Policy for Education Action Planning for taught and research programmes

1. Purpose of the Education Action Plan (EAP) process

1.1. The process of annual monitoring and action planning, provides a holistic review and record of school education activities and will both support and enable alignment with faculty and University planning. A diagram of the EAP process is available.

1.2. The outputs of the process of annual review and monitoring are the EAPs, which will provide an efficient means of drawing together all outcomes.

1.3. The EAP process, as part of the Quality Assurance Framework, enables the University to meet its obligations, including supporting its quality assurance statement regarding the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and the reliability of degree standards, which the Board of Trustees is required to annually submit to the OfS.

2. Education Action Plan (EAP)

2.1. Each school\(^1\) has two Education Action Plans, one which covers all taught programmes and one for research programmes. These follow a University template that record all actions from the different components of the Quality Framework and the school's internal review of its educational provision. Actions within the EAP may relate to the school, a constituent department or a programme. The EAP is live, iterative and is used to track actions and monitor progress.

2.2. Where PGR provision is managed at faculty level, for example through a graduate school model, one faculty-wide PGR Education Action Plan may replace the requirement for individual school PGR Education Action Plans within that faculty.

2.3. Management of the EAP is the responsibility of the School Education Director or PGR Director of Studies, although its administration may be the responsibility of the Student Administration Manager or designate. The plans will be updated by the school throughout the year as necessary and will include reference to Education Strategy priorities and themes.

2.4. A Doctoral Training Entity may use a separate EAP if it is not appropriate to group actions within one school’s PGR Education Action Plan. In these cases, the EAP would be the responsibility of the Centre Director. Reporting as defined in 2.7 and 2.8 would remain the same.

2.5. The school should monitor its EAPs throughout the year and they should be shared and discussed with school staff and students at appropriate points, for example at SSLC, particularly to clarify whether suggested actions address the feedback received and the prioritisation of those actions.

2.6. Three priority action areas must be identified by each school every year for both the taught programmes EAP, and the postgraduate research EAPs.

2.7. EAPs must be considered annually by the relevant faculty board and contribute to the Integrated Planning Process.

2.8. The Faculty Undergraduate/Graduate Studies Committee will discuss the taught and research EAPs and share common concerns and good practice.

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\(^1\) The use of the word School in this document also relates to Centres, DTEs or faculty for PGRs
2.9. The EAP must show how each action relates to either the University Education Strategy, or the impact on the student experience.

2.10. The FQT will annually analyse all Education Action Plans, including the progress made on actions and in relation to University priorities.

3. Scope of the Education Action Planning Process

3.1. The EAP is a live and iterative record of actions arising from the review of annual programme monitoring activities including for taught programmes; responses to External Examiners, student survey feedback, SSLCs, unit evaluations, and exam boards. The EAP should also capture any programme and unit changes that are proposed/approved in-year, for taught programmes and the taught component of PGR programmes. For PGR programmes the EAP is an iterative record of actions arising from feedback from supervisors and student, analysis of the student data dashboard, feedback from partners, review of annual processes.

3.2. Education Action Plans will include actions arising from Faculty Quality Team (FQTs) review and Periodic Programme Review.

3.3. All actions recorded in the EAP should be actions for the school. This includes actions which the school believe should be taken forward by other areas of the University (e.g. the School Education Director will raise the issue of increased pressure on lecture theatres with Timetabling).

4. Completing and using the EAP

4.1. An EAP template is provided for each school to use. These are held in a central filestore (\mis-app1.admin.bris.ac.uk\users\Education Action Plans) to allow access by schools, UQTs etc. At the end of each annual cycle (April) a new tab for the next cycle will be added to the spreadsheets by the Academic Quality and Policy Office (AQPO). The school is responsible for carrying forward any outstanding actions from the previous year.

4.2. Actions must indicate the primary source, for example External Examiners comments; secondary sources of the action can also be identified if applicable.

4.3. The EAP must be updated following each review activity and specifically in advance of and subsequent to any University-level and faculty-level review points. Outside of this, progress on the actions within the EAP should be kept up to date at regular intervals and the outcomes and progress of the EAP shared with students through SSLC meetings and with staff at school meetings.

