Guidelines for the completion of the Joint Portfolio review and annual programme monitoring template for 2015/16.

Contents

Important note......................................................................................................................................................... 2
Principles.............................................................................................................................................................. 3
Objectives .......................................................................................................................................................... 4
Inputs and Outputs ........................................................................................................................................... 4
Indicative questions/prompts for completing the Joint template................................................................. 5
Other notes....................................................................................................................................................... 7
Process Flow chart ........................................................................................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Important note

Please use the 2015/16 template only.

The form is divided into two sections, which both use a common data set and operate over a common time frame. The process of scrutiny for each section is different.

- Section 1 covers Portfolio Review and is scrutinised by the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC)
- Section 2 covers Annual Programme monitoring and is scrutinised by the Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committee (TQEC)
Principles

The portfolio review aspect is informed by the following principles:

(a) it is financially informed but not financially mechanistic – i.e. rather than requiring each and every module or programme to achieve a set level of return, the college asks Schools to demonstrate that they have considered consistent and robust data on financial performance alongside other strategic factors in planning their current and future teaching portfolio, in order to develop a financially sustainable strategic plan;

(b) portfolio review should not be seen as affecting teaching alone but needs to be constituted as a part of a School’s wider strategic development, and interact with emergent strategies, e.g. in research/planning for REF, engagement with cultural bodies, partner institutions, employers, professions and the wider public, etc. – in other words, it is a means of defining and refining our core mission;

(c) there is consistent cross-college framework, with ‘objective’/‘neutral’ data and methodologies centrally set and appropriate central support provided for Schools in undertaking the portfolio review; all recommendations will need to have a robust evidence base;

(d) it should be led by Executive Deans within their School but all recommendations will need approving by the Strategic Planning Committee chaired by the Master, and where appropriate (e.g. where they involve launching new programmes or withdrawal of existing programmes) taking through other relevant college committees.

The Annual Programme Monitoring aspect is informed by the following principles:

(e) it is the single most important process within the college’s internal quality assurance mechanisms which allows Birkbeck to assure itself and external regulators that our academic provision has made, and continues to make, available to students appropriate learning opportunities which enable the intended learning outcomes of the programme to be achieved.

(f) it provides opportunities to highlight that the student voice has been heard and that responses have been made to student feedback and feedback from other stakeholders (e.g. collaborative partners or professional bodies). Note that the requirement for each School to complete an individual School Response Form commenting on the National Student Survey (NSS) was subsumed into this Joint process from 2013/14, to avoid a duplication of activity and to encourage the interrogation of the results of all student satisfaction surveys conducted at Birkbeck (i.e. NSS, BSS and PTES).

(g) the annual programme monitoring process is not an isolated event but a particular stage within an ongoing systematic process which provides a check on ongoing learning and teaching provision at an operational level.

(h) Annual programme monitoring provides evidence for and informs the four-yearly Internal Review of academic standards and quality of all programmes within the college. However, Internal Review has a broader remit one of which is explore trends over time.
Note that on request from academic staff Annual Programme Monitoring is organised in “clusters” of programmes, whereas Internal Review is organised on a departmental basis.

Objectives

1. To enable each of the five Schools to develop and refine a teaching programme aiming at the provision of research-led teaching of the highest quality delivered in a flexible manner so as to reach out to Birkbeck’s unusually diverse student body, as laid out in the college’s Learning and Teaching Enhancement strategy (SLATE).
2. To facilitate the development and implementation of the college Learning & Teaching Enhancement strategy (SLATE).
3. Formulate how the School will respond to the college’s strategic objectives (these should have been published by SPC in October).
4. To provide all Schools with the data and framework necessary to consider critically and constructively its current and future teaching programme against its academic aims and objectives.
5. To ensure that current and future resources are used as effectively as possibly to promote the highest quality research-led learning and teaching within the new Schools.
6. To identify areas for future growth, including new areas of provision, and resources necessary for supporting that growth; and conversely to identify areas where current provision needs to be realigned, rethought or withdrawn.
7. To begin the process of strategic planning, leading to budget-setting and resource-allocation for the coming academic year.
8. Inform how current recruitment and quality issues impact the schools’ plans,
   i) for the coming recruitment cycle, and
   ii) over a 3 – 5 year recruitment and planning window.
9. Highlight any potential staffing issues early so that staff can be informed.
10. Assure the College that the academic standards of programmes and the quality of the student learning experience are maintained and there is continuing improvement and development of the programme during this time.
11. Provide a process for enhancements in provision to be disseminated to the wider College.
12. Provide an annual reflective process to Programme Teams, Departments and Schools which helps to inform periodic internal review.

