex.ac.uk](mailto:quad@essex.ac.uk))
- Postgraduate Research Education Team ([pgresearch@essex.ac.uk](mailto:pgresearch@essex.ac.uk))

## 7. CONTINUAL REVIEW

7.1 Progress reports and updates against actions in the ARC action plan should be considered at relevant Partnership Quality and Development meetings. This will inform the next academic year's ARC report.

## 8. RECORD KEEPING

8.1 Partner Institutions are asked to ensure that:

- Copies are kept of all papers forming part of the ARC report, including any feedback from the Deans. Evidence cited in the ARC should be available on request.
- Copies of the ARC report and any follow-up activity should be kept by the Partner Institution for 6 years.

### Document review information

<b>Document owner</b>	Partnerships Team
<b>Document author</b>	Roisin Dunne, Partnerships Manager
<b>Document last reviewed by</b>	Dawn Mott, Partnerships Manager
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