



Annual Monitoring

Procedure And Guidance Notes

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1. Purpose

This procedure and the guidance notes have been prepared to ensure consistency with the Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration, UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies' (PSRB) Requirements, Consumer Protection Law, and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation.

The University of Buckingham is committed to ensuring that the programmes which are delivered meet the National Qualification frameworks, are of a high standard, and that the programmes effectively prepare students for the workforce on completion of their studies.

The aim is to ensure that the University of Buckingham sets and maintains review systems that are high-quality leading to valued qualifications, with explicit positive learning outcomes for students.

Academic Services colleagues, Faculty Quality Managers (FQMs) and Collaborations Coordinators (CC) (for Collaborative Partners only) can provide further guidance on the application of this procedure and guidance document as required. Any minor deviation from the agreed procedure would require agreement from the Registrar and Chief Administrative Officer or the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic and Provost. Any major changes to the procedure will require approval from the University Assessment, Learning and Teaching Committee (UALTC).

Annual Monitoring is the process through which the university establishes that an existing programme continues to be academically viable, academic standards continue to be appropriately defined, the programme continues to offer students the best opportunity to learn and is fit for purpose.

Annual Monitoring also provides the opportunity to understand programme financial viability, recruitment and marketing provisions, programme-associated special regulations, student feedback and future programme requirements. It is about assuring ongoing quality through internal and external peer review and adds value by reviewing and enhancing the quality of the existing proposal.

The programme review should also look at the retrospective review of submitted business cases as appropriate to ensure that programmes are meeting the forecast performance, particularly after the first year of delivery post approval. They should also be reviewed in the context of their suitability within the wider portfolio of the academic area being reviewed.

Holding programme reviews at a specific time each year provides the wider university departments with a structure within which to plan workload, in order to implement and complete any changes and facilitate timely notification to students of any changes to their programme provision prior to the September intake.

A further key aim of the Annual Monitoring Review is to ensure most change requests, in particular long-term and strategic changes, will be proposed, submitted and approved within the annual monitoring period. However, there is scope for changes to be made through the rest of the academic year with appropriate justification and lead time. This again ensures appropriate lead time for change preparation, as well as a suitable period in which to notify prospective and current students of changes which are likely to impact their programme.

2. Principles

The Annual Monitoring Procedure creates an opportunity for all taught academic provision offered and accredited by the University of Buckingham to be reviewed in the same way, to ensure a level

playing field for review and parity within the review process. The benchmarks of the Annual Monitoring Procedure will be reviewed periodically in alignment with the procedural review.

At the inception of the University of Buckingham Annual Monitoring process, the intention will be to ensure that standards are met and quality enhanced utilising the following principles:

- The process is data informed, making use of contextually relevant data to inform decisions and drive enhancement.
- The process is transparent, and all decisions which are made will be made available to all staff and communicated with all appropriate stakeholders.
- Fundamentally the process is for student benefit, ensuring that all programmes offered by the university give students the highest quality academic experience.
- Outcomes of all panels are action-driven, ensuring that the decisions made within the annual monitoring panels are clearly explained, and that they can be remedied with action.

3. Scope

The Annual Monitoring Procedure is applicable to all credit-bearing programmes which are delivered by the University of Buckingham, including Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught programmes, credit-bearing Short Courses, Apprenticeship programmes, and those programmes delivered in conjunction with collaborative partners.

For Collaborative Partners, where a specific role is named, such as Programme Director or Dean, this should be taken as the counterpart or equivalent role within the partner institution. Similarly, Collaborations Coordinators (CC), fulfil the same role as Faculty Quality Managers (FQM) within the university.

This Procedure is designed to work with all taught Undergraduate and Postgraduate provision offered in the merged faculties. The faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences and Education, and the programmes delivered by our collaborative partners, may be reviewed outside the standard timeline, however, the standards created within this procedure are maintained. There might also be specific programmes, such as the part time LLB Law, for example, which need to be reviewed outside this schedule due to the academic timetable.

The Annual Monitoring Schedule ([Fig.1](#)) relates to the timeline for annual monitoring which is conducted within the merged faculties. It ensures adequate time for reviews to take place and any subsequent change to provision requests to be documented, processed and communicated to all relevant stakeholders including affected students, offer-holders and applicants ahead of the autumn term. For the Faculty of Education, it is expected that their reviews will take place in the summer, following the completion of a cohort, ready for changes to be implemented for the incoming September cohort. The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences will conduct their reviews in alignment with the expectations from the General Medical Council.

