

Periodic School Review: Guidance for panel members

1. Introduction

1.1 Members of the panel for Periodic School Review assess the effectiveness of a School's processes for the management of quality and standards and of student learning opportunities. It achieves this by reflecting on standards and quality management (Aspect 1) and the quality and enhancement of student learning opportunities (Aspect 2). For full details of these aspects please refer to Quality Handbook (QH) section 7.

1.2 A range of evidence is used by panel members to assess a School's processes in relation to these two aspects. This evidence includes:

- School's Reflective Analysis Document;
- Electronic Repository;
- Compliance and evidence overview prepared by CADQ;
- a range of meetings with key stakeholders including, staff, students and external colleagues.

1.3 Each panel member has a specific role as part of the review process, as follows:

- Review Chair and Review Manager: maintain oversight of both aspects of review;
- Academic Quality Manager and one internal panel member, supported by a Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ) officer: focus upon aspect 1;
- External panel member and one internal panel member, supported by the Review Manager: focus upon aspect 2;
- Student panel member: focus upon the effectiveness of student representation and the student voice across both aspects of review.

1.4 Panel members should therefore focus their reading, preparation and discussion areas according to their allocated role.

2. Twelve to nine months prior to the review: confirmation of panel

2.1 CADQ and the School confirm the review event dates twelve months in advance. CADQ will then contact individual panel members with the following information:

- agreed dates of the review event;
- a summary of the process of review (and associated guidance);
- details of their specific role.

3. Six weeks prior to the review: receipt of documentation

3.1 CADQ will provide panel members with the following documentation six weeks before the review event is due to take place (four weeks before the private panel meeting):

- review event agenda;
- the School Reflective Analysis Document;
- the School's Electronic Repository;
- analysis of key quality metrics related to all courses provisioned by the School, benchmarked against University or sector expectations (where available), prepared by CADQ;
- compliance and evidence overview undertaken by CADQ.

3.2 The agenda, Reflective Analysis Document and compliance check will be provided in hard copy format. The electronic repository will be provided on a USB flash drive, or made available by some other secure, accessible online means.

4. The role of the documentation

4.1 The purpose of each of the review documents is as follows:

School Reflective Analysis Document

4.2 The Reflective Analysis Document is the only document which is created specifically for the Periodic School Review. The document is developed by the School and is a self-evaluative document which provides a critical analysis of the effectiveness of the School's practice in the two aspects of review.

4.3 In the Reflective Analysis Document panel members can expect to find:

- a brief overview of the School, including its structure, discipline areas, and current strategic aims;
- critical reflection on practice which demonstrates how the School knows that the expectations set out in the review framework are being met across the School;
- evidence which supports this critical reflection on practice, or cross references to such evidence in the Electronic Repository;
- examples of development and initiatives which have taken place during the years between review which have led to, or have the potential to lead to, process enhancements or good practice.

4.4 It is important to note that the Reflective Analysis Document cannot discuss all aspects of the School's processes and practice in detail, nor can it anticipate the

extent of the questions that the review panel members will have. Information provided in this document will be supported by the Electronic Repository and review event meetings.

Electronic Repository

- 4.5 The Electronic Repository is a collection of documentation which is provided by the School to support reflections in the Reflective Analysis Document and to provide further evidence that the School is meeting the expectations set out in the review framework.
- 4.6 The contents of a repository will be bespoke to the individual School, however panel members can usually expect to find documentation relating to the following broad areas:
- School plans and reports;
 - School committees;
 - School strategies, policies and guidance;
 - staff development;
 - student surveys;
 - Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies;
 - collaborative provision;
 - course information;
 - work in progress.
- 4.7 Panel members should use the Electronic Repository to support their judgements about the effectiveness of the School's processes to meet the expectations. The range of evidence allows panel members to test the effectiveness of School level policies, processes and practices and their implementation at course level.

