Quality and Enhancement Framework for Research Degree Programmes

Purpose

1. The University is responsible for the standards of the awards made in its name and for providing the research learning opportunities and research learning experiences necessary to enable students to achieve those standards. At Newcastle University, there are annual and periodic reviews of research degree programmes, which are crucial and invaluable elements of the University’s quality assurance and enhancement framework.

2. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework for Research Degree Programmes provides Schools/Institutes with the opportunity to reflect on current practice in relation to Research Degree Programmes and provides a forum to consider the enhancement of the student experiences through the sharing of good practice and feedback from external sources and students.

3. The Framework enables the University to meet the requirement of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) that ‘Higher Education providers monitor their research degree provision against internal and external indicators and targets that reflect the context in which research degrees are being offered.

4. The review is an opportunity to highlight strengths of current provision as well as a means of reflecting upon any weaknesses which need to be addressed.

5. This Framework is applicable to all elements of PGR provision, including any taught components:
   a. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
   b. Integrated PhD (iPhD)
   c. Professional Doctorates
   d. Doctor of Medicine (MD)
   e. Engineering Doctorate (EngD)
   f. Master of Literature (MLitt)
   g. Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
   h. Master of Music (MMus)
   i. Master of Research (MRes)

Procedure

Overview

6. The University regards annual and periodic review (in our own terminology – Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) and Review Visits) as two parts of the same process of continuous improvement and enhancement of provision. AMR and Review Visits are intertwined in that the AMR reports provide a foundation and sources of evidence for the academic unit to use in the self-evaluative SWOT for the Review Visit.

7. The Annual Monitoring Review of Research Degree Programmes (AMR) will be undertaken for each School/Institute, providing a formal opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of research degree provision and focussing on aspects of the Newcastle University Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes through the completion of an AMR report.
8. The AMR reports are supplemented by Review Visits to approximately two Schools/Institutes per Faculty, as determined by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

**Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) Reports**

9. Each School/Institute is required to complete the AMR report for each programme or group of programmes. Each School/Institute is responsible for determining which programmes within its provision will be reported jointly. All programmes must be reported on annually. (Guidance on how to complete the form can be found in Appendix 1.)

10. Ownership of the process resides with the Head of School/Director of Institute; however, they have the ability to delegate authority for carrying out the process to an appropriate person or committee.

11. The AMR report is based primarily on the core elements of the Newcastle University Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes; evaluation of each of these areas will be supported by an appropriate evidence base including centrally provided statistics; the results of the national Higher Education Academy Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Graduate School Committee (GSC), Student-Staff Committee and other relevant minutes.

12. The AMR report incorporates a section asking for critical reflection on areas of practice, as well as completion of an action plan where the proposed response to any of the issues raised should be documented. The report should explain how the previous year’s actions were addressed and append the previous action plan for reference.

13. The review relates to activities undertaken during the previous academic year, except for recruitment, which relates to the current academic year. The reporting date for the recruitment statistics to be considered in the review will be the 1st December of any academic year.

14. The completed AMR report should be considered by the relevant body within the School/Institute responsible for Postgraduate Research quality assurance related matters before submission to the Faculty GSC.

15. The completed Report Form should be submitted by the School/Institute to the relevant GSC for consideration.

16. GSC’s are responsible for considering:
   a. Whether there are examples of good practice in the reports that could be disseminated on a University-wide basis;
   b. Whether there are any issues arising from the reports that require consideration;
   c. Whether the Annual Report has adequately considered all provision within the School/institute;
   d. Whether the process has been rigorous and whether to report to the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee (PGRSC) on behalf of ULTSEC that confidence can be expressed in the quality, academic standards and management of the Research Degree Programmes under consideration;
   e. Whether there are areas of concern/for action that should be brought to the attention of relevant bodies.

17. Following consideration of the reports, a Faculty Annual Review Summary Report and Faculty Action Plan will be submitted to PGRSC for consideration of any institution-wide issues, the dissemination of good practice across the University and the confirmation that the review exercise has been appropriately carried out by Schools/Institutes and monitored by the Faculty.
18. The Faculty Action Plans will be considered by PGRSC to identify any common themes and to agree any institution-wide action required.

19. Supplementing the AMR reports, each year up to two Schools/Institutes per Faculty will be selected by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies/GSC for a Review Visit. The purpose of the visit is to allow a Review Team to explore the information presented in the AMR report and drill-down into the annual review process to evaluate its efficacy.