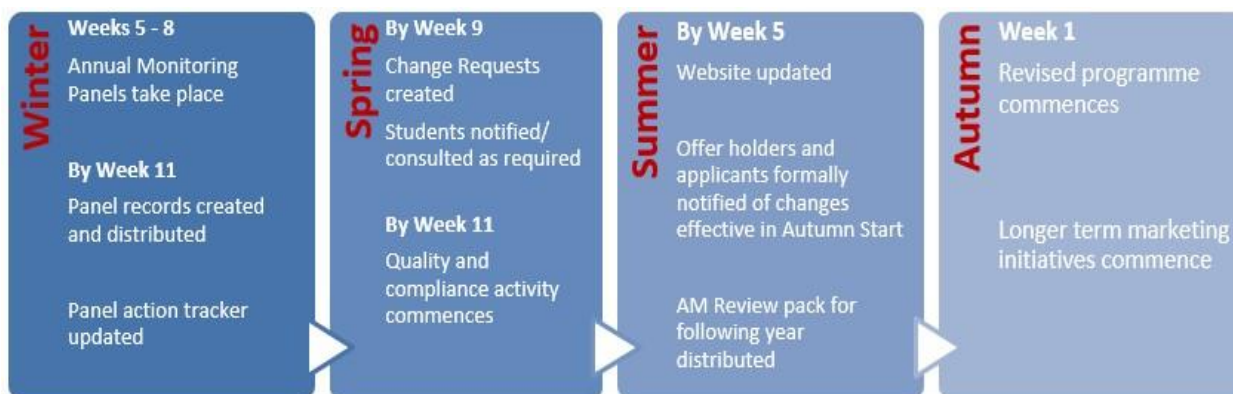
For the Collaborations provision, the expectation is that annual monitoring will be conducted in alignment with the academic timeline of the collaborative partners' institutions.

Every five years, a Periodic Review will take place and, where a school is subject to a Periodic Review, this will replace its Annual Monitoring Review in that year. The Periodic Review will utilise the previous four years' Annual Monitoring Reviews, together with an additional set of data which are deemed relevant to the review. This will be a top-down review, conducted in conjunction with the central Quality team.

The Periodic Review will be planned on a rolling basis by school and will align, where possible, with any pre-scheduled PRSB accreditation visits. More information on the Periodic Review process can be found in the Periodic Review Procedure.

The Programme Director will be responsible for leading the submission of the Annual Monitoring Reviews for their programme area. This should be done in conjunction with programme teams, and the professional services to ensure all areas are covered.

Fig. 1



4. Procedural Review

The Annual Monitoring Procedure will be fully reviewed on a biennial basis by the Deputy Head of Academic Services (Quality). Any amendments will then be presented to UALTC for approval. Once these changes are approved, they will be reported to Senate.

Any changes to the Annual Monitoring Procedure will consider the availability of data, as well as being reviewed in alignment with sector-recognised quality assurance practices. They will also review whether the outcomes of annual monitoring are still relevant and fit for purpose. Minor amendments can also be made to the Annual Monitoring Procedure outside of the standard review cycle, to better align with sector good practice.

5. Timelines

The table below outlines the framework required for annual monitoring, to ensure that appropriate lead time is given to enable the panels to operate effectively. For programmes delivered in conjunction with collaborative partners, the lead role should be shared between the University of Buckingham team and the equivalent role(s) within the partner institution.

Timeline	Activity	Lead *
Ongoing	Maintain programme Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)	Programme Director, programme team
Month following Annual Monitoring Panel	Book the following year's Annual Monitoring Panels	FQM/CC
6 months prior to Annual Monitoring Panel	Publish Annual Monitoring Review Form	FQM/CC, Programme Director
Term prior to Annual Monitoring Panel	Student Focus Groups	FQM/CC. Faculty Administration Manager,

		Faculty Registrar
Minimum 3 weeks before the panel	Completed Panel Review Forms	Programme Director
Minimum 3 weeks before the panel	Circulation of Panel documentation	Programme Director, FQM or CC
Minimum 1 week before the panel	Submission of questions/issues	Panel members
Ongoing (timing is area dependent)	Panel Meetings	FQM or CC, Programme Director
The first Executive Group meeting of the term following Annual Monitoring Review	Annual Monitoring Executive Summary	Faculty/School Dean

6. Documentation

All associated annual monitoring documentation will be held within the Quality Assurance area of SharePoint in a dedicated folder. This will be the 'master' version of all documentation and, on completion of the Annual Monitoring Review, will be classified as the final validated version.