4.4. Periodic reviews of education (School Review, Periodic Programme Review (PPR), professional accreditation) will utilise the school’s EAP to gauge the plans and priorities of the school, and any progress made, as part of the review process.

4.5. Detailed guidance on completing the EAP is available as part of the EAP template provided to each school in the central shared filestore (\mis-app1.admin.bris.ac.uk\users\Education Action Plans).

5. Schools internal review of their education provision

5.1. Schools should carry out a two-stage annual review of their taught programmes and postgraduate research programmes including any programmes that are part of a Doctoral Training Entity (DTE). The outcomes from these annual reviews must be captured in the EAP. This gives schools the opportunity to reflect on all aspects of their taught and research programmes in a timely manner. Its purpose is to improve the quality of the programmes offered by the University through:
• providing a developmental opportunity to review the effectiveness of a programme or programmes and the extent to which aims, objectives and learning outcomes are being achieved;
• providing a developmental opportunity to review all postgraduate research programmes within a school / faculty;
• considering any relevant external comments on the wider aspects of the programme(s), including those of External Examiners and, where appropriate, employers;
• providing an opportunity to update programme specifications and unit forms and thereby keeping this information current and accurate;
• initiating the planning of consequent changes to units and/or programmes.
• providing key information for FQTs, including encouraging and disseminating good practice, through the EAP, which is considered annually by the FQT review panel;
• providing input through the EAP into School Reviews and external quality assurance visits.

5.2. Stage one reviews for taught programmes will normally take place in late June or July, directly following exam boards. This allows schools to discuss any immediate changes to programmes and submit these for approval. For taught postgraduate programmes the Stage one review will only cover the taught component of the programme.

5.3. Stage one review for research programmes including DTEs should take place at the most appropriate time of the year for the programme. The stage one review will only cover the taught component of the programme. PGR programmes with no formal taught element, or a DTE where the taught component is delivered wholly by a partner institution are not required to conduct a stage one review.

5.4. The second stage of the review for undergraduate (UG) and taught postgraduate (PGT) provision will necessarily take place at different times. Undergraduate by end of September, taught postgraduate by end of February the following year. The postgraduate research stage review, which will be the second stage review for programmes with a formal taught component, must take place before the end of February. Research programmes may combine the stage one review of the taught element with the postgraduate research stage review if this is deemed to be appropriate.

5.5. Each School must agree three priority action areas which will be added to the relevant Education Action Plan in time for any University-level review meetings.

5.6. Detailed guidance on undertaking the school’s internal review, including a list of inputs that must be considered at stage one, stage two and postgraduate research is provided in Guidance for annual review of programmes.

6. University-level review of School Education Action Plan (EAP)

6.1. A University-level review meeting, normally with the PVC Education & Students, will be organised for each Faculty. These will usually take place in October/November. These meetings will agree the educational priorities for the schools and what further monitoring is desirable, including the format it will take.

6.2. A University-level review meeting, normally with the Associate PVCs (Postgraduate/Undergraduate), will also be organised for each School which will consider both the taught and the PGR EAPs. This is a review of the EAP to ensure the school is on track for the academic year.
6.3. An evaluation of all the EAPs will be undertaken on completion of the University-level reviews. This will form one of the sources of evidence that contributes to the quality assurance statement presented to the Board of Trustees each year.

6.4. AQPO will evaluate the EAPs at the end of the cycle (April) and produce a summary report for the FQT and University Academic Quality and Standards Committee (UAQSC). The report will summarise issues and highlight any institutional level themes arising from actions being taken by schools to enhance the student academic experience and maintain degree standards.

6.5. Non-completion of Education Action Plans will be reported to the FQT Chair before being escalated first to the Head of School, the Faculty Dean, and then to the Associate PVC (Postgraduate), and finally to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students).

7. Faculty-level consideration of the School Education Action Plan (EAP)

7.1. Faculty-level consideration is undertaken annually by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee or equivalent and EAPs must be considered annually by the relevant faculty board and contribute to the Integrated Planning Process.

7.2. The Faculty may additionally make recommendations for action, if required. Any actions arising from the Faculty consideration should be recorded on the EAP.