Academic Quality Enhancement Framework

Annual Academic Quality

Enhancement Process

Approved by Academic Council

23 June 2021

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1. Context

1.1. This document sets out the Annual Academic Quality Enhancement procedures and reporting mechanisms. Each Discipline Programmes Board in the University is required to reflect on the provision of the programmes within its remit and identify actions required to address issues, maintain the standard of the programmes or enhance the student learning experience. These actions form the basis of the Faculty and University Quality Enhancement Plans.

1.2. The effectiveness of this quality enhancement process is dependent on how well the issues and actions identified within Quality Enhancement Plans are progressed throughout the University. Hence, the processes have been designed to ensure that ownership of actions is transferred to the appropriate unit or function within the University, and that unit or function takes responsibility for engaging with the relevant stakeholders to complete the action and progress a solution to the issue.

1.3. In addition to being populated by the Annual Quality Enhancement Process described in this document, the Quality Enhancement Plans can be updated as issues or actions are identified through other quality enhancement processes, such as Programme or School Reviews. Furthermore, matters that are raised through informal quality enhancement processes, such as discussions at Faculty Boards or meetings with students, can also be transferred in a timely manner onto the relevant Quality Enhancement Plan.

1.4. The Quality Enhancement Plans will be 'live' documents that can be updated by the relevant unit, Faculty, School or Discipline Programme Board and viewed by the relevant stakeholders. In this way, actions can be added to the relevant plans as the issues arise at any stage throughout the year.

2. Purpose

2.1. The purpose of this section is to describe Annual Academic Quality Enhancement process and procedures as they apply to TU Dublin programmes, and the roles and responsibilities of Discipline Programmes Boards, Faculty Boards and the University Programmes Board in this regard.

2.2. The purpose of the Annual Academic Quality Enhancement process is to identify actions that will lead to improvements in programme delivery and the student learning experience. The objectives of the Annual Academic Quality Enhancement process are to:

- Critically evaluate each programme and its delivery ensuring its alignment with the TU Dublin Educational Model;

- Consider external examiner reports and feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders;

- Reflect on student data and statistics, such as profile, demographics, diversity, engagement, assessments, progression and graduation rates;

- Reflect on possible implications for the programme of changes in the sector or any aspect of the internal or external environment;

- Identify any issues and problems, and devise corrective actions and appropriate programme modifications;

- Develop an action plan for the development and enhancement of the programmes.

3. Scope

3.1. This document refers to the annual enhancement of the academic delivery of TU Dublin programmes leading to Major awards. An adapted version of the process described in this document is followed for programmes leading to Minor, Special Purpose or Supplemental awards. Academic Affairs will determine the exact process to be used for such programmes in collaboration with the Discipline Programmes Board.

3.2. For the purposes of presenting the processes clearly, the timelines in this document refer to a programme delivery aligned to the academic calendar, i.e. semester 1 starting in September and semester 2 starting in January. For a programme starting in January, the timelines are shifted accordingly.

4. Overview of Annual Academic Quality Enhancement Procedures

4.1. The process begins with the completion of the Annual Programme Enhancement Report. The Programme Coordinator downloads the form, prepopulated with the relevant student data. The Programme Coordinator completes the form by summarising the views and feedback from staff and students and by identifying any actions that need to be taken to maintain or enhance the quality of the programme and the student learning experience.

4.2. The Annual Programme Enhancement Reports are used by the Discipline Programmes Board to reflect on the quality of its programmes and to develop a Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan. This plan is submitted to the Faculty Programmes Board and used to inform the development of the annual Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan which in turn informs the University Quality Enhancement Plan, as shown in the process flow chart in Section 10.

4.3. All quality enhancement plans described here are available to staff via the TU Dublin intranet and will be continually updated as: new actions arise from quality enhancement processes; actions are completed; or the status of an action changes.

4.4. Discipline Programmes Boards will administer and maintain the Discipline Quality Enhancement Plans, Faculties will administer and maintain the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plans, and Academic Affairs will administer and maintain the University Quality Enhancements Plan.

5. Annual Programme Enhancement Report

5.1. Annual Process

5.1.1. Discipline Programmes Boards shall follow the two-part Annual Academic Quality Enhancement process. The process involves the completion and submission of two reports: Report A is completed in February/March while Report B is completed in October/November. Each report, with the relevant data already included, is downloaded by the Programme Coordinator in February and October respectively.