To ensure version control, all documentation must be saved and amended within the SharePoint folder. Any documents downloaded locally for working purposes, must be uploaded back to the SharePoint folder as soon as possible, and the locally-saved document deleted. Any changes made to locally-saved documents will not be considered. For version control purposes, editorial rights will be limited to the Quality team and Collaborations Managers.

The Programme Director is at liberty to use any data sources they deem relevant to support the completion of the Annual Monitoring process, alongside those which are made available on the Quality Assurance SharePoint site. Caution should be taken to understand the data when using non-University data sources. Collaborative partners, in conjunction with the Collaborations team, will be expected to ensure that the equivalent data is available to facilitate their own Annual Monitoring process.

The Programme Director will complete the Annual Monitoring Review Form and send the finalised version to the FQM/CC to upload it, together with any supporting documents, to the relevant annual monitoring folder within the Quality SharePoint site a minimum of three weeks before the Panel convenes.

The FQM or CC will quality assure the uploaded documentation, request any missing information and distribute the link to the Panel members. Should the documentation not be received within the designated time, then the Panel shall be reconvened at a later date. Such delay to the Panel will risk amending the timeline in which the requested change can be adopted.

To facilitate the Annual Monitoring process, the following supporting documentation will be made available within the Panel folder.

Annual Monitoring SharePoint Documents	
Annual Monitoring Procedure and Guidelines	Procedure and Guidelines to the Annual Monitoring Review process
Annual Monitoring Report	Central report where the Programme Director updates and records responses
Data Sets – Availability Schedule	Calendar of data sets and the month of publication
Data Sets – hyperlinks	Quick-access links to supporting data sets held outside of the e:Vision ‘Academic Portal’ dashboard
Programme list for the subject area	A programme list will be given for all programmes within the subject being reviewed. This will enable the review of the appropriateness of programmes within a wider academic portfolio.
University Regulations	University of Buckingham regulations and procedures applicable to support the Annual Monitoring process e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Academic Regulations • Major and Minor Change Request definitions • New Programme Approval and Validation Procedures • Programme Closure Procedure
Regulatory and PSRB Information	Downloads and links to relevant Regulatory and PSRB information that the Programme Director can use to support the review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OfS ‘B’ Conditions of Registration • OfS Regulatory Framework <p><i>(as required)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>BCS accreditation requirements</i> • <i>BPS accreditation requirements</i> • <i>Apprenticeship Standards</i> • <i>ACCA/CIMA Requirements</i> • <i>GMC Requirements</i> • <i>DFE Requirements</i>
Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS)	Current subject benchmarks downloaded from the QAA website. In the absence of an appropriate subject benchmark, a QAA Characteristic Statement must be utilised.
Assessment Framework	A copy of the University of Buckingham Assessment Framework including guidance around the duration and number of assessments for a programme.
Programme Business Case	Where appropriate a retrospective review of programme performance compared to the business case submitted will be incorporated into the annual monitoring process. <i>(Only applicable to programmes which have been implemented in the 18 months prior to monitoring)</i>

Alongside these documents, the review should also ensure that it considers the QIP for each subject area, made available to the panel members as appropriate. Again the intention of making this available is to not only look at a strategic and directional plan for areas, alongside a reflective view of work which has been done retrospectively.

6.1 The table below shows the documentation required for submission to the panel members.

Annual Monitoring Panel Documents	
Annual Monitoring Report	One report can be submitted for all programmes within a family (subject) group at the Programme Director's discretion
Annual Monitoring Summary Report	An overview by family (subject) group
Annual Monitoring Checklist	Verification from the Programme Director that relevant documents have been reviewed and uploaded and stakeholders have been consulted
Programme and Module Specification amendments	Specifications reflecting proposed changes, exported from e:Vision in Word format and amended using tracked changes NB: Programmes not maintained in e:Vision must have their equivalent documentation available
Assessment Matrix	A matrix document used to review the number and versatility of assessments offered across a programme
Professional Skills Mapping Matrix	A matrix document used to map the professional skills delivered within a programme

Documentation Verification - the FQM or CC will review all submitted documentation to ensure all requirements have been met before circulation to the Panel. In instances where programme is a collaboration the FQM should review all the documentation in conjunction with the Collaborations Manager/Co-ordinator for the faculty being reviewed.

