

QUALITY REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK

Chapter 6 - Faculty Programme Enhancement Process

6. Faculty Programme Enhancement Process (FPEP)

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The Faculty Programme Enhancement Process (FPEP) offers enhanced scope to contribute to institution-wide oversight of the taught portfolio, to ensure that programmes:

- i. Align with the University of Exeter's Education Strategy 2019-2025 (see [University of Exeter Education Strategy 2019-2025](#) and [University of Exeter Strategy 2030](#)); and
- ii. Comply with the [Office for Students' \(OfS'\) Conditions of Registration](#), including:
 - A. Access and Participation for Students from All Backgrounds,
 - B. Quality, Reliable Standards and Positive Outcomes for all Students,
 - C. Protecting the Interests of All Students, and
 - D. Financial Sustainability.

6.1.2 This policy:

- i. Can be **tailored to the needs of the Faculty/programme/cluster**, time period, and context. It can also be adapted for those programmes which have recently had Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB), or local-level internal reviews.
- ii. Provides a mechanism for the oversight of externality of our taught educational portfolio at a **programme/cluster-level, and** should build upon existing local-level reviews, and other Quality Review and Enhancement activities undertaken at a **departmental-level**.
- iii. Provides a **forum for in-depth conversations** between academics, professional services staff, students, and External Advisers, **facilitated through a light-touch, Faculty-led process**, which aims to review and enhance the quality of our provision and experience for our students, as well as our Student Outcomes.
- iv. Can be **driven by data and risk** (e.g., NSS performance, continuation/completion, Graduate Outcomes), **and/or by thematic reviews and strategic imperatives** (e.g., inclusive curriculum, greener, fairer, healthier, etc.). Questions and prompts for Faculties/ programmes/ clusters and panel members to consider are provided separately.

- v. Can be utilised for all programmes, including **new** programmes (once embedded), whether that is to **review and refresh** programmes or to monitor the performance of them. FPEP can also aid considerations regarding programme **withdrawal**; an outcome of FPEP where appropriate may result in a programme withdrawal.

6.2 Definitions

Programme: A combination of academic courses or modules leading to a degree or certificate.

Programme cluster: A group of cognate programmes that share common subject matter and are academically linked.

Risk-based: FPEP will follow the approach of the regulator for Higher Education in England, the OfS, in utilising metrics/datasets (where possible) to inform Reviews; Reviews will not follow a pre-determined pattern and the focus and frequency are determined by the Faculties to adapt to their current needs.

6.3 Responsibilities

6.3.1 The Education Board, with representation from each of the new Faculties, broadly determines the requirements of FPEPs, conferring considerable autonomy to Faculties, supported by the University.

6.3.2 The Taught Portfolio Review Board (TPRB) will collaborate with the Education Board to maintain oversight of the FPEP process, and to ensure it aligns with institutional-wide oversight of our taught portfolio (see section 6.1 above).

6.3.3 FPEP is a process owned by the **Faculties**, supported as appropriate:

- i. Important, where the term Faculty is used, this refers to the **Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (PVC)** (delegated to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (APVCE):
 - a. The Faculty Taught Portfolio Group (FTPG) (or equivalent) maintains a regular agenda item to discuss the requirements of FPEPs and appropriate programmes/clusters and themes to review.
 - b. FTPG (or equivalent) recommends to the Education Board the frequency, theme(s) and proposed programme/cluster(s) for review during each academic year, utilising the data provided to inform decisions as appropriate. *The Education Board ensures that the TPRB has oversight of these recommendations.*
 - c. The Faculty then:

- 1) Plans and manages the FPEP review process, and will cover any associated costs, i.e., remuneration of External Advisers, as appropriate, as determined by the Faculty.
- 2) Appoints the FPEP Review Panel and Chair (including externals and student representatives. Student representatives and External Advisers should normally participate in Reviews. However, a Faculty may decide to form a panel without such representation if there is a legitimate reason, for example, if the focus of the review is commercially sensitive. This is at the discretion of the Chair.
- 3) Oversees and approves the compilation of the FPEP Review Report with the panel Chair (or FPEP Self-evaluation Report).
- 4) Ensures the FPEP Review Report (or FPEP Self-evaluation Report) is shared with the Education Policy, Quality and Standards Team (EPQS), and relevant Boards, for information and to facilitate learning and policy enhancement.
- 5) Reviews the actions resulting from the FPEP throughout the year, or as appropriate, as well as sharing good practices, as appropriate.

ii. The **Chair of the FPEP Review Panel:**

- a. Will usually be from outside the programme/cluster.
- b. Approves the FPEP Review Report (or FPEP Self-evaluation Report).
- c. Nominates a Deputy Chair if they are not able to fulfil their role.

iii. **The Faculty:**

- a. Provides secretarial support to each FPEP review process, who will compile the FPEP Review Report (see **Annex 1 to Chapter 6**) or FPEP Self-evaluation Report (see **Annex 2 to Chapter 6**) on behalf of the Faculty/programme/cluster.
- b. Should consider how they will ensure that a diversity of voices can input into any given FPEP review process.
 - This should consider all stakeholders directly involved, benefitting, or impacted by programme/cluster, including the different communities served or associated with a programme/cluster whether they be students, academics, professional services staff, local communities, local authorities, trade bodies, companies etc.
 - Student representatives should be empowered to lead change through the FPEP review, and should be kept updated with FPEP Review Panel progress, i.e., through Follow-up Report outcomes (see templates below).