20. The visit will normally last no longer than 2-3 hours, including a meeting with student representatives.

21. If there is substantial taught or educational partnership provision in the School/Institute, then there is scope to extend the visit and allow for an additional meeting. The relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies will make the final decision about the duration of the visit.

22. Within a 6-year period, it is expected that all Schools/Institutes should have been visited at least once. However, if the Review Team identifies any areas of concern, a follow-up visit may be required the following year by the full Review Team or a sub-group as is deemed necessary to monitor improvements.

23. The Review Visit will be carried out by a Review Team comprising of:
   a. The relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies (acting as Chair*);
   b. Senior Student Policy Manager (also acting as Review Secretary);
   c. Member of academic staff from another Faculty;
   d. The relevant Graduate School Administrator;
   e. External Advisor (nominated by the School/Institute and approved by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies);
   f. Student Representative (from another School/Institute within the Faculty under review)

   (*The Chair may ask other staff to join the Review Team, as appropriate – or appoint a nominee if they are unable to attend the meeting.)

24. It is expected that the members of academic staff on the Review Team will have significant research and supervisory experience.

25. The School/Institute will nominate an appropriate External Advisor, based on his/her research and supervisory experience in the field. The nomination will be approved by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The External Advisor will be paid £400 plus expenses.

26. On selection of the Schools/Institutes, GSC should inform the Senior Student Policy Manager, who will then liaise with the School/Institute on the arrangements for the visit.

27. Schools/Institutes are responsible for preparing a self-evaluative, length-limited SWOT analysis about the nature of the research provision, organised according to the principles outlined in Appendix 2. In developing the SWOT, the School/Institute should draw on an evidence base such as the following: previous AMR reports; degree programme handbooks and other information provided to students; external examiner comments; relevant management information (from the AMR report) and student questionnaire results. The Senior Student Policy Manager can provide advice to Schools/Institutes preparing to write the SWOT.

28. If there is substantial Educational Partnership provision, the Review Visit Secretary will liaise with LTDS to prepare a one page summary document.

29. If there is substantial taught provision, the Review Visit Secretary will liaise with LTDS to compile quality assurance documentation and complete a summary report (Appendix 3).
30. The Review Visit Secretary stipulates the deadline by which the School/Institute must submit the SWOT, normally at least four weeks before the date of the Review Visit. The Review Visit Secretary and the Review Visit Chair may review and provide feedback on a draft of the SWOT before this time.

31. The Review Visit Secretary is responsible for liaising with the School/Institute/LTDS and Graduate School Administrator to compile the documentation required for the Review Visit and will set a deadline for submission of the required documentation.

32. The Review Visit Secretary is responsible for compiling all necessary documentation, including the SWOT and brief factual statement on the scope of the review (e.g. programmes under review, numbers of students) and circulating to the Review Team three weeks before the Review Visit.

33. The Review Visit Secretary will arrange a virtual meeting with the Review Team approximately two weeks prior to the visit day, to discuss themes and possible avenues of inquiry, having read the SWOT and other documentation. These themes are relayed to the School/institute ahead of the Review Visit and are used by the Review Visit Secretary and Chair to agree the structure of the Review Visit (i.e. number, length, attendees and focus of each meeting).

34. The Review Team will consider all research degree provision within the School/Institute during the Review Visit. The Review Visit will normally follow the structure outlined below:
   a. Meeting with student representatives;
   b. Pre-determined meetings with staff;
   c. Review Team meeting to agree areas of good practice and recommendations;
   d. Feedback to staff

   The duration of the individual meetings is determined by the Review Team, but meetings should normally be no longer than 30 minutes in length and followed by a break of approximately five minutes. This allows the Review Chair to summarise items to be included in the report as commendations or recommendations. At the end of the visit, the Review Chair provides oral feedback on the conclusions of the visit.

35. The meeting with student representatives will take place at the start of the Review Visit. The students identified to meet the Review Team should be representative of the School/Institute’s research degree programme profile, covering the range of awards available and additionally representative of the student profile of the School Institute. (E.g. ensuring that international students are well represented, as well as an appropriate gender mix.)

36. The Review Team meeting with the students will provide the opportunity to:
   a. Share views of the research environment provided by the School/Institute;
   b. Highlight any areas of provision where students have concerns or examples of good practice;
   c. Provide feedback on the provision from the wider student cohort.

