



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



ANNUAL MONITORING

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Background

- 1 This document sets out the policy governing Annual Monitoring of programmes. It covers responsibilities, operation of the process, timelines, guidance and associated templates.
- 2 Annual Monitoring supports the ongoing monitoring and enhancement of the University's provision and has been developed in alignment with the UK Quality Code Chapter B8, Programme Monitoring & Review.
- 3 The focus of Annual Monitoring at Bucks is to use available data on an on-going basis to inform planning and support enhancement as well as mitigate risk throughout the academic year. It is supported by both the Periodic Review cycle and the revalidation of individual programmes.

Purpose Statement

- 4 The review of past performance and feedback on programmes through Annual Monitoring allows the University to:
 - Consider evidence to confirm the academic standards of its awards
 - Evaluate the quality of students' learning opportunities and experience
 - Promote discussion and debate about module and programme performance
 - Identify and disseminate good practice
 - Strengthen accountability
 - Identify risk and recognise the collective responsibility to mitigate that risk
 - Take timely and informed action to enhance its programmes
 - Support reflection informed planning at programme and strategic levels
 - Provide Council with the information it needs to make the required assurances to Office for Students

Applicability and Scope

- 5 This policy applies to all taught programmes leading to an undergraduate or postgraduate award of the University (including Level 0), wherever they are delivered.

Principles

- 6 The Annual Monitoring process is designed to:
 - Enable continued enhancement in the overall quality of provision and the student experience.
 - Identify areas of good practice for dissemination and areas requiring improvement.
 - Identify and mitigate against risk
 - Ensure open and honest discussion about programme performance among relevant stakeholders

Process

7 The Annual Monitoring process will consist of the following stages:

- Module
- Programme
- Institutional

MODULE STAGE

- 8 Module Boards (or joint Module/Assessment Boards) held throughout the academic year are responsible for considering *each* module's delivery, performance and feedback.
- 9 It is the Head of School's overall responsibility for ensuring that module monitoring takes place.
- 10 It is the Module Leader's responsibility at the Module Board (or joint Module/Assessment Board) to be fully prepared for module monitoring discussions around their modules' performance and delivery in relation to student feedback, external scrutiny and information from any relevant periodic, partner or PSRB reports, in addition to the statistical data set on the module performance, as detailed in the *Board of Examiners' Handbook*.
- 11 Where a module is taught by an Academic Partner, and the Partner staff are not present to comment on modules, then the Partnership Tutor will take the role of Module Leader, and is responsible for securing the relevant information from the Partner.
- 12 A Guidance Sheet (AM1) is available to assist Module Leaders prepare. Use of this is optional, but may provide a useful framework for discussions at Module Boards.
- 13 When reviewing performance, the University considers an acceptable module pass rate (at first attempt) to be a minimum of 85% and average mark to be between 46% and 64%. The table below shows the criteria which may prompt the board to request a Module Review and Action Plan (AM2).

Module	Performance	Action required
Pass rate	84% or below	Module Leader to comment/contextualise against number of students taking the module and where appropriate recommend action to address
Average mark	45% or lower 65% or higher	Module Leader to comment/contextualise against number of students taking the module and where appropriate recommend action to address
Student evaluation response rate	Below 30% response rate	Module Leader to comment/contextualise and where appropriate recommend action to address
Feedback (from students or external bodies)	Poor feedback or that which raises concern	Module Leader to comment/contextualise and where appropriate recommend action to address

- 14 Where a module's performance falls outside the acceptable criteria, and the discussion does not sufficiently explain or mitigate against the triggering criteria, the Module Leader will be required to complete a Module Review and Action Plan (AM2).
- 15 In instances where student module evaluation has not been received at the Module Board, or less than 30% of enrolled students have responded, a Module Review and Action Plan will be required as a matter of course, including an action aimed at increasing students' participation in feedback mechanisms.
- 16 Where a module has less than 12 enrolled students, the criteria listed above become less meaningful. In these cases, the Module Board is expected to use academic judgement in deciding whether a Module Review and Action Plan is needed.
- 17 A Module Board Record will be kept by Academic Registry, noting:
 - Module performance and feedback
 - External examiner's comments (where present or through the *in absentia* report)
 - Modules requiring Module Review and Action Plans
 - Examples of good practice identified during the discussion

Completed forms should be sent to the Head of School for review and monitoring of actions.