6.3.4 **Central teams:**

- i. Develop and maintain the FPEP policy, with approval from the Education Board, with representation from the Faculties (e.g., via EPQS).
- ii. Provide datasets to appropriate Academic and Professional Services staff, as agreed with the Faculties, to help facilitate the review. *Dialogue should take place with the Faculty/Department(s) to address any concerns raised during the consideration of datasets.* (e.g., via PPBI and relevant Professional Services Staff).
- iii. Maintain a central repository of FPEP Review Reports (and FPEP Self-evaluation Reports), recommendations, and actions to enable the preparation of annual academic assurance reports (e.g., via EPQS).

6.3.5 Panel members, including student representatives and External Advisers will:

- i. Attend an FPEP Review Panel via a series of meetings (this may be virtual and/or in-person).
- ii. Provide reflective analysis, feedback, and suggestions for enhancement of the programme or programme cluster.
- iii. Provide objective and supportive input for the programme or programme cluster during the FPEP Review Panel, commenting on the quality of the programme/cluster under review.
- iv. Pursue lines of enquiry relevant to their areas of expertise and experience.
- v. Review the agenda and relevant documentation in advance of the meeting, including this FPEP policy, Module Descriptors, Programme Specifications, relevant data sets, and other documentation where appropriate to the theme. This can be delegated as appropriate by the Faculties/the FPEP Review Panel Chair.
 - This activity may not be required for programmes regulated by PSRBs/other accreditors, or programmes with exceptions, as listed in the sections below. This is at the discretion of the Chair of the FPEP Review Panel.
- vi. External Advisers only: Provide a sounding board for the FPEP Review Panel, including offering relevant academic, experiential, and/or professional insight at relevant FPEP meetings (**see Annex 3 to Chapter 6 for Criteria for Appointment**).

6.4 Reviews

- 6.4.1 FPEP Review Panels are organised and managed by the Faculties, supported as appropriate, in a timeframe and duration that is appropriate to the Faculty and programme/programme cluster under review.

- i. A pre-panel meeting should take place with the Chair and panel members to determine the focus and agenda for the Review.
- ii. **A main panel meeting** should then review the programme/cluster(s) through the lenses determined by the Faculties. Sub-meetings should occur as appropriate with stakeholders. Students must have the opportunity to provide feedback without their Faculty staff present. A one to one-and-a-half-day main panel meeting event is recommended as a maximum; Faculties determine the length of any FPEP Review Panel meeting(s).
- iii. **A post-panel meeting** should then take place with the Chair and panel members to confirm the actions for the FPEP Review Report or FPEP Self-evaluation Report (**see Annexes 1 and 2 to Chapter 6 respectively**).
- iv. **A follow-up review** should take place at 12 months post-review, or as appropriate. All panel members should be informed of the progress made, including student representatives (or the replacements for those, should they have left their roles).

6.4.2 The FPEP review process should take place every year, however, the **Faculty determines the frequency and number of Reviews undertaken**, via the PVC or delegate. The review of one programme/cluster, per Faculty, per academic year, is recommended as a minimum.

6.4.3 Panel memberships:

- i. Panel members are selected by the Faculties. Advice can be sought from central teams as appropriate.
- ii. The Chair of the FPEP Review Panel should be from outside the programme/cluster.
- iii. External Adviser(s) and student representative(s) must be present for the main panel meeting(s), unless the focus of the meeting is deemed commercially sensitive (**see Annex 3 to Chapter 6 for Criteria for Appointment**). If there are aspects of the review that are commercially sensitive, it may be permissible, at the discretion of the Chair, for the External Adviser and student representative to be present for only part of the panel's proceedings, and to see a redacted version of the FPEP Review Report (or FPEP Self-evaluation Report).

6.4.4 Themes and focus:

- i. Enhancement should be a core focus of any FPEP review process, as should the sharing of best practice.

- ii. The FPEP review process should also focus on areas for improvement, i.e., risks or issues which may be significant as they are occurring on a large scale across a programme or programme cluster, and/or where they are significantly affecting the quality of a programme or programme cluster.
- iii. Faculties determine the focus of FPEP, themes may include one or more of the following:
 - a. Programme design and quality enhancement,
 - b. Scale: admissions, recruitment, and enrolment,
 - c. Efficiencies and Margins: portfolio/programme costs, e.g., direct/indirect costs, pricing, module costs, workload costs, etc,
 - d. Attendance and engagement,
 - e. Assessment and feedback,
 - f. Continuation, completion, progression and degree outcomes,
 - g. Student experience and support,
 - h. Student surveys and student feedback,
 - i. Employability,
 - j. Sustainable, healthy, and socially just futures,
 - k. Innovation, entrepreneurship, and digitalisation,
 - l. Cultural competence and global citizenship.