37. It is recommended that the School/Institute SWOT report is shared with the identified student representatives prior to the review for information.

**Following the Review Visit**

38. The Review Visit Secretary writes up the findings in a draft Review Visit report (Appendix 4) which outlines the deliberations and conclusions of the Review Visit, highlights areas of commendable practice, makes recommendations and includes timelines for implementation, where appropriate. The report is then agreed by the Review Team and submitted to the School/Institute no later than four weeks following the Review Visit.
39. The School/Institute has four weeks to correct any factual inaccuracies and to submit a formal response to the outcome to the Review Visit Secretary. The School/Institute response will briefly outline how any issues identified by the Review Team will be addressed and included in the action plan, as necessary.

40. The Review Visit Secretary will submit the visit report and the School/Institute response to the relevant Graduate School Administrator for inclusion and consideration at the next GSC meeting. Ideally, this should happen within four months of the Review Visit.

41. GSC will consider the report and response, particularly for areas of good practice to disseminate and any issues which have been addressed to the Faculty. GSC will submit the Visit report and the relevant GSC minute to the PGRSC for institutional consideration of the outcomes, in particular any University level recommendations.

42. PGRSC will consider each of the reports to ensure that the institutional-wide areas of good practice are disseminated, that any areas of concern are addressed and that the academic standards of the programme under review have been appropriately considered by the subject area and monitored by GSCs. PGRSC will report to ULTSEC on an annual basis on the outcome of the Review Visits.

Reporting Timelines

**Annual Monitoring Review (AMR)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>Performance statistics to be provided to Schools/Institutes by GSAs on AMR report form.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>AMR reports to be completed and considered by the appropriate School/Institute committee with responsibility for quality assurance matters and forwarded to the GSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>AMR reports to be considered by the relevant GSC’s.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>GSC’s to provide a summary report to the PGRSC for consideration.</td>
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</table>

**Review Visits**

The Review Visits are normally scheduled to take place between April and July each academic year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three weeks prior to visit</th>
<th>Review documentation circulated to the Review Team.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Two weeks prior to visit</td>
<td>Review Visit Secretary arranges a virtual meeting with Review Team to discuss themes, lines of inquiry and agree structure of Review Visit. This will be communicated to the Academic Unit once agreed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day of visit</td>
<td>The Chair of the Review Team will provide oral feedback at the end of the review visit to the School/Institute.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within two weeks of the visit</td>
<td>Production of draft report by Review Team Secretary.</td>
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### Quality and Enhancement Framework for Research Degree Programmes

**Student Progress Service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Action and Consideration</th>
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| Within 6 weeks of the visit| • School/Institute submits to the Review Team Secretary a formal response to the outcome of the review, which will briefly outline how any identified issues will be addressed and included in the action plan as necessary.  
  • The Review Visit Secretary will submit the report and the provider’s response to the GSC Secretary for inclusion and consideration at the next available GSC. |
| Within 3 months of the visit| GSC will consider the report and response, particularly for areas of good practice to disseminate and any issues which have been addressed to the Faculty. |
| Within 4 months of the visit| GSC will submit the visit report and the relevant GSC minute to the PGRSC for institutional consideration of the outcomes and in particular any University level recommendations. |
| April                      | At the April PGRSC meeting, each of the reports will be considered to ensure that the institutional-wide areas of good practice are disseminated, that any areas of concern are addressed and that the academic standards of the programmes under review have been appropriately considered by the subject area and monitored by GSC’s. |
| May                        | The PGRSC will report to ULTSEC on an annual basis on the outcome of the six Annual Review visits. |

*Last updated by Student Progress Service following approval by ULTSEC in July 2017.  
Contact: nicky.houghton@ncl.ac.uk (Senior Student Policy Manager)*
Appendix 1 - Guidance on completion of the AMR report