PROGRAMME STAGE

- 18 The Programme Stage of the Annual Monitoring process enables programme teaching teams and University directorate representatives to jointly consider a range of evidence relating to the performance of programmes within a School.
- 19 Rather than being primarily retrospective once a year, the focus of the process is to use available data on an on-going basis as close to it being available as possible. This will help to inform planning, support enhancement and mitigate against risk throughout the academic year and enables a greater focus on student lifecycle from application through to graduation.
- 20 The level of reporting given to programmes will be risk based. In the majority of cases only programmes that fall outside of stated University parameters will specifically be referenced within the report and action plan. The exception to this relates to areas of good practice which should be noted as possible examples of ways to improve aspects of high risk programmes. The risk rating will utilise the categories from the University's Risk Register.
- 21 Programmes will be grouped and considered at School level. Each Head of School or Associate Head of School (where they lead on education & quality), will be responsible for ensuring the relevant School Annual Monitoring Meetings (SAMMs) are arranged, that all relevant stakeholders are included, will Chair the discussions and ensure the outcomes of those discussions are recorded in the Report and Action Plan (AM3).
- 22 The aims of the School Annual Monitoring Meetings are to:
 - Enable teams to engage with programme data at relevant points of the year
 - Promote in-depth peer discussion about programme/School performance
 - Identify good practice for dissemination within and across Schools
 - Utilise the data to identify risks and areas for improvement

- Ensure that standards are being maintained across the School.
- 23 To ensure data is reviewed as close to its source as possible and to enable identification of areas that may benefit from pre-emptive action at the appropriate point in the year, a number of SAMMs will need to be scheduled throughout the year. The outcomes of each SAMM will be recorded in a Report and Action Plan (AM3) which will be updated and added to at each meeting. This will then culminate once a year in a review of the action plan, for that academic year cycle, by Education Committee.
- 24 The Heads of School will decide on the most appropriate forum for the meetings. These can be part of regular scheduled School meetings or organised separately with relevant stakeholders invited.
- 25 Representatives from relevant University Directorates should be invited to attend SAMMs to contribute to and to support discussions of relevant datasets and other information.
- 26 The student voice will be incorporated into this stage of the process via a number of feedback mechanisms that exist within the University including module feedback, NSS, Programme Committee Meetings.
- 27 The focus of the SAMMs and suggested timelines will be:

Suggested Timeframe	Themes to cover	Data Sets	Contact points for data sets
Feb – March	Marketing, applications & recruitment	Application numbers for coming academic year	Admissions
		Enrolment numbers for the current year	MIS system – can be accessed by programme leaders
		Marketing/recruitment plan	Marketing
July – August	Student performance, retention & Employability	Awards made (does not include reassessment results)	MIS system – can be accessed by programme leaders
		Withdrawals during the year	Academic Registry
		Progression by level (does not include reassessment results)	MIS System – can be accessed by programme leaders
		DLHE	Careers
September	Feedback and Student experience	NSS/PTES/UKES results	Bucks Survey Team
		Programme Committee meetings/Feedback compiled by SU	SU
		External Examiner Reports & responses	Academic Registry – Quality & Governance Team

Suggested Timeframe	Themes to cover	Data Sets	Contact points for data sets
		Student Complaints	Academic Registry – Quality & Governance Team

- 28 At the meetings members are encouraged to reflect on the data sets, identify themes arising and actions to be planned which will help enhance the programmes or to rectify any problems and mitigate risks.
- The data sets should be put in context by comparing the data to previous years where possible to identify trends.
 - The data sets should also be analysed in terms of the University's *Access and Participation Plan* and associated actions/priorities.
- 29 Members of the SAMMs may be given responsibility by the Head of School for leading discussions on specific data sets at each meeting, and will be notified of these in advance of the meeting.
- 30 SAMMs are expected to consider the following criteria for various data sets:
- NSS/PTES and UKES data: minimum 88% satisfaction rating
 - Student retention rate – minimum 90% in the first year of a programme
 - Programme Progression/Award data:
 - Progression
 - Level 4 to Level 5 - 80% minimum progression rate
 - Level 5 to Level 6 - 90% minimum progression rate
 - Awards:
 - Undergraduate degrees – 70% achieving 1st or 2:1
 - Postgraduate/Foundation degrees – 90% achievement rate
 - External Examiner Reports and responses:
 - Red require specific actions
 - Amber may require actions
 - Green reports may contain examples of good practice
 - Destination of Leavers from Higher Education data (DLHE): minimum 70% in graduate level employment
- 31 Following the SAMM, the Head of School or their nominee, completes the Action Plan section, using the details in the Record section to inform the actions required. The SAMM Record & Action Plan (AM3) is required at the Education Committee in November each year, and comprises part of the Annual Monitoring Evidence Base at the Institutional Stage.