Inputs and Outputs

Inputs – Recruitment Performance
- School plans for current academic year (written in the last planning round).
- School strategies / plans over 3 – 5 year planning window.
- Current academic year recruitment data by programme and modular subject area, against target and compared to previous years.
- Birkbeck Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- Birkbeck Strategic priorities (SPC).
Inputs – Quality

- **Student Feedback** (Student survey results by programme/module feedback/student staff liaison).
  - For undergraduate students, please refer to the Tableau reports on the Birkbeck Student Survey and the National Student Survey – for the NSS, please focus on the results for sections on ‘The teaching on my course’ (Qs 1-4), ‘Assessment and Feedback’ (Qs 5-9), ‘Academic Support’ (Qs 10-12) and ‘Overall Satisfaction’ (Q22).
  - For postgraduate taught students, please refer to the Tableau report on the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.

- **Degree classifications and pass rates**
  - Please refer to the awards table (by subject) in the Portfolio Review report on Tableau and compare against the benchmarks.

- **Retention rates**
  - Please refer to the ‘Year 1 outcome by cohort’ and Course length outcome by cohort’ tables (by subject) in the Portfolio Review report on Tableau.

- **External Examiner Reports**, verbal feedback and responses to reports.

- **Records and feedback on Peer Review of Teaching activity**.

Outputs - Recruitment Performance

- **Amendments to school strategies / plans** over 3 – 5 year planning window, as required.
- **Templates completed for programme clusters**, categorising the programme cluster (Expand, Maintain, At risk (monitor), Consider closure, Other) and including an action plan where appropriate.
- **Programmes categorised** as ‘At risk’ or ‘Consider closure’ trigger a communication to staff teaching on the programme.
- **Strategies for programme clusters**, which then inform the detailed programme level planning exercise.

Outputs - Quality

- **Improvements to programme delivery/assessment**.
- **College level issues highlighted to TQEC**.
- **Successful quality enhancement practices identified and shared**.

Indicative questions/prompts for completing the Joint template

**Section 1 – PORTFOLIO REVIEW**

*In the “comments and action” boxes:*

- **a.** Report on the progress made addressing the issues identified for further development in last year’s module report to provide an update of the actions taken and the outcome achieved.

- **b.** Comment on how student recruitment has been during the monitoring period.
  
  Also, comment on how programme retention has been during the monitoring period.

  Outline the actions identified from the above comments.
Section 2 – ANNUAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

In the “comments and action” boxes:

a. Comment on any particular issues of note or developments related to Learning and Teaching; this might include the aims, curriculum, learning resources or assessment methods contained within the programmes being monitored and their relevance to SLATE (Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement 2012-2016).

Outline any particular issues or developments related to opportunities for flexible study within the programmes being monitored.

Reflect on any particular issues or developments around staff development/peer mentoring.

Reflect on student performance on the programme (or cluster of programmes) in terms of retention (outcome by year 1 and cohort) and achievement (awards) and their relationship to learning, teaching and assessment methods.

b. Outline any changes you would suggest which might enhance the students achievements or the student experience, taking into account student feedback received (this could be through the satisfaction surveys, module evaluations or staff/student committee meetings).

Identify the positive themes which have arisen through module evaluations.

Identify the positive themes which have arisen through surveys (The Birkbeck Student Survey and the National Student Survey for UGs or Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey for PGTs).

Identify the positive themes which have arisen through staff-student committees or other forms of student engagement.

Identify areas for concern or enhancement and include any trends you may have noticed in student feedback data.

c. Identify any departmental concerns in your comments (e.g. outlying performance in a particular programme).

Identify action points out of the above.

d. Identify any developments that have been successful this academic period and any enhancement planned for next academic period.
e. Provide a summary of any written or verbal feedback received from the external examiners in their annual reports or at Sub-Board meetings which has promoted change.

f. If any programmes within the cluster are collaborative (i.e. delivered in partnership with other institution) provide a commentary on any particular issues which have been encountered in the operation of the partnership and how these have been addressed.

If any programmes within the cluster are accredited by a Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) provide the following information:

- Name of the PSRB
- Date (month/year) of the most recent accreditation of the programme
- The main outcomes of the most recent accreditation review/meeting
- The expected date (month/year) of the next accreditation of the programme.

g. Provide a summary of the operation of Peer Review of teaching activity

Other notes

Programme clusters and modular subject areas
It is anticipated that, typically, a department might have between 2 and 5 clusters of programmes (and hence 2-5 templates completed) across UG and PG Taught programmes: the number being a judgement based on the variety and complexity of the portfolio. Similarly, modular subject areas may need a template each, or it may be sufficient to do one template for all modular subject areas in the department. Clusters would not normally include a combination of UG and PG Taught programmes.

