Annual Programme Monitoring Programme Leader Guidance

Contents

1.   Purpose and Scope

1.1   This document sets out the policy governing the annual monitoring of taught programmes of study leading to an award of the Royal Agricultural University (RAU). It covers responsibilities, the operation of the process, timelines and associated templates. This guidance also applies to research degrees and programmes involving collaborative provision.

1.2   Annual Programme monitoring is a key component of the University's quality assurance mechanisms and supports the ongoing monitoring and enhancement of the University's provision. It has been developed to demonstrably align with the guiding principles of the QAA Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Monitoring and Evaluation (Nov 2018) and to meet and exceed the Office for Students (OfS) ongoing conditions of registration B1 to B6:

B1: Academic Experience

B2: Resources, support and student engagement

B3: Student outcomes

B4: Assessment and awards

B5: Sector-recognised standards

B6: Teaching Excellence Framework participation

1.3   The monitoring process reviews past performance and feedback on programmes that allows the University to consider evidence to confirm academic standards of its awards, evaluate student learning opportunities, identify and disseminate good practice, strengthen accountability, identify and mitigate risks; and promote discussion and debate about module and programme performance.

1.4   The monitoring process provides the University's Governing Council with the information it needs to underpin the required assurances to the Office for Students (Condition E).

2.   Principles

2.1   The University is committed to the regular monitoring of its modules and programmes in order to:

- Maintain the quality and validity of modules and programmes;
- Enable continuous enhancement of its provision to reflect developments in the sector and disciplines;
- Align its academic provision with the University's strategic direction;
- Record the quality and standards of its provision as appropriate and meeting sector standards.

2.2 The University recognises that programme monitoring and enhancement is iterative and happens throughout the academic year through a range of informal and formal mechanism. The process provides subject areas with a defined opportunity to take a holistic view of both modules and programmes and the in which learning and teaching occurs. Annual Programme Monitoring draws on observations and evidence, and uses available data on an ongoing basis to inform planning and support enhancement as well as mitigate risk throughout the academic year. It is supported by both the periodic review cycle and programme revalidations.

2.3 Annual monitoring is an academic process which is underpinned by student involvement and peer review. It is risk focussed and aligned to the [University's Vision and Strategy.](#)

2.4 The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) is responsible for monitoring the core indicators of the quality and standards of learning and teaching across the University and its collaborative partners. This includes the consideration of survey outcomes, retention and degree outcomes, External Examiner reports, and destination data. AQSC reports annually to Academic Board and the Governing Council on the University's performance and activities to continuously improve and enhance the academic experience for students.

3. Monitoring of modules

3.1 The University monitors the delivery, performance and feedback of its modules through:

- Module Leader Reports (from end of Semester 1, 2024/25)
- Mid-module and End-of-module evaluations through student participation
- Internal moderation of assessment briefs, assessments and marking
- External Examiner Reports
- Module boards

3.2   Module Leader Reports (MLR) are ongoing and continue throughout the year following delivery. Reports reflect on:

- Student experience

- Student performance

- Student attendance and engagement

- Feedback from Mid-module and End-module (from September 2024)

- Responses to module surveys

- Industry engagement

- Areas of good practice

- Areas identified and planned for enhancement activities

3.3   Mid-modules evaluations (MMEs) are administered by Learning Technology through Gateway and are undertaken in weeks 5 and 6 in each semester; they are based on three open questions:

- What would you like us to continue doing?
- What would you like us to start doing?
- What would you like us to stop doing?

Module Leaders can access results by going into the feedback activity on their module pages which will show how many students responded and the open feedback provided. Learning Technology is able to provide advice and guidance on how module leaders and programme leaders can carry out their analysis of results.

Module Leaders provide a response to module evaluations through "You said – we did" campaigns and Deans of subject oversee actions that require a longer response time.

3.4   End of Module evaluations (EMEs) will come into effect from September 2024 and will be administered by Learning Technology through Gateway, similar to the MMEs.

The MMEs are based on the following questions:

- Teaching on my course: Teaching staff made the module content interesting and facilitated my learning
- Marking and assessment: Assessment requirements and marking criteria were clear
- Organisation and Management: The module was well-organised
- Academic support: It was easy to contact teaching staff when needed

- Learning Resources: Resources and module content were easily accessible
- Overall satisfaction: I was satisfied with the quality of this module

In addition, students are provided with two free-text questions, requesting feedback on:

- What I liked most about this module was…
- My suggestions for improving the module are…

Once the results have been collated, module leaders will be provided with a bespoke report for their module.

3.5 <u>Moderation of assessment briefs, assessments and marking</u> takes place for each module assessment *[Assessment brief template].* Each module is assigned an internal moderator who considers the assessment brief *[Assessment brief internal moderation form]* based on whether the assessments meets the requirements for challenge, product/ performance, transfer of knowledge, metacognition, is recognised by stakeholders, and the assessment component is measured by the associated module learning outcomes and correspondent weighting as specified on the module template.

Internal moderation *[Internal moderation of assignment and exams form]* of undergraduate and postgraduate student work across all levels of study is the process whereby grades and feedback are confirmed to ensure that they are appropriate, fair and reliable across all items of assessment. This includes collaborative provision and alternative assessments set for students with learning contracts. It is usually carried out by the first and moderator discussing and agreeing the grade and any feedback/feedforward. Where agreement cannot be reached between first and moderator, an additional moderator will adjudicate.