Compliance and evidence overview

- 4.8 Prior to the documentation being sent to panel members, CADQ undertakes a check of the evidence and prepares a compliance and evidence overview. This is designed to support the panel in their preparations as follows:
- a. to establish compliance with University policy and enable the panel to close down expectations or parts of expectations which are demonstrated to have been fully met by the evidence provided in the Reflective Analysis Document and Electronic Repository;
 - b. to sign-post the panel to where the evidence supporting the expectations can be found in the Reflective Analysis Document and repository and / or to indicate to the panel where there is no evidence to support an expectation.
- 4.9 Panel members should use this document to focus their reading of the School's submission. It is not designed to prevent panel members from exploring areas of interest in the documentation, or to pre-empt areas of discussion or conclusions.

5. Between six and two weeks prior to the review: preparation for the private panel meeting

- 5.1 Two weeks before the event, a private meeting takes place. The purpose of this meeting is to set the agenda for the review event itself. Panel members need to have undertaken their consideration of the documentation before this meeting. Panel members are advised to set aside one-two days in this period to read the documentation and to start thinking about potential areas for discussion at the review event.
- 5.2 Panel members should prepare for the private panel meeting as follows:
- scrutinise the School's Reflective Analysis Document, paying particular attention to aspects pertinent to their role;
 - assess the details provided in the Reflective Analysis Document in relation to the review expectations and factors (see Quality Handbook (QH) Section 7), using the evidence provided in the electronic repository;
 - from the documentation, begin to identify broad areas for discussion at the review event in relation to aspects pertinent to their specific role. These broad areas will form the basis of the agenda-setting at the private panel meeting.

6. Two weeks prior to the review: private panel meeting

- 6.1 CADQ will arrange a private meeting for all panel members two weeks before the review event takes place. Attendance is important and panel members are asked to prioritise this meeting in their diaries. The meeting will be chaired by the Review Chair.
- 6.2 The private panel meeting has an agenda-setting focus. Panel members need to have undertaken their consideration of the documentation before this meeting. Based on individual members' reading of the documentation, the panel will begin to set out the broad areas that appear to require further exploration at the review event.
- 6.3 In the period between the private panel meeting and the review event, panel members should begin to draft questions for the event based on the broad discussion areas agreed at the private panel meeting. These questions will then be confirmed at the private meetings of the panel during the review event itself.

7. Periodic School Review event

- 7.1 The review will be a two full day panel event. Panel members will be involved in a range of meetings with School staff, students and other stakeholders, during which the panel will ask a series of questions related to the broad areas of discussion agreed at the private panel meeting. The event includes a tour of the School's facilities and resources. There will also be a set of scheduled private panel meetings which are used for the setting of specific agendas and reflection on previous meetings.
- 7.2 The role of panel members at the review event is as follows:

Private meetings of the panel:

- contribute to agenda setting for review meetings, proposing questions to be explored in relation to review aspects;
- provide reflections on review meetings;
- keep personal notes to track the particular evidence which has been significant in reaching outcomes and judgements.

Review meetings:

- ask questions as agreed in the panel meetings, at the direction of the Review Chair;
- ask follow-up questions as required;
- full notes of review meetings are taken by the review coordinator. Individual notes may be taken but should be kept to a minimum, recording only that information which, alongside review documentation, is significant in reaching outcomes and judgements.

7.3 The panel will go for a meal at a local restaurant at the end of the first day of the review.

7.4 The Periodic School Review process culminates in the panel arriving at a judgement about each of the aspects that have been considered. Judgements are based largely on the extent to which expectations have been met. For each review aspect there are four possible judgements as follows:

- commended;
- meets NTU and UK expectations;
- requires improvement to meet NTU and UK expectations;
- does not meet NTU and UK expectations.

7.5 The second half of the second day of the review event is reserved for the purpose of agreeing judgements and outcomes (please refer to QH Section 7). Panel members will use the framework in order to arrive at a judgement for each aspect of the review. Decisions leading to judgements should be based on the evidence that has been provided by the School in its documentation and during the review event meetings. Arrival at a judgement is a collective decision of the panel as a whole.

7.6 In addition to arriving at judgements, the panel will also agree recommendations, commendations and affirmations.

Recommendations

7.7 Recommendations are areas that the School should address to ensure that expectations are met or more fully met. These may relate to areas that the School is not addressing or areas that are in development. Recommendations must have a sound rationale and be based on evidence that specific factors or expectations are not fully met. Panel members will agree the timeframe within which recommendations should be acted upon.

