

QUALITY REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK

Chapter 3 - Quality Review and Enhancement for Postgraduate Research Programmes

3. Quality Review and Enhancement for Postgraduate Research Programmes

The University recognises that the process of reviewing research degree provision is iterative and that much of this business takes place at different times and through a variety of mechanisms during the monitoring year.

Responsibility for reviewing such provision is devolved to Faculties and, for this system to work, it is important that a Faculty (or delegated School) is able to identify concerns:

- a. that apply to a particular Department.
- b. that are common to a number of its Departments.
- c. and to take timely and appropriate action.

Faculties will ensure that a detailed review of PGR student progress takes place at the Faculty/Department level through Annual Monitoring Reviews (see Chapter 7 of the PGR Handbook) and Quality Review and Enhancement process. Following discussion, each Faculty will document on an annual basis, the performance of each Faculty/Department against the relevant data.

The Faculty Director of PGR (DPGR) may delegate their authority as appropriate, as outlined in the TQA Manual Introduction. No further delegation of authority may occur unless explicitly specified.

The Dean of Graduate Research will chair a Quality Review and Enhancement Working Party (QREWP) at the start of the cycle, to review the datasets and set the agenda, and at the end of the cycle, to review the progress of Action Plans/Reports. This comprises of members of the Doctoral College Leadership Team, Education Policy, Quality and Standards Team, student representatives and others as appropriate.

The PGR Quality Review and Enhancement process takes place in alternating light-touch and deep-dive cycles:

- For **light-touch cycles**, the **Department DPGR, or equivalent**, compiles a **Department-level Thematic Report** (supported as appropriate). For some Faculties, it may be appropriate to complete the Thematic Report as a Faculty rather than by individual Departments, or as a delegated School. In these instances, all Departments within the Faculty must be included. The theme for the cycle is selected by the QREWP, based upon discussions and outputs from the previous deep-dive cycle. The selected theme

will be communicated to Faculty and Department DPGRs by the Quality and Standards Team/Doctoral College. This will not need to reflect on the previous deep-dive cycle. This will not reflect on data, unless a decision is made by the QREWP that it is appropriate to the theme/cycle.

- For **deep-dive cycles**, the **Faculty DPGR** compiles a **Faculty Action Plan**, following discussion at Department and College level (supported as appropriate). Deep-dive cycles will review two years of data and the previous two cycles; light-touch and deep-dive.

Where Department-level activities are referred to, it is recognised that other groupings may be more appropriate in some areas.

Guidance and templates are available to guide reflection via the PGR Quality Review and Enhancement SharePoint Site.

For access to the SharePoint site and for any queries please email [Education Policy, Quality and Standards](#)

3.1 Internal Discipline-Level Quality Review and Enhancement

For deep-dive cycles:

Departments should hold an Internal Department-level Quality Review and Enhancement process, and the Department DPGR (or equivalent) should report the outputs of this process to the Faculty DPGR this could be minutes, notes, etc. This process may utilise existing meetings where appropriate.

It is expected that student representatives are involved in this process, where possible. Data should be considered on the basis of the whole cohort (e.g., to include analysis of both off-campus versus on-campus and part-time versus full-time provision, where appropriate). Deep-dive cycles will review two years of data and the previous two cycles; light-touch and deep-dive.

Particular attention should be paid to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) data, submission, completion, and continuation data, and to any programme where amendments have been made. Annual Monitoring Review (see Chapter 7 of the PGR Handbook) discussions should also be included in these meetings.

Department DPGRs (or equivalent) are not required to compile a Department-level Action Plan during the deep-dive cycle. They should however report outputs of their process to the Faculty DPGR, as per the above.

For light-touch cycles:

Departments should hold an Internal Department-level Quality Review and Enhancement process, and the **Department DPGR (or equivalent)** should create a **Department-level Thematic Report**. They should share this with the Faculty DPGR ahead of submission to the Quality and Standards Team, to aid prioritisation of thematic actions. This process may utilise existing meetings, if appropriate to the light-touch process. It is expected that student representatives are involved in this process where possible.

Department DPGRs (or equivalent) should compile their Department-level Thematic Report, assisted as appropriate, within the timeline specified for the cycle, and send this via email to [PGR Quality and Standards](#).

3.2 Internal Faculty-Level Quality Review and Enhancement

For deep-dive cycles:

The internal Faculty-level review process is instrumental in maintaining and enhancing the quality of provision offered by Faculties. This may subsume another similar meeting of a relevant group or committee. Student representatives should be present. To ensure independence and accountability, the Faculty DPGR should oversee the Internal Faculty-level Quality Review meeting/process.

The outcomes from Annual Monitoring Review (see Chapter 7, PGR Handbook) discussions for all Departments should be considered, as well as using the outputs (e.g., minutes and/or notes) from the internal Department-Level Quality Review and Enhancement processes. These processes and/or meeting(s) should discuss unresolved matters of concern identified in the reports, along with the action proposed to address them and the identification of the person or body responsible for resolving them.

A **Faculty-level Action Plan** should be completed by the **Faculty DPGR** and must be submitted via email to [PGR Quality and Standards](#) in readiness for the annual University-Level Faculty Quality Review and Enhancement meeting.

Actions should be precisely stated, ensuring that they are measurable and achievable. Where more than one person is listed against an action it should be clear who is the lead and is responsible for completion. The Action Plan should include the date on which it was subject to Faculty-level scrutiny. This will negate the need for the Faculty to supply minutes of such a meeting, which may replicate much of the content of the Action Plan. Faculties should supply evidence of Annual Monitoring Review discussions at the discipline level within their Action Plan. The Action Plan will form the basis of discussion at the University-Level Faculty Quality Review and Enhancement meeting.

For light-touch cycles:

The **Department DPGR** (or equivalent) will prepare the **Department-level Thematic Report**, as per section 3.1, supported as appropriate, and with input from student representatives. The Faculty DPGR will not be required to prepare a separate Faculty-level report for light-touch cycles.

The Department-level Thematic Report should be sent to PGR Quality and Standards as per the timeline outlined during the cycle. Prior to this, they should be shared with Faculty DPGR to aid prioritisation of thematic actions.

3.3 University-Level Faculty Quality Review and Enhancement

An important aim of the annual Quality Review and Enhancement process should be to promote the enhancement and to disseminate good practice, not only within the Faculty (or delegated School) but also across the University. It is therefore important that both Departments and Faculties consider and record good practice for all provision.

A **University-level Report** is created at the end of **each cycle** in collaboration between the Quality and Standards Team and the Doctoral College and is shared with the Board of Graduate Research to ensure a coordinated approach in Action Planning.

For deep-dive cycles:

A University-level Quality Review and Enhancement meeting will take place for each Faculty, chaired by the Dean of Graduate Research. Meetings will be informed by relevant data.

The discussion will focus on the review of the Faculty-level Action Plan and the common themes identified.

Faculties are expected to monitor the progress of their own Action Plans at least once per term via an appropriate group or committee. Interim Action Plan updates will not normally be required, although updates may be requested if there are particular areas of concern identified centrally.

For light-touch cycles:

The Dean of Graduate Research and the Quality and Standards Team will review each Thematic Report. The prioritisation of thematic actions may also be discussed at relevant Faculty/Department DPGR meetings, or equivalent meetings as appropriate, to help review and prioritise actions across Faculties.

Usually, there will be no University Faculty-level meetings during light-touch cycles, but these may be utilised if helpful for the Faculty, or if a particular concern arises.

Interim updates will not normally be required from the Faculty, however, an update may be sought if appropriate.