5.1.2. One Report A and one Report B will normally be completed for each programme. However, as described in the Management of the Quality Enhancement of Academic Programmes document, in the case where a programme's modules are a sub-set of a larger programme, one of each report (A & B) can be submitted that includes the parent programme and the embedded programme. In this case, there will be one Programme Team and the Coordinator for the parent programme will also have responsibility for the smaller programme. For example, where a Level 7 programme comprises of the first three years (stages) of a Level 8 programme, one of each report (A & B) can be submitted for both programmes. The *Discipline Programme Board* will make the decision in relation to the number of reports required in this regard.

5.1.3. Similarly, if two or more related programmes share multiple stages and modules, the Discipline Programmes Board can decide that only one of each report (A & B) is required for all programmes. For example, this can apply in cases where there are streams in the later stages of a programme or where two programmes differ only in the later stages of the programmes.

5.2. Annual Programme Enhancement Report A

5.2.1. Report A captures the data and feedback required for the Programme Team and Discipline Programmes Board to reflect on the delivery of the programme during the academic year under review, including the level of student engagement and performances in any assessments that have been completed by this time. Engagement data can include attendance in class (e.g. laboratories, studio), level of VLE access and participation in assessments. Report A also focuses on the profile of the student cohort, including demographics, number of students, diversity and academic level. The Programme Team and Discipline Programmes Board will also consider the quality of the student learning experience with a particular focus on equity.

5.2.2. If the reflection identifies the need to make changes to the programme, these changes are proposed through the [Making Changes to Programme & Modules](#) process. Any issues and problems affecting the quality of the programme and the student learning experience that have not been addressed should be identified and where possible corrective actions devised. Required actions that are not within the remit of the Programme Team should be clearly identified in the report.

5.2.3. Completion of Report A involves the following steps:

- Programme Coordinator downloads and circulates Report A (with prepopulated data) to the Programme Team and Class Representatives;

- Programme Coordinator meets with the Class Representatives to discuss the data and add any further relevant information;

- Programme Coordinator discusses the data with the Programme Team and adds any additional relevant information to the form;

- To complete the form, the Programme Coordinator can use data from the Programme Student Surveys and any formal or informal meetings with students and the Class Representatives;

- Programme Coordinator submits Report A to the Discipline Programmes Board.

5.3. Annual Programme Enhancement Report B

5.3.1 Report B captures the data and feedback required for the Programme Team and Discipline Programmes Board to reflect on the students' overall performance across the previous academic year (e.g. assessment, progression, graduation statistics, etc.). In addition, Part B also

focuses on the external examiner report(s) and feedback from students and Programme Team members.

5.3.2   If the reflection identifies the need to make changes to the programme, these changes are proposed through the [Making Changes to Programme & Modules](#) process. Any issues and problems affecting the quality of the programme and the student learning experience that have not been addressed should be identified and where possible corrective actions devised. Required actions that are not within the remit of the Programme Team should be clearly identified in the report.

5.3.3   Completion of Report B involves the following steps:

- Programme Coordinator downloads Report B (with prepopulated data) and adds/attaches the required information from the relevant stakeholders, such as:
  - External Examiners
  - Student Feedback
  - Staff Feedback
- Feedback should also be sought from community and industry partners, where relevant (e.g. where there are community-engaged projects and/or work placement);
- Programme Coordinator circulates Report B to the Programme Team, external examiner(s) and the Class Representatives;
- External Examiners have the opportunity to provide feedback and input into the drafting of the report electronically;
- Programme Coordinator meets with the Class Representatives to discuss the data and add any further relevant information;
- Programme Coordinator discusses the data with the Programme Team and adds any additional relevant information to the form.
- Programme Coordinator submits Report B to the Discipline Programmes Board*;*

6.   Consideration of Annual Programme Enhancement Reports by Discipline Programmes Board

6.1.   The Discipline Programmes Board ensures that all [Annual Programme Enhancement Reports](#) (A & B) are completed and uses these reports to update the [Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan](#).

The status of existing actions are updated and any new actions are added along with where responsibility lies for each action.

6.2. Both Report A and Report B include:

- Student data (e.g. profile, assessment, progression, graduation, etc.);

- Summary of stakeholder feedback;

- Commentary on student data;

- Actions identified to enhance the quality of the programme.

6.3. The Discipline Programmes Board will normally receive one Report A and one Report B from each programme. However, as described in Sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3, one of each report (A & B) can be submitted in the case of embedded programmes or programmes that share multiple stages. The Discipline Programmes Board will decide whether a single report or separate reports are required.

