University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 5 October 2012

Revised Guidance on the Structure and Contents of the Annual Report from Validated Institutions to the University of Glasgow

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1. Background

Validated institutions are required to submit an Annual Report on the performance of all validated programmes leading to awards of the University delivered wholly or jointly by those institutions. The Report is considered at a meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee or Joint Board, comprising representatives of the University and the relevant validated institution.

The guidance on the structure and contents of the Annual Report from Validated Institutions to the University has been revised in the context of:

- an enhancement-led approach to quality has been in operation in Scotland for nearly a decade
- updated guidance on Quality from the Scottish Funding Council, including on annual monitoring
- the University's responsibilities as a degree awarding body as defined by in the QAA Quality Code
- the maturity of the University's relationships with its validated institutions, some of whom are independent higher education institutions in their own rights
- a desire to produce a more streamlined and focused annual report

2. Assurance and Enhancement - A Reflective and Critical Evaluation

In revising its guidance on the annual report, the University is seeking to ensure that its requirements for annual reports from its Validated Institutions are consistent with the Scottish enhancement-led approach to quality as set out in the Quality Enhancement Framework, which includes Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR).

The SFC guidance in relation to institution-led review, includes the following statements, which are also relevant to Validated Institutions' annual report to the University.

- 'encourage and support critical reflection on practice'
- 'to provide assurances about the quality and standards of provision'
- 'promote dialogue on areas in which quality might be improved'
- 'identify good practice for dissemination within the institution and beyond'

Consequently, the University is placing greater emphasis on all of the above in relation to the annual reporting arrangements for validated programmes and the learning experience of students on these programmes.

The Annual Report to the University should be a reflective and critical evaluation:

- how successfully the validated programmes have operated and what the quality of the learning experience of students has been;

- actions needed or being taken to further strengthen provision and to address any identified weaknesses, thereby further enhancing the provision of teaching, learning and assessment and the learning experience of students;
- good practice for dissemination within the institution and beyond.

3. Evidence Based

The Annual Report should be evidence-based and include cross references, as appropriate (eg footnotes and cross-referencing) to direct readers to where supporting evidence may be found to substantiate statements or claims (e.g. external examiners' reports, student evaluations – including NSS results, annual monitoring reports, SFC/QAA or accrediting body reports, employers' views, statistical indicators, etc). Supporting or background documentation can be contained in appendices, as appropriate. Guidance on this is provided below.

4. Structure and Contents of Annual Report

The Annual Report from Validated Institutions to the University should embrace the operation of all awards validated by the University, including any research degrees and international activities. The report should address the following:

a) *Overview of the year*

This should be an introduction to the annual report and provide an overview of the operation of the programmes covered by the report, highlighting any significant new developments or changes in the duration since the previous report.

b) *Update on issues arising from the previous year's report*

An update on any issues identified from the previous year's report where they are not addressed in other sections of the report.

c) *Securing Academic Standards and Assuring Quality*

This section should:

i) identify the **key points** arising from an analysis and evaluation of the core processes for securing academic standards and assuring quality of provision for the preceding 12 months
ii) Provide details of proposed enhancements/developments, including plans for tackling and timescales.
iii) Provide a commentary on the effectiveness of these processes

The core processes for securing academic standards and assuring quality of provision are:

- Admission procedures
- Student Achievement, Progression and Retention

  Please comment on the results and on any patterns in this year's results compared to previous years

- Student Support mechanisms
- Student feedback mechanisms (student representative system, surveys and questionnaires including performance in the NSS, etc)
- Annual monitoring process
- External Examiners' system including a summary of any issues raised in reports and actions taken in response
- Validation/ revalidation and Periodic Review processes
- Outcome of any Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) visits and or reports

Cross referencing should be provided in the body of the report to the supporting evidence.

The following information should be provided as appendices:

i)   Data relating to

    a. student numbers (total and per programme) with a breakdown for gender, ethnicity and disability

    b. admissions, progression, degree classifications and graduate destinations (at the programme level)

ii) A summary of programmes validated/ revalidated/ during the year and forward timetable.   [Individual reports are not required as these will have been submitted separately to the University for consideration by the Academic Standards Committee.]

iii) A report on the key points arising from the annual monitoring process with a sample of annual monitoring reports. The Senate Office will advise on the required sample.

iv) A summary table of External Examiners' reports showing their University of Glasgow categorisation (eg, External Examiner satisfied with all aspects of the programme through to Examiner making serious comment and School to respond within 3 months). An example is appended. Individual reports are not required as these will have been submitted separately to the University.

v)   Any PSRB reports.

d) The Student Learning Experience

This section should evaluate the effectiveness of the Validated Institution's approach to enhancing the student learning experience, identify the **key points** including recent and proposed enhancements/developments, and plans for tackling them including timescales.

This section should include:

i)   details of any developments or updates in relation to

- the quality of learning opportunities including resources for learning, teaching and assessment
- academic and pastoral support mechanisms and other forms of student support
- promoting the development of graduate attributes, including those relating to employability

- Equality & Diversity,
- Engagement with sector-wide enhancement themes

ii) Details of any actions taken to any policy initiatives that the University has recommended to Validated Institutions

iii) a summary of any academic appeals, academic-related complaints and academic-related conduct (discipline) cases, dealt with during the year covered by the report. Please comment on any patterns in this year's cases compared to previous years and highlight any changes to policy, regulations, procedures or practices as an outcome of student cases.

iv) a summary of staff recruited (for the recognition of staff as teachers of the University - a brief CV for each new member should be included in the appendices); any planned changes in staffing, and details of any significant staff development events held during the year.

e) *Summary of Successes and Areas for Improvement*

This section should be the natural conclusion of the Annual Report. It will, inevitably, provide a focus for the Liaison Committee or Joint Board when they are considering the areas of enquiry at the meeting where the report is considered. It is a good idea, therefore, to adopt a balanced approach. To this end highlight:

- those aspects of provision that are considered to be particularly successful
- areas for improvement, which should be prioritised,
- future planning, such as new programmes, further developments on campus, changes in leadership roles, etc
- any issues that the validated institution wishes to draw to the attention of the University (not otherwise addressed) including any proposals for change which might affect the grounds on which validation is granted

If appropriate, and to avoid duplication, please include cross-references to other sections of the Annual Report or supporting documentation.

Senate Office

28 September 2012

Summary of External Examiners Reports

Programme	External Examiner	Session 2009-10	Session 2010-11	Session 2011-12
Programme A	Examiner A1	1a	1c	1csp
Programme A	Examiner A2	2	1c	1c
Programme B	Examiner B	1csp	1b	2
Programme C	Examiner C	1c	1asp	1c
Programme D	Examiner D	1a	1a	1a

* <u>Notes</u>

1a   Examiner satisfied with all aspects of the course

1b   Examiner satisfied with all aspects of the course. (Suggestions will form a helpful contribution to course development).

1c   Validated institution to make comments

2   Examiner making serious comment and the validated institution has to respond within 3 months

sp   Examiner raises issues other than that relating directly to the course