- The following are examples of areas that may be considered when undertaking the review; these are not prescriptive but are to be used as indicative of the type of matters to be considered within the review. Where appropriate, the relevant section of the Newcastle University Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes is identified for reference.
- All research degree provision should be reflected upon when completing the Annual Report form.
- All internal and external survey data such as the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey should be formally responded to through the annual report.
- Any actions identified by the review process should be incorporated into the action plan.
- If sections of text are copied directly from the previous year’s report, red or italicized text should be used to signal what has been added or deleted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMR Section</th>
<th>Examples of Issues for consideration</th>
<th>Evidence base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section A1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action Plan Progress</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explain briefly how the previous year’s actions were addressed and append the previous action plan for reference, if necessary. A detailed account of each point is not required. An exception approach is entirely appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section A2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Strengths and Weaknesses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What has the review identified as a strength of your programme(s) over the last year?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What has gone particularly well? Examples of good practice?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What has the review identified as having gone less well over the last year? Any areas or issues of weakness?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section A3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Selection, admission and induction (CoP Section 8 -18)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Are admissions targets being met?</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- How do Academic Units ensure that students receive an induction? (CoP Section 17 &amp; 18)</td>
<td>questionnaire on recruitment, admission and induction procedures. (CoP Section 124)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How is feedback on the induction process considered?</td>
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<td>- Analyse entry profiles, for example student qualifications or the standards of English on entry, the male/female, home/overseas balance; do these have an impact on the performance?</td>
<td>Statistics on entry profile, gender, ethnicity, home/overseas status. (Accessed via the Portal – Annual Degree Programme Statistics or Business)</td>
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</table>
| Research Environment (CoP Section 4-7) | - Are there any areas within the research environment that are causes for concern and, if so, how can these be addressed?
- Are there any issues relating to resources that impact on the research environment (for example, IT, Library, Laboratory space)?
- How does the Academic Unit facilitate opportunities for students to develop peer support networks? (e.g. social spaces)?
- How does the Academic Unit plan to address any key issues highlighted in the PRES Student Survey Results, where appropriate?
- Comment on current supervision arrangements – for example supervisor workloads/ support/training for supervisors – monitoring of supervision arrangements (CoP Section 38-54). |
| Warehouse reports) | - GSC/SSC minutes |
| | - RAE/REF results |
| | - PRES results |
| | - Statistics on number of students per supervisor |
| | - GSA administered annual survey, exit survey about the totality of the learning experience |
| | - GSC/SSC minutes |
| Student Support and Guidance (CoP Section 38-54) | - How are supervisory sessions monitored to meet CoP Section 54?
- Comment on pastoral care provided to students within the Academic Unit and its effectiveness?
- Have students been adequately briefed on plagiarism, and are there any issues in this regard?
- How are part-time students catered for? Are there issues which need to be addressed to support part-time provision?
- Have any ethical issues arisen that have proven difficult? How have these been addressed, and has there been appropriate support and guidance for students on ethical considerations? |
| | - PRES results |
| | - SSC minutes |
| | - ePortfolio |
| Research Training and Skills (CoP Section 21-23) | - How does the Academic Unit ensure that arrangements are in place to meet Faculty training requirements? (CoP Section 22)
- How do Academic Units encourage and identify areas for skills development? (CoP Section 27)
- Does the Faculty’s research development provision meet the needs of the Academic Unit’s students?
- Comment on any additional areas for consideration by the Faculty/GSC. |
| | - Statistics on attendance at induction |
| | - PRES results |
| | - GSC/SSC minutes |
| | - Student Feedback of Faculty Research Training |
| Employability | - How successful have students been in moving into appropriate jobs?
- Have any areas been identified where further skills development is required to aid graduates moving into appropriate employment?
- What do you do to support and mentor PGRs who teach in your Academic Unit? |
| | - Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education statistics |
| | - Feedback from recent graduates |
| | - PRES results |
| | - GSC/SSC minutes |

SECTION B1
Performance Statistics provided by Graduate School Administrators

*Student Progress Service*
### SECTION B2

**Performance Analysis**
- Compare the monitoring statistics against benchmarks and identify any trends, commenting on issues identified as a result and how these may be addressed. Address temporal changes in performance statistics.
- How does the Academic Unit ensure that CoP requirements for LA, PA, Progression, Meeting Records, Submission and Completion rates are being met?
- How does the Academic Unit ensure that any significant issues are being addressed?
- Comment on any increases or decreases in complaints/appeals, both formal and informal and reflect on any trends/common themes?

**Progression & monitoring (CoP Section 72-83)**
- Learning agreements (CoP Section 19-20)
- Project approvals (CoP Section 64-71)
- Meeting Records
- Complaints and Resolution and Academic Query and Appeals (CoP Section 131-135)

Please note that anonymity should be maintained when commenting upon complaints and appeals.