Commendations

- 7.8 Commendations might include reference to good practice observed by the panel and / or affirmation of developments already in place, or planned, to address previously identified issues. Commendations must have a sound rationale and be based on evidence found in the Reflective Analysis Document, Electronic Repository and review meetings.
- 7.9 The rationale and evidence base for each of these judgements, recommendations and commendations are articulated in the Periodic School Review report.

Affirmations

- 7.10 Affirmations made by the panel acknowledge developments already in place, or planned, to address previously identified issues. In order to make an affirmation, the panel should be confident, and provide evidence for its judgement, that the action taken by the School is appropriate to address the issue identified by the School.

8. Up to eight weeks after the review event: confirmation of the outcomes

- 8.1 Written feedback, in the form of a 'key findings' letter, will be sent to the School within seven days of the event. This will include any recommendations and commendations agreed by the panel. The recommendations will indicate the timeframe within which the panel considers that they should be acted upon.
- 8.2 The Periodic School Review Report will be prepared by the Review Manager following the review event. This will require contributions from the panel, therefore panel members need to ensure that they set aside time to contribute to the preparation of the report in the weeks after the event. The report will set out the judgements, recommendations and commendations and will include the rationale and evidence for each of the outcomes.
- 8.3 A draft of the report will be sent to panel members for consideration within six weeks of the review event taking place. Panel members should read the report, suggest any necessary amendments and confirm their approval of the report as a true and accurate record of the outcomes of the review.
- 8.4 The report will then be sent to the School within eight weeks of the review event.

9. Specific guidance for individual roles

Guidance for the External panel member

- 9.1 The role of the External panel member is to provide an external perspective on the School's processes for the quality and enhancement of student learning opportunities. The external panel member also brings with them broad subject knowledge and expertise related to the School's disciplines.
- 9.2 The External panel member will focus specifically on review aspect two: the quality and enhancement of student learning opportunities. The External panel member will need to attend the private panel meeting and review event. In addition to a

fee, travel expenses are reimbursed by the University. Overnight accommodation for the review event and meals are provided.

- 9.3 The External panel member must undertake a Right to Work check, prior to commencing any review work.

Guidance for the Review Chair

- 9.4 The Review Chair, an NTU Pro Vice Chancellor, will work closely with the Review Manager to take a broad overview of the review process. Specifically, the role is to chair both the preparatory and review event meetings, ensuring that agendas are set, the event runs to time, and that appropriate outcomes are reached.
- 9.5 Additionally, the Review Chair will be required to undertake the following:
- provide the School with a summary of the panel's judgements and outcomes at the end of the second day of the review event;
 - approve the 'key findings' letter which is sent to the School within two weeks of the review event;
 - chair a follow-up meeting with the School within four weeks of the report being made available to the School, to discuss and agree a proposed action plan based on the recommendations.

Guidance for the Student panel member

- 9.6 Involving a Student panel member in the Periodic School Review process is one of the ways in which the University seeks to engage students with quality processes. Normally from the Student's Union, the Student panel member provides a student perspective on the effectiveness of the School's processes for engaging students.
- 9.7 The Student panel member focusses on the following expectations, which span both review aspects, as follows:
- student engagement: the effectiveness of the ways in which the School engages students in standards and quality management, and in the quality and enhancement of students' learning opportunities;
 - student voice: the effectiveness of the ways in which the School seeks, and acts on, the views of the student body.
- 9.8 The Student panel member should therefore focus on these two areas when reading the review documentation in preparation for the event. For example, in relation to expectation one, the Student panel member might wish to focus on policies and processes for student engagement and explore the effectiveness of these through evidence provided in the Electronic Repository and in the discussions with staff at the event.
- 9.9 CADQ will work with the Student panel member to support their preparation and contribution.

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
<i>Version:</i>	<i>Approval date:</i>	<i>Implementation date:</i>	<i>Nature of significant revisions:</i>
Sept 2016	30.09.16	01.10.16	Clearer role information for student panel member and other routine updating.
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	Change from compliance and evidence check to compliance and evidence overview. Further information on quality metrics.
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	None

Equality Impact Assessment		
<i>Version:</i>	<i>EIA date:</i>	<i>Completed by:</i>
Sept 2016	NA	