Purpose

1. The responsibility for the academic quality and standards of Newcastle University’s programmes rests with Senate. The delivery of the University’s programmes takes place through its academic units, with Senate delegating to boards of studies a range of responsibilities for overseeing this delivery to ensure that academic quality and standards are maintained.

2. The responsibilities of boards of studies are detailed in the University’s standard terms of reference. The terms of reference are supplemented by a board of studies schedule that sets out those areas and issues that a board must consider during each academic year, in order to meet its responsibilities.

3. The purpose of Annual Monitoring and Review (AMR) is to complement and supplement the oversight of programmes through regular meetings of boards of studies. The aims of AMR are therefore to:
   a. Reflect holistically on the operation of the programme over the previous academic year, drawing and building on the consideration of key issues by the board of studies.
   b. Identify potential new opportunities and developments intended to improve the programmes for which the board of studies is responsible (including identifying examples of effective practice for dissemination).
   c. Develop and agree an action plan for the enhancement of programmes over the following academic year.
   d. Provide assurance to the University that core quality assurance activities relating to taught programmes have been undertaken, and allow the University to identify and consider any issues of strategy, policy or process emerging from AMR.

Scope

4. This policy covers all undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.

5. All boards of studies must submit a completed AMR form each academic year for consideration by their Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (FLTSEC). The normal expectation is that each board of studies should submit a single form covering all the programmes for which it is responsible (if a board is responsible for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, it should submit a separate AMR form for each of these two levels of provision).

6. A board of studies may choose to submit multiple AMR forms for different programmes / suites of programmes for which it is responsible, if they feel that this is appropriate given the nature of their provision. This is a choice a board of studies may make, not a University requirement.

7. Where a board of studies is responsible for programmes that one or more of the following types of provision, they should include consideration of these types of provision within their completed AMR form:
   a. Combined and/or Joint Honours.¹
   b. Programmes offered through educational partnerships (in which cases the partner organisation should be written in collaboration or consultation with the partner).

---

¹ Where a board of studies is responsible for a specific named programme(s), rather than that being the responsibility of a specific and separate Combined/Joint Honours Board of Studies, they should incorporate this programme(s) in their AMR report; if they contribute modules to a programme that belongs to a specific and separate Combined/Joint Honours Board of Studies the responsibility for reporting on this provision rests with that separate Combined/Joint Honours Board of Studies.
c. Any provision offered through the University’s Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS).

Quality and equality

8. In relation to learning, teaching and the student experience, the University’s Equality Strategy and Action Plan includes a commitment ‘to move from simply providing an environment which is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation to one which positively promotes good relationships between people who work and study and engage with the University’.

9. The management and monitoring of programmes by boards of studies through both their regular pattern of meetings and the AMR process, allows reflection on the needs, experiences, issues and priorities of different groups of students. Examples of the types of issues that boards may consider can be found at http://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/inclusive-environment/providing-support/.

Consideration of statistical data

10. There is a wide range of statistical data available to support boards of studies in considering the academic quality and standards of their programmes.

11. A range of reports on recruitment, applications, student progression and student achievement can be accessed via the Portal (My Workplace), and as they feed directly from the SAP student record system they are updated overnight (so that any corrections to the student record will be reflected in reports the following day).

12. Boards of studies are also required to consider a range of survey data: National Student Survey; Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey; module evaluations; International Student Barometer; and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education.

13. The board of studies schedule sets out the data that must be considered by boards, with this consideration being recorded in the minutes of the relevant board meeting. There are a series of prompts that boards of studies may find helpful in considering this data, available at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh-bos-schedule.pdf

14. For undergraduate programmes, guidelines are available on how to access statistical reports on data that boards of studies are required to consider. These are available at: https://internal.ncl.ac.uk/planning/performance/school/UG-AMR.htm

15. As part of AMR, boards of studies should consider the key issues emerging from the data they have considered, and this consideration should inform the completion of their AMR form in terms of both the issues reported and the action points included in the AMR form. The AMR form should identify key issues and action points arising from these, rather than provide a detailed commentary.

Procedure

Board of studies

16. All AMR reports must be submitted using the standard University form available at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh-amr-ugform.docx (Undergraduate programmes) http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh-amr-pgtform.docx (Postgraduate Taught programmes). This form has five sections, each of which must be completed:

   a. Section A: a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis. Examples of the types of issues that boards may consider can be found at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh-ltr-sampleswot.pdf.

   b. Section B: a report on key assessment issues where the data is held at academic unit rather than University level.

   c. Section C: for programmes delivered through an educational partnership (including articulation arrangements), a report on the operation of that partnership. Details of relevant programmes can be found in the University’s Register of Educational Partnerships.
d. Section D: a checklist on the operation of key quality assurance processes.

e. Section E: an action plan for the forthcoming academic year, based on issues arising from Sections A to D, and including actions from the previous year’s report that have not been completed.

17. Typically completed AMR reports will be five to six pages long, although there may be circumstances where for good reason boards of studies feel that they need to submit lengthier reports.

18. Boards of studies are responsible for ensuring completion of the AMR report, and agreeing it prior to submission of FLTSEC. Completed AMR reports must be submitted to the relevant faculty learning and teaching team.

Faculty consideration

19. FLTSECs are responsible for considering AMR reports from boards of studies. The purpose of this consideration is to:
   a. Ensure that all boards of studies have been meeting their responsibilities for managing the academic quality and standards of their programmes.
   b. Identify examples of effective practice identified in AMR reports, for dissemination within the faculty or University.
   c. Identify and address any issues of strategy, policy or process relating to the faculty that are identified in AMR reports.
   d. Identify any issues of strategy, policy and process identified in AMR reports that raise issues relating to University strategy, policy or process.

20. FLTSEC review is a peer led process. All AMR reports are considered by a faculty quality circle, leading to the production of a faculty summary report that is considered by FLTSEC. The Chair of FLTSEC (or nominee) provides written feedback including any action points to each Board of Studies. FLTSECs forward the summary report, together with an extract from the minutes of the meeting of FLTSEC where it was considered, for consideration by Taught Programmes Sub-Committee (TPSC). This should be submitted to the Learning and Teaching Development Service (LTDS).

University level consideration

21. FLTSEC summary reports are considered in the first instance by TPSC. The purpose of this consideration is to:
   a. Confirm that AMR has been conducted in line with University policy, including the effectiveness of faculty monitoring of the process.
   b. Consider any issues of University strategy, policy and process referred to it by FLTSECs. Where these issues require clarification within existing University policy and processes, TPSC will respond on behalf the University. Where they may require changes to existing University policy and processes, TPSC will make recommendations to ULTSEC for consideration for approval.
   c. Identify any common themes arising from FLTSEC summaries, and where appropriate either take action or recommend action to the relevant body within the University.
   d. Identify and disseminate examples of exemplary practice evident from the FLTSEC summaries.

22. TPSC will then provide an overview report to ULTSEC addressing these issues. ULTSEC will consider the report and any recommendations made to it, following which feedback will be provided to FLTSECs through an updated version of the TPSC overview report.

Timescales

23. The schedule for the stages of the AMR process set out above is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Taught postgraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consideration by board of studies</td>
<td>October / November</td>
<td>December / January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration by FLTSEC</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration by TPSC</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration by ULTSEC</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULTSEC feedback to FLTSECs</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This document is primarily intended for: Chairs of Boards of Studies
Degree Programme Directors
Course Representatives

Contact: ltds@ncl.ac.uk 0191 208 8491/3978