Internal moderation comprises of a 10% sample, subject to a minimum of five assessments, of each examination and the highest weighted coursework assessment (or one of any equally weighted coursework assessments) for the module, spanning the full range of marks awarded, including, where applicable, examples of borderline grade assessments, first class and fail submissions;

3.6 <u>External Examiners</u> review all student work that contributes to an award and in advance of module, progression and award boards including borderline grades (up to 1 marks), fails and highest marks. Where modules are shared across programmes, programme leaders of such modules agree the allocation of an External Examiner for these modules. External Examiners comment on

the continued currency, appropriateness and coherence of the modules and programme(s) to which they are appointed, and provide feedback regarding proposed changes to curriculum content, structure or outcomes; or any other advice and guidance as deemed necessary; they also review assignment briefs, and review and approve draft examination papers that contribute to a final award.

Following the examination boards, External Examiners feed back to the University through the completion of an External Examiner Report to which Programme Leaders respond to any issues raised. Issues raised are included in the Annual Programme Monitoring Report with an action response set out in the Action and Enhancement Plan.

Where an External Examiner is unable to attend a module, progression and award board, comments are to be received by the Exams Office in advance of the exam board meeting.

3.7 <u>Module boards</u> take place at the end of each semester (Collaborative partners may have different arrangements) and consider each module's performance.

It is the Module Leader's responsibility to be prepared for discussion of their module's performance and delivery in relation to student feedback, internal and external scrutiny, and information relevant to the statistical data set.

Where a module is taught by a Collaborative Partner, partner staff are required to attend module boards and be prepared for discussion as outlines above.

Where a Module Leader is unable to attend a module board, an alternative representative is to be nominated to discuss module performance at the board.

Module Board records will be kept by Academic Registry and comprise of:

- Module performance and feedback
- External Examiner comments
- Examples of good practice identified in discussion at the board

Minutes of Module Boards will be disseminated by Academic Registry.

4. Annual monitoring of programmes

4.1 The purpose of Annual Programme Monitoring is to maintain and enhance the quality of programmes by undertaking a holistic appraisal of the programme based on key performance indicators and the outcome of module monitoring.

The process draws on a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence to support the identification of good practice, successes and areas for improvement. Areas for improvements can include programme aims, learning outcomes, module content and structure, assessment components, placements; the environment in which the teaching occurs, facilities, support services and staff development for the programme team.

4.2 Annual Programme Monitoring takes place following the summer examination boards and is a review of the previous academic year. The process is supported by Academic Quality who will work with Academic Registry to pre-populate the monitoring template with the data set prior to making it available to the Programme Leaders.

4.3 The data set includes information pertaining to student recruitment, retention and withdrawal, module results, award outcomes, continuation and completion measured against OfS numerical threshold values, survey results and External Examiner feedback.

4.4 Programme Leaders are asked to evaluate aspects of their programme(s), focusing on outcomes as indicators of the effectiveness and impact of the programme(s) while:

- evaluating the academic health of the programme(s);
- identify issues that may require specific attention and/or support;
- identify matters relating to quality and standards for the Subject Area or University to address;
- ensure there is a detailed and appropriate response to external examiners comments;
- agree a set of actions/priorities for the programme(s) to enhance the quality and student experience over the next academic year in the form of an Enhancement and Action *Plan [Annual Programme Monitoring Report - Appendix 1].*

4.5 For programmes delivered at collaborative partners, the partner should complete a monitoring report for each programme they deliver and submit these to quality@rau.ac.uk by the deadline.

4.6 Report deadlines for Undergraduate and Postgraduate reports are set annually by Academic Quality.

5. Scrutiny of Annual Programme Monitoring Reports

5.1 The Deans of Subject are responsible for ensuring programme monitoring reports are completed in their subject areas. Deans may wish to set up

programme monitoring meetings with programme teams to discuss data and report outcomes.

5.2 Deans have oversight of Annual Programme Monitoring Reports produced by Collaborative Partners, and these should be taken into account when considering programme enhancement action and/or changes.

5.3 Academic Quality will ensure that reports are completed for each programme and ensure that the overall focus and coherence of each programme has been maintained since the last monitoring report;

5.4 Deans are responsible for consideration Annual Programme Monitoring Reports in detail, assuring themselves that all areas have been completed and the action and enhancement plans are specific for the purpose of enhancing the quality of programmes. Deans are responsible for:

- assuring themselves that the quality of action and enhancement plans are appropriate;
- ensuring that good practice is identified and shared across the subject area(s)
- ensuring that External Examiner comments are taking into account;
- ensuring that student feedback from surveys and/or programme committees is taken into account;
- principles issues arising, including issues to be addressed at University level, are considered.

5.5 The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC), on behalf of Academic Board, ensures that appropriate arrangements are in place for the monitoring of University awards and programmes. AQSC receives Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and action and enhancement plans in relation to quality assurance and standards, and keeps the effectiveness of these processes under review. AQSC together with Academic Board monitor key data across the institution.

5.6 All undergraduate and postgraduate Annual Programme Monitoring Reports will be considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) in the autumn/spring, with ongoing monitoring of the action and enhancement plan the responsibility of Deans of Subject and Programme Leaders.

5.7 Annual Programme Monitoring Reports produced by Collaborative Partners will be presented by the Deans or Academic Link Tutors at AQSC. Updates to partner action plans will be monitored through partnership operational

meetings, the minutes of which will be shared with Deans by Academic Quality.

6.   Use of Action and Enhancement Plans

6.1   Action and Enhancement plans should consolidate the actions arising from each area of the Annual Programme Monitoring Report. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) and monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the year through programme meetings.

6.2   Action planning provides the opportunity for reflection and for a joint approach to improvements and quality enhancements. Though the monitoring report is completed by the Programme Leader, action planning provides the opportunity across the programme team to bring together ideas and best practice from subject experts.

6.3   Outstanding actions from the previous action and enhancement plan are to be carried over into the new plan for the forthcoming academic year.