

Summary			
This policy governs the operation of the University Quality Team in providing assurance to the University with regard to the quality and standards of its education provision and the student academic experience.			
Scope - This document applies to:			
All programmes of study.			
For applicants entering in:	n/a	Applies to academic year:	2021/22 onwards
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## University Quality Team: Policy

### Overall purpose

1. The University Quality Team (UQT) provides assurance to the University by scrutinising the quality and standards of education provision and student academic experience, contributing to and overseeing improvement via the Education Action Planning process and surfacing examples of educational excellence at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research levels across the institution.

### Underpinning principles

2. The UQT tests the quality and standards of the University's education provision and actively contributes to and monitors the planning and delivery of associated actions for improvement. It also has a forward-looking role in supporting programmes in their reaccreditation or revalidation.
3. Where the University Quality Team, in consultation with faculty officers, are content there is sustained evidence of the quality and standards of its education provision within a specified department or school (or individual programme), the area of review will not be subject to an annual UQT review, unless it wishes otherwise (e.g. to support accreditation). This consideration will occur in advance of each UQT cycle and only apply to taught reviews. An area of review will be subject to a UQT review once in any two-year period.

The Education Action Plans of those areas that do not have a UQT review will be reviewed by a University Education Director (Quality) for internal purposes to identify good practice and establish where support might be offered to assist in the completion of actions in the Plan.

4. Any additional scrutiny by the UQT of the quality and standards of a programme or group of programmes beyond the standard review process (as set out in 16-19) is determined on a risk-based approach where there is evidence of a risk to the quality and standards of the provision and/or the student academic experience.
5. The focus of activity by the UQT is on outcome rather than process. The outcomes are to:
  - Provide objective evidence of the quality and standards of education provision and the student academic experience across the University;
  - Ensure a critical self-reflective approach with a focus on continual improvement, incorporating recommendations made by the UQT, is applied and reflected in Education Action Plans.
  - Ensure that institutional and faculty-level issues and themes to support improvement plans are identified and resolved.
6. Review activities are conducted and reported upon in a timely way and informed by live insights from students and staff.
7. Reviews are grouped by cognate programmes within subject disciplines. Inter-disciplinary and joint honour programmes are reviewed as a single programme rather than component parts. Additionally, 'summer-school' units and University-level open units are batched and an adapted UQT review held for each. Research postgraduate provision is reviewed separately from taught provision. The taught component of research postgraduate provision may be

included as part of the PGR review or the taught programme review, as advised by the relevant School and Faculty.

8. The UQT Panels will primarily engage with role holders who have overall responsibility for delivering programmes when undertaking review activity: the Programme Director in taught programmes, and school-level PGR Directors (or equivalent) for PGR programmes,
9. The quality and standards by which provision and the continued improvement of the student experience are judged is defined by:
  - the UK Quality Code, in particular its expectations and core practices;
  - subject benchmark statements;
  - relevant professional standards;
  - the University's regulations and policies;
  - the University's specific priorities and themes, as guided by the University Education Committee and the University Research Committee for taught and research degree programmes respectively.
10. The student voice is an integral part of the review process: a student perspective will be provided by student quality reviewers on each UQT Panel; and each review will take account of feedback from students as to their academic experience (e.g. from student surveys and SSLCs), with live insight derived from student representatives on the programmes that are under review.

#### Membership and Panels

11. The UQT contains a balanced membership of appointed academic University Education Directors (Quality), appointed student quality reviewers and designated quality reviewers from AQPO staff. The number of members will be kept under review to ensure that the UQT can adequately discharge its duties each year.
12. Academic and student members of the UQT are representatives of the University and not aligned to a discipline, although it is expected that there will be a reasonable coverage of disciplines and levels of study across the membership.
13. The UQT is subdivided into individual panels to review a designated group of cognate programmes containing: a University Education Director (Quality) or the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Standards) who will chair the panel; a Student Quality Reviewer; and, a Professional Services quality reviewer from AQPO.

#### Responsibilities of UQT

14. The UQT provides assurance on the quality and standards of the University's provision and student academic experience principally by:
  - Ensuring that issues identified through quality mechanisms are being addressed and that actions are logged in Education Action Plans (EAPs);
  - Positively contributing to relevant EAPs by steering plans to resolve any issues and ensuring the actions are appropriate, and, where necessary, requiring action in response to a recommendation;
  - Overseeing the delivery of improvement plans by proactively monitoring progress in fulfilling actions in the EAPs and identifying any barriers;
  - Testing the impact of actions in the EAPs with students;
  - Producing a report on the result of each review activity;

- Producing overviews report to the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
15. The UQT will refer any identified examples of good or innovative practice to the Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching.
  16. In order to discharge its responsibilities, members of UQT will engage with induction, training and professional development in the area of quality assurance, as appropriate.

#### Review methodology

17. An initial desk-based review of the quality and standards of education provision across a group of programmes is undertaken whereby a panel reviews relevant EAPs against a variety of evidence sources from the previous academic cycle.
18. To support the desk-based review<sup>1</sup>, 'live' insight is gathered through engagement with students (e.g. course reps) and relevant faculty, school, department and programme representatives. This engagement may include a request for clarification on any queries that arise following the UQT panel's review of the evidence.
19. The UQT may also be directed by the University Education Committee and/or University Academic Quality and Standards Committee or University Research Committee and/or the University PGR Committee to investigate a specific quality and standards matter or evaluate whether satisfactory progress has been made in response to a specific action.

#### Reporting

20. At the end of the process the UQT panel produces a short report that sets out the results of its review activities, including any commendations and/or recommendations for action. Recommendations may be attributed to the programme, centre / school, faculty or a university-level professional services division, post-holder or committee.
21. Any urgent recommendations that arise from review activities will be raised and reported immediately such that they are addressed in a timely way.
22. Finalised reports are formally submitted to the faculty, school or department under review, as appropriate, copied to relevant school and faculty representatives and to the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
23. Annual overview reports setting out the results of the work of the UQT and any institutional-level actions and arising themes across the different levels of provision will be produced and submitted to the University after the conclusion of the relevant review activity.

#### Relationship with periodic reviews

24. Periodic Programme Revalidation (PPR) is a longer-term and deeper review and revalidation of the curriculum. If a PPR is being undertaken on a group of programmes, the UQT will not

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<sup>1</sup> EAPs are live documents that reflect changing priorities and actions within the year. Some of the forms of evidence considered by UQT will be static and relate to the previous year and may even have been resolved before the UQT review activities take place. It is therefore the role of the UQT to evaluate where issues have already been resolved, using EAPs as an audit trail to confirm completion, or identify any gaps in actions or progress in EAPs based on the live and static evidence.

scrutinise those programmes in the same academic year. UQT and PPR reports will be shared between the two processes.

25. Programmes that are subject to PSRB accreditation will be subject to the normal review process conducted by the UQT; however, the professional standards set by the body will constitute one of the key measures by which the quality and standards of the programme is judged and any recent accreditation report will constitute the main form of evidence by which the UQT determines quality and standards.