Academic Partners

- 32 Programmes for academic partners will be grouped and considered at partner level. The relevant member of staff within the Academic Partner, will be responsible for ensuring the relevant Partner Annual Monitoring (PAM) is undertaken.

- 33 Outcomes of PAM are recorded in the Partner Report and Action Plan (AM4).
- 34 The Partner Report and Action Plans for all academic partners will be received and reviewed by University Partnership Board.
- 35 The Chair will write a summary report highlighting any trends, good practice and significant risks. This will be submitted to Education Committee as part of the Institutional Stage.

INSTITUTIONAL STAGE (November)

- 36 Annual Monitoring at Institutional Stage takes place at two meetings:

- Education Committee
- Joint Senate / Council meeting

Education Committee

- 37 The following Evidence Base will be considered by the Education Committee:
 - SAMM Record & Actions Plans
 - Summary from University Partnership Board on Partner Annual Monitoring Record and Action Plans
 - University Quality Reports:
 - Student Achievement Report
 - External Examiners
 - Student Casework
 - Application of Standards (Academic Qualifications Framework, Regulations and Boards of Examiners)
 - Academic Partnerships
 - Approval & Review of Academic Provision
- 38 Auditors will be appointed from the membership of Education Committee to undertake an audit/peer review of the adherence to the Annual Monitoring process.
- 39 The allocation of Auditors will be undertaken by Academic Registry in consultation with the Chair of Education Committee.
- 40 The role of the Auditor is to:
 - Report on whether the area to which they have been allocated has fulfilled its obligations in respect of Annual Monitoring and that in doing so has identified relevant issues and initiated action as appropriate. This will be achieved through reviewing the SAMM Record & Action Plans, or reviewing the University Quality Reports.
 - Complete the Auditor's Report (AM6) for discussion at Education Committee
- 41 Based on consideration of the Evidence base and the Auditor's Reports, Education Committee will:
 - Determine whether or not the evidence presented confirms that quality and standards have been maintained
 - Confirm that Annual Monitoring has been undertaken with due process
 - Identify any themes and issues that need addressing across the University

- 42 Following Education Committee, the Academic Registrar & Secretary (or nominee) has responsibility for the production of the University Quality & Standards Report.

Joint Senate/Council Meeting

- 43 The following Evidence Base will be considered by the Joint Meeting of Senate and Council:
- University Quality & Standards Report (with recommendations)
 - University / School NSS Action Plan
 - University quality reports:
 - Student Achievement Report
 - External Examiners
 - Application of Standards
 - Research Degrees (recommended by Research & Enterprise Committee)
- 44 Through presentations, discussions and debate, members of Senate and Council will explore themes arising from the Evidence Base. A Question & Answer session will enable Council to challenge the University, and to ensure that confidence in the maintenance of quality and standards can be confirmed.
- 45 Joint Senate/Council will determine whether quality and standards for academic provision across the University have been maintained.
- 46 On the basis of the consideration at the joint Senate/Council meeting, Council members will also consider the assurances required for the Accountability Return and confirm its agreement with the following:
- “The governing body has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This included evidence from the provider’s own periodic review processes, which fully involve students and include embedded external peer or professional review”
 - “The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate.”
 - “The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained.”

Monitoring and Communication

- 47 In order to ensure actions are being undertaken, each School will consider progress with the School action plan at each SAMM throughout the year. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that the Action Plan is updated at this point, and completed in preparation for reporting at Education Committee at the end of the academic cycle and finally at the first SAMM the following year.

48 Actions Plans will be monitored during the year as follows:

Action Plan arising from:	Monitored by:
University Quality & Standards Report-recommendations	Senate
School Action Plans	Education Committee
Student Achievement Report	Education Committee
External Examiners	Education Committee
Application of Standards	Education Committee
Academic Partnerships	University Partnership Board/Education Committee
Approval & Review of Academic Provision	Education Committee
Student Casework	Education Committee
Research Degrees	Research & Enterprise Committee

49 The University will be informed of key outcomes through Digest.

Abbreviations

DLHE	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (QAA)
NSS	National Student Survey
OfS	Office for Students
PAM	Partner Annual Monitoring
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SAMM	School Annual Monitoring Meeting
UKES	UK Engagement Survey