- Key performance statistics provided by GSAs
- GSC/SSC minutes
- Statistics on number of complaints and appeals

### SECTION B3

**Benefit to Wider Community**
- The benefit of DTCs/DTPs to the wider community should be captured, where they exist.

**Student Feedback and Representation (CoP Section 124-126)**
- What are the methods through which student feedback on the programme is gained?
- Describe any key issues raised by students on the research programme, how these have been addressed and how actions have been feedback to students?

- PRES results
- GSC/SSC minutes
- GSA administered questionnaires

**Examiner and other Stakeholder Feedback**
- Describe any issues raised by external examiners and how these issues have been dealt with.
- Describe the response to any other feedback on the provision (for example from funding agencies, employers and other stakeholders). How is this feedback sought?

- Examiner reports
- GSC/SSC minutes

### SECTION B4

**Future Developments**
- Comment upon any future developments which impact upon the research degree programme environment

- Internal Committee minutes
### SECTION C

**Response to PRES Data**
- Comment on any actions taken as the result of the most recent PRES data
- How have any changes been communicated to students?

### SECTION D

**Taught Elements of Research Degree Provision**
- Are the aims and learning outcomes of the programmes being addressed appropriately by the modules?
- Does the delivery method remain appropriate? Please highlight any innovative methods used in the delivery and assessment of the modules or where changes are required to improve the student experience.
- Do the results of any module give cause for concern?
- Do the methods of assessment allow students to demonstrate their full potential?
- Describe any issues highlighted by the external examiner(s) and what has been done to address these.
- Are there any issues relating to the learning resources for the modules, and if so, how are these being addressed?
- Please report on any issues arising from student survey data and actions taken to address these.
- Have any key issues been raised through Student-Staff Committees or module evaluation questionnaires, and how have these been dealt with?
- Please summarise the percentage of feedback on summatively assessed coursework returned to students within 20 working days, AND the percentage of feedback on exams returned within the stated policy deadline.
- Please summarise the use of discretion by boards of examiners in respect of the programme(s) covered by this report.
- Please comment on the use of discretion for the programme(s) under review (including the use of PECs), and note any issues.

### SECTION E

**Doctoral Training Provision (if relevant)**
- How have any DTP/DTCs been implemented at School-level, i.e. additional facilities or changes to facilities, researcher development training, etc.?
- Have there been any specific challenges posed by the doctoral training provision, especially in providing...
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<th><strong>SECTION F</strong></th>
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| Educational Partnerships (if relevant) | - What educational partnership arrangements do you have with other institutions (e.g. joint or dual awards, significant contribution from external institutions)?  
- How are students recruited onto the degrees? What marketing strategies are in place, both in the UK and abroad (as appropriate)?  
- How are supervisory arrangements managed?  
- What quality assurance guidelines and processes are in place?  
Student Numbers Supervisory Information Partnership agreement |

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<tr>
<th><strong>SECTION G</strong></th>
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| Action Plan | - Identify source of issue (for example progression data), not a detailed or lengthy statement.  
- State clearly who is responsible for carrying out the action.  
- State the date by which it is intended that the action should be completed.  
From above sources. Include previous year’s action plan, where appropriate. |
Appendix 2 Guidelines for the SWOT analysis

The key objective of the SWOT is to consider the internal and external factors that affect that nature of the research provision within the unit; to identify the positive aspects and strengths of the provision; and to consider how best to mitigate the current weaknesses and internal/external threats.

Format
The final SWOT should be no more than three pages of A4. This will include an introduction and a section on each of the four elements (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) – approximately 0.5 pages per section.

The SWOT should reference specific examples and evidence of the points made, but the subject area is not expected to submit this evidence unless asked to do so. The SWOT should also note the impact of each point and how the unit may respond to it in future. Academic Units can choose to use the following template, or another format if this is felt to be more effective or appropriate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Strengths</td>
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</table>

The lists of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats should be as specific as possible. Precise, verifiable statements should be used, which reference the evidence base and it should avoid using generalities.

Introductory Page
Include essential background information that the panel members need to know about the Unit. This should always include a list of programmes and the number of students on each programme (which can be provided by the Graduate School Administrator). It may also be desirable to include a brief ‘history’ of the unit, including recent or anticipated changes in structure.

Initial Questions for SWOT
Strengths (Internal to the Academic Unit)

All strengths should be specific to your academic unit (when measured against comparators or similar programmes);
- What advantages does your School/subject area have (i.e. over comparators)?
- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What unique or effective resources can you draw upon that others cannot?
- What do people (students/parents/teachers/other academic colleagues) in your market see as your strengths?
- What factors mean that you recruit, retain and develop students?
- What do your students and alumni remember and recommend about your provision?