6.4. Discipline Programmes Boards consider the analytical data for each programme and may make recommendations in relation to additional actions for Programme Teams to consider.

6.5. The Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan lists the actions, required to enhance the quality of the programmes, and assigns each action to one of the following:

- Discipline Programme Board (includes actions for individual Programme Teams);

- School.

6.6. Actions outside the remit of the Discipline Programme Boards and Schools involved in the programme are also identified within the enhancement plan.

6.7. The Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan is submitted to the Faculty Board, and includes appendices providing an overview of the statistical data for the programmes.

7. Consideration of Discipline Quality Enhancement Plans by Faculty Boards

7.1 Faculty Board ensures that all annual Discipline Quality Enhancement Plans are completed and uses these plans to update the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan. The status of existing actions are updated and any new actions are added, along with where the responsibility for each action lies.

7.2 Faculty Board considers the analytical data for each programme and may make recommendations in relation to additional actions for Discipline Programmes Boards to consider. The Faculty Board may also make recommendations to other relevant Faculty committees regarding the supports that should be provided to assist Discipline Programme Boards to address any issues arising.

7.3 Faculty Board may require that a Discipline Programmes Board reconsiders specific actions or that a [Programme Review](#) be undertaken.

7.4 Actions that have been identified within the Discipline Quality Enhancement Plans that are outside of the remits of the respective Discipline Programme Boards and Schools, are assigned to Faculty committees or functions by Faculty Board.

7.5 Faculty Board is responsible for updating the status of these actions in the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan. The committees and functions assigned these actions are responsible for reporting on their status and progress to Faculty Board.

7.6 Faculty Board may also reassign actions to Schools or Discipline Programmes Boards, in which case the actions will be added to the relevant Discipline Quality Enhancement Plans.

7.7 The Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan also identifies actions that are outside of the Faculty's remit and need to be addressed at University level.

7.8 The Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan is submitted to the University Programmes Board, via Academic Affairs, and includes appendices providing an overview of the statistical data for the programmes.

8. Consideration of Faculty Quality Enhancement Plans by University Programmes Board

8.1. When all Faculty Quality Enhancement Plans have been submitted, Academic Affairs updates the [University Quality Enhancement Plan](#), which is submitted to the University Programmes Board for consideration. The completion of the University Quality Enhancement Plan is also noted at the Academic Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee.

8.2. The University Programmes Board considers the plan and determines whether there has been sufficient follow-through on the actions identified in the previous years' plans and assigns actions to the appropriate University committee or function. The University Programmes Board can assign actions back to the Faculty, in which case the actions will be added to the relevant Faculty Quality Enhancement Plans.

8.3. Actions that have been identified within the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plans that are outside of the remits of the respective Faculties, are assigned to University committees or functions by the University Programmes Board.

8.4. Academic Affairs is responsible for updating the status of the actions assigned to University committees and functions in the University Quality Enhancement Plan. The committees and functions assigned actions are responsible for reporting on their status and progress to the University Programmes Board, via Academic Affairs.

8.5. The University Quality Enhancement Plan is then forwarded to Academic Council and to the University Executive Team for noting.

9. Updating and Transparency of Quality Enhancement Plans

9.1 All quality enhancement plans are 'live' documents, available on the TU Dublin intranet and continuously updated as new actions are identified, through quality enhancement processes, and as the status of actions are progressed.

9.2 As mentioned in Section 1.2, the effectiveness of the Annual Academic Quality Enhancement process is dependent on how well the issues and actions identified within Quality Enhancement Plans are progressed throughout the University.

9.3 The Chair of the Discipline Programmes Board (or nominee) will be responsible for updating the Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan; the Vice-Dean of Education (or nominee) will be responsible for updating the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan; and Academic Affairs will be responsible for updating the University Quality Enhancement Plan.

9.4 Actions, identified through Report A or Report B of the Annual Academic Quality Enhancement process and actions arising from stakeholder feedback at any stage during the delivery of a programme can be added to the relevant enhancement plan immediately, if deemed appropriate by the relevant Board. For example, the Discipline Programme Board can update the Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan at any stage, and can also propose an action is added to the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan. Similarly, Faculty Board can update the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan at any stage and can propose an action is added to the University Quality Enhancement Plan at any time during the academic year.

9.5 Actions arising from Institutional Review, Professional Services Reviews, Faculty Reviews, School Reviews or Programme Reviews can be incorporated into the relevant quality enhancement plan.

10. Process Flow Charts

Annual Academic Quality Enhancement Process

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