Any missing documentation will be requested and, where a significant shortfall is identified, this will be brought to the attention of the Panel Chair, who will decide whether the Panel will convene or be postponed. *Note: Any delay to a panel meeting, may delay approval of changes for the start of the next academic year.*

Documentation Review - To be able to do their job effectively, Panel members need time to receive and read the documentation thoroughly and to seek any clarification in advance of the Panel date. Therefore, all documentation must be available to be shared by the FQM with Panel members, no later than two weeks prior to the Panel convening. Documentation should be with the FQM a minimum of three weeks prior to the panel to ensure that the paperwork can be reviewed prior to the two-week deadline.

Members will be expected to submit any initial concerns or comments no later than one week prior to the Panel to the Chair. Active dialogue between members is encouraged before the commencement of the Panel, and the Programme Director able to clarify as many questions as possible to allow the Panel to use the time efficiently.

7. Annual Monitoring Review Panels

The Annual Monitoring Review panels will take place where possible between Week 5 and Week 8 of the winter term. As mentioned earlier within the procedure, this timeframe can be adjusted where appropriate justification is given, with consent from the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic and Provost.

During the Panel, the Chair will lead discussion to address each agenda item, when members can raise questions to gain assurance that the required due diligence has taken place during the Review.

Should all documentation be received in a full and timely manner, the Panel, as agreed by the Chair and FQM/CC, can also be utilised to approve new programmes and major/minor changes.

Where a new programme is being approved (and subject to completion of the Portfolio Development Group (PDG) stage), the Panel will then become a Validation Panel and follow the Validation Procedure. In instances where a programme is being revamped, validation can also be done within the Annual Monitoring Review. More time should be scheduled for the Panel where this is the case. External Reviewer and/or Examiner commentary is to be sought by correspondence either prior to or post the Panel taking place. Without a record of External Examiner/Reviewer feedback, the Panel cannot act as a validator, or the approving body for major change. As appropriate, the membership of the Annual Monitoring Panel will also be changed to reflect Validation Panel membership.

The FQM will support the Chair in the co-ordination of the Annual Monitoring Review Panel, including arrangement of panel dates and distribution of any documentation.

The Panel will be serviced, and supplementary notes will be made by an administrator/assistant as appointed by the Faculty Registrar.

The Panel will review all programmes within a Subject Group in one sitting. To accommodate this, the Programme Director/s of each Subject Group will be invited to join the Panel on a rolling basis.

Recognition of any PSRB timelines, regulations or requirements must be made, recognising that these may supersede any university policies or procedures.

Possible outcomes to be recorded (see section 6):

- No changes to be made
- Major changes to be made to the programme/modules
- Minor changes to be made to the programme/modules
- Closure or suspension of programme and/or entry point
- Creation of new programme or entry point

The FQM will distribute the Action Tracker created by the Servicing Officer and ensure that the appropriate documents are in place to action changes to provisions.

Membership

Core membership of the Annual Monitoring Panel must include the following (or delegated nominee in case of absence):

Core membership: (to attend all panels)

- Faculty Dean (Panel Chair)
- Faculty Quality Manager
- Faculty Registrar
- Faculty Administration Manager

In attendance:

- Servicing Officer (nominated)
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Representative

Rolling membership

- School Dean
- Programme Director
- School Administrator

As required:

- Additional Academic Representative
- Foundation Department Representative
- Admissions Representative
- Linked Programme Representative
- Apprenticeship Manager
- Collaborations Representative
- Academic Link Tutor (Collaborations)
- Student Fees Representative
- Webcontent Representative
- Marketing Representative
- Library Representative
- Other Learning Services Representatives
- PSRB Representative

In instances where the Faculty Dean is also the Dean of the School for review, the Dean of another Faculty or School will be invited to chair the Panel.

A standing agenda will be made available for all programmes going through annual monitoring. This is to facilitate outcome alignment and ensure the Panel meets all benchmarks. Agenda items should not be removed; however, additional items specific to a programme can be approved for discussion as required by the Panel Chair.

8. Collaborative Partnership Review

Monitoring of all programmes offered in association with collaborative partners should follow the procedure laid out in this document. The roles which are listed above are applicable to the University of Buckingham staffing structure. For partner institutions, the

roles should be supplemented with the equivalent role holder of the partner institution in conjunction with appropriate University of Buckingham staff.