Weaknesses (Internal to the Academic Unit)
Weaknesses should be specific to the academic unit, and should not reference external threats (this will come later). All weaknesses should be unique to your academic unit, in the sense that other comparators will not all struggle with the same thing.

- What could you improve?
- What can and should you avoid doing in the future?
- What are people (students/parents/teachers/other academic colleagues) in your market likely to see as weaknesses?
What factors lose you student recruitment?
What factors result in a less successful and/or rewarding student learning experience?
Are there areas where your comparators are succeeding and you are not?

Opportunities (External to the Academic Unit)
Opportunities should be external factors or situations that the academic unit wants to take advantage of in the future. Although you should not reference things already happening with the academic unit, you may include items that are either within the broader University or in the external environment. The SWOT table should explain how you will respond to the opportunities available and how they will have an impact on learning and teaching.

What good opportunities can you spot in your discipline (e.g. funding, research opportunities, increase in student numbers, local initiatives, etc.)?
What interesting trends are you aware of?
What changing technologies could have a positive impact on your provision?
Are there opportunities within the University that you have not previously taken advantage of, but which you could use in the future?

Threats (External to the Academic Unit)
Like Opportunities, Threats should be primarily external factors or situations to which the academic unit must respond. These may include factors within the broader University or in the external environment.

What obstacles do you face? Are these new obstacles?
What are your competitors doing that may be a threat to your success?
Is technology changing and threatening your position, e.g. in student or industry expectations?
Has the workplace shifted its expectations, so that you need to change how you prepare students?
Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten learning and teaching?

Suggested Process for Developing the SWOT
There is no required process for developing the SWOT, so the academic unit may choose to nominate an individual or individuals who are responsible for preparing it. You may wish to involve a group of colleagues in the brainstorming process, and then have one person write up the notes from the meeting in the required format.

Activity One: Brainstorming Strengths
To get started, brainstorm responses to this question: Considering our existing and any planned developments, what do we do well in learning and teaching? You may ask participants to brainstorm responses in advance of the session and come prepared to discuss them; you could also start the session with this activity. Either way, what matters is that you start to list the areas, resources, people, external links, etc. that you feel mark you out from similar subject areas in other universities. At this stage, you don’t need to worry about evidence; this can be added later.

Activity Two: Analysis of External Factors
The second activity asks participants to consider factors in the external environment that may impact learning and teaching. Although there are no requirements to do so, you may wish to divide the environment according to the acronym PEST: political, environmental, social, and technological. You may also wish to think both about the near environment in other parts of the University and the farther world outside the University. Again, this activity could be done before the session or at the beginning of the session; either way, the goal is to generate ideas and suggestions that will be refined later. In addition to thinking about the external factors, you should note initial ideas about how they will impact the subject area and what might be done in response.

Activity Three: SWOT Analysis
Once you have your ideas in place, you can move onto the formal SWOT analysis. At this stage, you can begin (as a large group, in teams, or individuals) to populate the table, noting each key element (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity or Threat) along with supporting evidence, impact, and responses to be taken. Informal notes are completely fine at the initial stage, although the final submission should conform to the format noted above.
Appendix 3 - Overview of Quality Assurance Summary for Taught Provision

If the School/Institute under review has substantial taught provision (as identified by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies), the Review Secretary will prepare a summary document based on the following items of documentation:

Centrally-Held Documentation:

1. External examiners’ reports and Board of Studies’ responses (from the past 3 years) - LTDS
2. Programme specifications and regulations - LTDS
3. Module outline forms - LTDS
4. Annual Monitoring and Review reports (from the past 3 years) – GSA
5. GSC minutes (from the past 3 years) - GSA

School/Institute-Held Documentation:

1. Board of Studies minutes (from the past 3 years)
2. Student-Staff Committee minutes (from the past 3 years)
3. School/Institute policy on RPL, plus any relevant paperwork and examples where RPL has been granted
Appendix 4 Structure of Review Visit Report

All Review Visit reports will be written using the following structure and headings:

1. Introduction
2. Code of Practice areas discussed at the Review Visit
3. Summary of Good Practice
4. Recommendations for enhancement by the School/Institute
5. Recommendations to the Faculty
6. Recommendations to the University
7. Overall judgement