

## Policy and Procedure for the Continuous Monitoring of Taught Provision

### Introduction

1. University of Staffordshire's quality framework is in place to ensure that all its courses meet appropriate standards, provide current and coherent curricula and deliver a high-quality student learning experience and positive outcomes. The framework:
  - 1.1. Supports the University's Academic Strategy and achievement of institutional KPIs.
  - 1.2. Provides assurance of the quality and standard of the provision.
  - 1.3. Facilitates quality enhancement.
  - 1.4. Facilitates the assessment of risk, focusing attention where it is most required.
2. This policy and procedure outlines the University's mechanisms for the continuous monitoring of taught provision.
3. Continuous monitoring will ensure the quality of the university's provision and maximise student satisfaction through incremental and focused improvement at all levels.
4. Continuous monitoring operates through the completion and consideration of:
  - Course Monitoring Action Plans
  - Departmental Monitoring Action Plans
  - School Monitoring Action Plans.
5. Separate module-level monitoring plans are not required but any significant issues which do not form part of the routine reflection and development of modules should be incorporated into the relevant course monitoring action plan(s).
6. Course level action plans are maintained for all taught provision, including apprenticeships and provision delivered by collaborative academic partners. Courses on teach out will also form part of a course monitoring action plan.

### Action Plan Completion

7. The action plan templates are issued prior to each academic year and are completed on a continuous basis. While there are formal points in the year when action plans will be considered at monitoring meetings/committees (please see below), the plans are 'live' documents which are used to support the ongoing enhancement of provision.
8. The course level action plan template for apprenticeship provision differs as the plan also acts as the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) arising from the Ofsted self-assessment process. The QIP template is responsive to the regulatory landscape for apprenticeships and is therefore guided by the themes in the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and IfATE External Quality Assurance (EQA) of End Point Assessment (EPA) Framework. Each apprenticeship will have its own QIP.
9. Non-apprenticeship courses may be grouped for the purposes of course monitoring, with several courses covered by one plan. Courses should however only be grouped where the courses concerned are closely associated (for example different versions of the same course) as all actions in the plan should relate to the grouping as a whole. Heads of Department are asked to confirm course monitoring groupings annually prior to the issuing of action plans for the year. Courses delivered by partners will be allocated separate action plans (per course group/partner).
10. Evidence to inform action planning should be considered as soon as it becomes available and action plans completed/updated as required. The Academic Quality Service (AQS) provides

guidance on the evidence that should be considered and when this should be available [here](#). Evidence includes (but is not limited to) student survey and module evaluation results and other student feedback; B3 metrics and internal withdrawal, completion and pass rate data; graduate outcomes; and external examiner comments. Additional evidence sources must also be considered for apprenticeship provision, including the apprenticeship Qualification Retention Rate data (QRR), Quality Pass Rate data (QPR) and Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) data.

11. Course monitoring is also an important means of capturing evidence of good practice and the action plan templates are designed to facilitate this. (For apprenticeship provision good practice is captured in the SAR).
12. Course Leaders are responsible for completing the Course Monitoring Action Plans/QIPs for University-taught provision (including apprenticeships), as determined by the Course Director/Head of Department.
13. Academic Link Tutors (ALTs) are responsible for completing the Course Monitoring Action Plans for provision delivered by partners. While ALTs should discuss and agree actions with partners and monitor progress against those actions collaboratively, responsibility for completion of the course monitoring plan sits with the ALT (liaising with the Course Leader/Course Director as needed).
14. Heads of Department and Directors of Institutes are responsible for ensuring that course level action plans are completed and maintained for all the provision in their Department/Institute. They are also responsible for the completion and maintenance of the Departmental level action plans, which outline Departmental actions identified to address themes emerging at course level. Associate Deans Students are responsible for the completion and maintenance of School level action plans, which detail actions identified to address School level themes.
15. Following each academic year AQS will archive the final course, departmental and school plans for that year for the University's records.

## Course Monitoring Meetings

16. All Heads of Department and Course Directors will be invited at least twice a year (autumn and spring) to a university meeting to discuss the areas of good practice and action identified through their course monitoring activity/action planning. These meetings, organised by AQS, will normally be chaired by either the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) or a member of the Academic Quality and Development (AQD) Senior Management Team. The relevant School ADS will also be invited to the meeting.
17. The autumn meetings normally take place in October/November with the spring meetings normally being held between March and May.
18. The meetings provide an opportunity for supportive, collaborative and collegial conversation about courses' performance with AQD colleagues and the actions required to further enhance this. Students' Union representatives are also invited to participate.
19. Course Leaders, ALTs and Practice Learning Managers will not be routinely invited to these meetings but may be invited by the Head of Department if they feel they are particularly needed.
20. A course's risk-rating against the University's internal quality benchmarks<sup>1</sup> will determine the level of review it will be given at the meetings as follows:
  - Red – enhanced monitoring is required beyond the standard biannual monitoring discussions to support the course to improve. Additional meetings will be put in place to support enhancement of red rated courses.

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<sup>1</sup> Academic Board has approved the introduction of a series of internal quality benchmarks against which taught courses are assessed. These benchmarks are informed by the university KPIs, NSS (UG), PTES (PGT) and OfS B3 metrics and enable the university to identify more effectively those courses requiring additional support to improve. The benchmarks to be used will be confirmed annually by Quality and Enhancement Committee.

Amber – continued engagement with the biannual course monitoring meetings to ensure that progress is maintained.

Green – good practice will be shared at the biannual course monitoring meetings, but the course level action plan(s) will not be subject to detailed discussion.

21. Apprenticeships will be considered in detail at least biannually regardless of risk-rating as part of the SAR process.
22. As noted above, courses with a red rating will be required to engage in additional activity beyond the biannual meetings. An additional meeting will be held in the August/September before the autumn course monitoring meetings to consider courses red rated at that point so that any support required to facilitate improvement is identified as early as possible. Progress will then be reviewed at the autumn meetings. A further additional meeting may then also be required in January/February if insufficient progress has been made by the autumn discussion. The need for the January/February meeting will be determined by the Director of Learning and Teaching and Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) following the autumn meetings.

### **Committee/Institutional Oversight**

23. Continuous monitoring is overseen by School and University level committees as follows:
  - School Academic Committees (SAC) will consider the departmental and school level action plans for their Schools, and the progress against actions contained therein, at each meeting.
  - The school level action plans will also be considered as a standing item at each meeting of Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC). QEC also has oversight of SAC consideration of the departmental and school level plans through receipt of the minutes of the SAC meetings.
24. Additionally, QEC and Academic Board have oversight of the outcomes of continuous monitoring through the receipt of reports following the course monitoring meetings (sections 16-22 above). These may be standalone reports or course monitoring outputs may be embedded in broader reporting activity. Course monitoring outputs will be used to inform development of the Institutional Enhancement Plan.

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