However, in order to accommodate the risk profile of collaborative partners, as well as considering the additional requirements of good quality practices and jurisdictional demands, there are additional components within the collaborations review process surrounding the profile of partners and overall partnership performance, which are contained in the bespoke Collaborations Annual Monitoring Procedure.

9. Panel Outcomes and Actions

The following actions will be taken once the panel has been concluded:

9.1 No recommendations for change

The FQM/CC will update the Annual Review date within the programme specification and the relevant module specifications within e:Vision.

9.2 Minor Changes recommended

The FQM/CC will update the Annual Review

Should all the appropriate paperwork for minor changes to provision be in place, reviewed and approved during the Panel meeting and a record made of this, the FQM will action the changes without the need for the Programme Director to submit a further change to provision request. These will instead be completed by the FQM, including submission of relevant supporting documentation.

Changes will be completed following the Changing Programmes and Modules procedures held within the Quality Handbook [Quality Handbook | University of Buckingham](#)

9.3 Major Changes recommended

The FQM/CC will update the Annual Review Date section of each relevant programme and module specification within e:Vision.

Should all the appropriate paperwork for major changes to provision be in place, reviewed and approved during the Panel meeting and a record made of this, including evidence of any Examiner/Reviewer commentary, the FQM will action the changes without the need for the Programme Director to submit a further change to provision request. These will instead be completed by the FQM, including submission of relevant supporting documentation.

However, where a request to submit a change falls outside of the annual monitoring cycle the Programme Director will be responsible for submitting the requisite documentation and ensure any required approval/consultation activity takes place in line with processes laid out in the Quality Handbook. [Quality Handbook | University of Buckingham](#)

9.4 Closure or Suspension of Programmes and/or Entry Points recommended

The FQM/CC will update the Annual Review Date section of each relevant programme and module specification within e:Vision.

Should all the appropriate information be in place, and the closure or suspension decision be approved during the Panel meeting, the FQM/CC will action the changes.

However, if the above conditions are not met, the Programme Director will be responsible for submitting the required request and supporting documentation in line with the Closure or Suspension of Programmes procedures held within the Quality Handbook [Quality Handbook | University of Buckingham](#)

9.5 New Programme and/or Entry Point recommended

In instances where programme proposals are agreed, the Programme Director should follow the New Programmes and Modules procedures held within the Quality Handbook. [Quality Handbook | University of Buckingham](#)

NB: The development-approval cycle for new programmes has a recommended lead time of **at least twelve months**, although some flexibility may be feasible in exceptional circumstances e.g. when looking at programme implementation to align with Existing ESFA funding rules.

10. Executive Summary Report

An Annual Monitoring Executive Summary will be completed by the Faculty/School Dean ready for submission by Week 1 of the term following the annual monitoring review. It is expected that the Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) will present the report at the key school and university academic committees: the following term's Faculty Executive Committee and the next available UALTC and Senate meetings.

Feedback will be encouraged, to support and inform the school's strategic academic plan for the coming twelve to eighteen months.

Wherever possible, this report should align with the institutional University Strategy, referring to the relevant agreed University aims and objectives.

11. Document Retention

All documentation associated with the Annual Monitoring process and panels will be kept in a secure folder within the Academic Compliance SharePoint site. Access to this folder will be restricted to Panel members and Central Quality Team/ Leadership in Academic Services. The documentation will be retained for a minimum of 6 years to facilitate periodic review.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

RESPONSIBILITY	ROLE
Completion of the Annual Monitoring Review Report	Programme Director
Co-ordination of the Annual Monitoring Review Panels, including circulation of supporting documents ahead of the Panel	Faculty Quality Manager or Collaborations Coordinator
Servicing of the Annual Monitoring Review Panels	Faculty Registrar's Nominee
Creation and submission of any change requests resulting from the Annual Monitoring Review Panel (submitted in full at panel stage)	Faculty Quality Manager or Collaborations Coordinator
Creation and submission of any change requests resulting from the Annual Monitoring Review Panel (not submitted in full at panel stage)	Programme Director
Recording of the Annual Monitoring Review dates within the Programme Specification, and e: Vision Programme Page	Faculty Quality Manager or Collaborations Coordinator
Validation Panel document retention (SharePoint)	Faculty Quality Manager or Collaborations Coordinator

13. Further Information and Guidance

Please contact your FQM/CC or the Deputy Head of Academic Services (Quality), who will be able to assist with any further information or guidance in respect of anything held within this document.