Programmes may be ‘red flagged’ according to agreed criteria, e.g. the number of new entrants was 5 or less, applications have fallen by more than 20% year on year, etc. Red flagged programmes are areas of concern where an action plan is required. The Schools will ‘un-flag’ programmes where they feel the flag is not justified, e.g. the programme is important as a progression route, etc. and will flag additional programmes as they see fit – i.e. the automated flagging is just a guide.

Modules
Similarly, individual modules may be red flagged where the number of students taking the module is low: modules which can be taken on their own (standalone modules and modular enrolment) and modules that are part of programmes are both included in the reports and in the review process. Where an individual module or group of modules is ‘at risk’ or at ‘Consider closure’ and this may impact staff then (as with programmes of study) this will trigger the processes for informing staff described below.
Involvement of and Communication with Staff

1. **Pre and During Joint Portfolio Review and Annual Programme Monitoring**

Schools and/or ADs should inform Teaching and Scholarship staff, as well as academic and administrative staff when Portfolio Review is happening and give them the opportunity to provide any feedback they have on their programme(s) to the Programme Director so this can be taken into account as part of Portfolio Review.

Academic teams are advised to use programme specifications found at [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/quality/programme-specifications](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/quality/programme-specifications) as the record of current versions of running programmes.

Changes to advertised programmes should reference College best practice that ‘essential programme details, are subject to change in exceptional circumstances’ and note the [Competition and Markets Authority – UK HE providers advice on consumers protection laws](https://www.gov.uk/competition-and-markets-authority-uk-he-providers-advice-on-consumers-protection-laws).

**The UG print prospectus will be printed earlier this year: March 2016, rather than September 2016. THE 'UCAS FAIRS' PRINT PROSPECTUS WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED.**

ADs should also make the final Portfolio Review report available to Teaching and Scholarship staff at the end of the process.

2. **Post Joint Portfolio Review and Annual Programme Monitoring**

If the outcome of the Portfolio Review, endorsed by SPC, is that a programme:

(a) is ‘at risk’, the affected staff should be informed of this and work undertaken with them to consider the options (e.g. revamping the programme) and monitor its performance; staff should be alerted that if changes do not lead to an increase in student recruitment the programme may close.

(b) will close, inform the affected staff and, where necessary, produce a redundancy business case.
Joint Portfolio Review and Annual Programme Monitoring Guidelines 2015/16
(Review of data from 2014/15)

**Process Flow chart**

**Portfolio Review & Annual Monitoring**

**Date:** determined by school

1. **Launch via Deans**
   - End of October 2015

2. **Portfolio Review** (Section 1)
   - Heads of Department/ Executive Deans
   - Via Executive Deans
   - Cluster reports completed from common data set

3. **Quality Monitoring** (Section 2)
   - Heads of Department/ Executive Deans
   - Via Assistant Deans – Learning & Teaching
   - Cluster reports completed from common data set

4. **School Executive Committee**
   - Scrutinizes section 1, reads section 2 for context
   - By 15 February 2016
   - Summary report submitted
   - Strategic Planning Committee: 22/03/16

5. **School TQEC**
   - Scrutinizes section 2, reads section 1 for context
   - January/February 2016
   - School Summary report submitted. (Completed by AD L&T)
   - 17 March 2016
   - Learning & Teaching Working Group
   - College Summary report submitted. (Completed by ASQ and PVM L&T)

6. **TQEC**
   - Summer term
   - 19.05.16

Dates:
- End of October 2015
- End of January 2016
- End of January 2016
- End of October 2015
- January/February 2016
- By 15 February 2016
- 17 March 2016
- Summer term

**Notes:**
- Date determined by school
- Summer term
- College Summary report submitted. (Completed by ASQ and PVM L&T)
- Learning & Teaching Working Group
- School Summary report submitted. (Completed by AD L&T)
- School TQEC
- Scrutinizes section 2, reads section 1 for context
- January/February 2016
- School TQEC
- Arts 03.02.16
- BEI/04.02.16
- Law 11.01.16
- Science: TBC
- SSHP: 24.02.16
- Summary report submitted
- (Completed by AD L&T)
- Learning & Teaching Working Group
- 17 March 2016
- College Summary report submitted. (Completed by ASQ and PVM L&T)
- TQEC
- 19.05.16
- Winter term
- Summer term
- College Summary report submitted. (Completed by ASQ and PVM L&T)
- Learning & Teaching Working Group
- 17 March 2016
- College Summary report submitted. (Completed by ASQ and PVM L&T)
- TQEC
- 19.05.16
- Summer term