6.5 Outputs

- 6.5.1 A short **FPEP Review Report (see Annex 1 to Chapter 6)** must be completed following the FPEP Review Panel. This is a short, light-touch report. No other documentation is required for completion when utilising this report template, before or after the Review. Please see the “Exceptions” section for those using the FPEP Self-evaluation Report in place of the FPEP Review Report (**see Annex 2 to Chapter 6**).
- 6.5.2 The Faculty must share the FPEP Review Reports (and FPEP Self-evaluation Reports) with the EPQS, and relevant Boards for information.
- 6.5.3 Reports generated under the Quality Review and Enhancement Framework, including the FPEP, will provide information that can help inform decisions on institutional strategy and development, re-development and enhancement, or withdrawal of programmes.

- 6.5.4 The FPEP Review Report or FPEP Self-evaluation Reports may also sit as an appendix to a Teaching Excellence Action Plan (TEAP) and be presented within relevant papers to the Teaching Excellence Monitoring (TEM) meeting. Outcomes of a TEM meeting may contribute to the instigation of the FPEP if a risk has been identified that requires in-depth investigation.
- 6.5.5 Programme approval or amendment resulting from the FPEP review process must be progressed via the policy outlined in the Approval and Revision of Taught Modules and Programmes Handbook.
- 6.5.6 A final copy of the FPEP Review Report (or FPEP Self-evaluation Report) must be shared with the EPQS, to ensure this can be stored centrally, to support and enable institutional quality assurance processes. This is for information only.

6.6 Exceptions

- 6.6.1 **New programmes** should not normally be selected for the FPEP until they have been embedded into the Faculty for three years. However, internal Faculty-led light-touch monitoring processes should ensure these programmes are reviewed in the interim.
- 6.6.2 A separate **FPEP Self-Evaluation Report template (see Annex 2 to Chapter 6)** is provided for programmes/clusters where there is unlikely to be the same level of data directly available and thus it would not be possible to flag a programme or programme cluster for review. This can be adapted to the needs of the Faculty/programmes/clusters. These include **Higher and Degree Apprenticeships**, programmes held via an **academic partnership** with a **UK** partner(s) where an Exeter Award is received (i.e., via Validation, Split-site, etc.), progression onto an Exeter Degree (such as the **INTO International Foundation Programmes**), and any other programme/cluster held in **academic partnerships with international partners**.
- i. There is no obligation to use the FPEP Self-evaluation form for anything other than those types of programmes as listed above. However, Faculties may choose to use the FPEP Self-evaluation form for other programmes/clusters should that better suit their needs than the FPEP Review Report template.
 - ii. It is still expected that a FPEP Review Panel meeting(s) takes place.

- iii. Section 1 of the Report should be completed and circulated prior to a panel meeting(s). The rest of the Report is completed after the FPEP Review Panel has taken place.
- iv. It is recommended that this template be utilised on a four-yearly cycle, with annual review/updates in between, however, the frequency for reviews with “exceptions” is at the discretion of the Faculties, as is the scope of any Review(s).

6.6.3 For **Higher and Degree Apprenticeship** programmes:

- i. A Review should primarily focus on the academic elements of the programme.
- ii. A representative from the partner/industry should be invited to the FPEP Review Panel.
- iii. There is no requirement to replicate content from Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) and Self-Assessment-Reports (SARs) - these can be appended to the FPEP Self-evaluation Report if appropriate.

6.6.4 Where a programme or programme cluster is under review, and they are part of a collaborative **academic partnership with an International Partner**:

- i. Appropriate staff from the Global Partnerships Team should be consulted, as well as the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global), or deputy, as appropriate.
- ii. Outcomes of the FPEP should also be shared with the relevant Partnership Board (see the Academic Partnerships Handbook for more information), however, a Partnership Board cannot fulfil the requirements of the FPEP alone.
- iii. Data-sharing agreements with the partner(s) should be reviewed when utilising data to inform Reviews. This is the responsibility of the Faculties.

6.7 Further support and guidance

- For central policy support: email Education Policy, Quality and Standards
- Letter for Faculties to provide to External Advisers (to be adapted by the Faculties as appropriate): QREF SharePoint site
- Letter for Faculties to provide to student representatives (to be adapted by the Faculties as appropriate): QREF SharePoint site
- **Annex 6 to Chapter 6:** Questions to Consider for Reviews Chair and Panel Members during the FPEP review process.

Access requests to the QREF SharePoint site should be directed via email to Education Policy, Quality and Standards