

**University of Glasgow****Academic Standards Committee - Friday 23 May 2014****Periodic Subject Review: A Reflective and Critical Evaluation of the  
Second Six Year Cycle (2008-14)**

**Ms Fiona Dick, Ms Jane McAllister and Mrs Catherine Omand, Senate Office**

**Background**

Periodic Subject Review is the University's system of Institution led subject review. The Scottish Funding Council requires that all universities operate such a system but allows institutions to develop their own processes within a number of wide parameters. Institution led subject review was first introduced at the University of Glasgow in 2002-03 as Review of Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA). Since then, the process has been under continuous review and development, including a major review at the end of the first six-year cycle and a restructuring and name change to Periodic Subject Review (PSR) in 2009-10, reflecting the restructuring of the University to schools and colleges.

We have now reached the end of the second six-year cycle and it is time to consider whether any major improvements to the process can be identified and implemented.

The Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Senate Office agreed a plan for a reflective, critical evaluation of the second six-year cycle that included:

- reference to external sector guidance i.e. SFC Quality Enhancement Framework, QAA Quality Code;
- consideration of examples of other practice, i.e. University of Glasgow Graduate School Review and two case studies of practice at other universities (University of St Andrews and Warwick University);
- reflection on the review process for ELIR;,
- a comprehensive consultation with key stakeholders, including:
  - students through SRC/Student Council Panel conveners;
  - Deans of Learning and Teaching;
  - Chair of ASC;
  - Heads of recently reviewed Schools/Subjects;
  - Learning and Teaching Centre/Academic Development Unit staff members involved in PSR;
  - Senate Office staff involved in PSR.

It was also agreed that the conclusions of the review and any recommendations arising would be shared and discussed with these groups before being finalised.

**External requirements/reference**

Senate Office is confident that our procedures continue to meet the SFC requirements established in 2003 and updated in 2012 (see Appendix 1). The expectations and indicators of

Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and review (listed in Appendix 2) published in September 2013 have also been reviewed and Senate Office is confident that Periodic Subject Review does not require any changes to meet these.

### **Alternative models**

Alternative review processes were investigated with a view to determining if PSR remains the most appropriate approach for the University and also to discover whether the alternative models have any particular elements that might enhance the PSR process. The processes examined were:

- *University of Glasgow graduate school review*
- *Subject Review at University of St Andrews*
- *Subject Review at University of Warwick*
- *Enhancement-led Institutional Review*

The main features of each are listed below. These were considered throughout the consultation process. None of these alternative methods were considered to be suitable in its entirety but there were aspects of each that were of interest. These are discussed below as part of the themes arising from the consultation with groups involved in PSR.

#### **University of Glasgow Graduate School Review**

- Self Evaluation Questionnaire - structured and prescriptive;
- Documentation - flexible/suggestions not requirements (language used is 'might'), although in reality guidance is generally followed;
- Panel send in report and identify groups to meet with two weeks prior to visit;
- Pre-visit day before to agree questions and whole panel has working dinner.

#### **University of St Andrews**

- Guidelines follow ELIR model, short, Reflective Analysis approach with report (7-8 pages) following sections from RA;
- Review team meet night before a one day review visit for working dinner which allows panel to get to know one another and begin work;
- Panel has already exchanged commentary and identified themes and good practice which is sent out to School in advance of the review;
- More active role/contribution to draft report by panel members,

#### **University of Warwick**

- All teaching and learning provision is reviewed every five years; this covers 30 departments in a 3 day period in November;
- Reviews last between one and three days, depending on how recently departments have been reviewed previously by the University and/or by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRB);
- The provision of administrative support is main challenge; mainly tapping into a broad pool of staff with secretariat, committee and teaching and learning quality experience;

- Reviewing all of the departments at once is thought to reduce the burden on departments and also ensures that the review process is both fair and consistent.
- “Faculty Engagements” take place in March to provide an opportunity for the Faculties to reflect on the outcomes and drive common themes to engineer change;

### **Enhancement-led Institutional Review**

- Reflective Analysis document accompanied by case studies;
- Advance Information Set is provided to enable matters relating to Quality Assurance and the management of academic standards to be addressed early in the process allowing discussion during visit to focus on enhancement;
- Short outcome report followed by a more detailed technical report.

### **Main themes from consultation**

#### **1. Level of review**

Some Heads of Schools and Subject areas noted that post restructuring organisational units could present some challenges in establishing the most effective level of review for PSR. It was suggested that reviews seemed to function best at School level where the management and teaching responsibility of the School were the same, e.g. in the College of Science and Engineering. Other experience, e.g. the Review of PGT programmes in the School of Medicine, suggested that a wide range and volume of provision was challenging to deal with in a single event. Other circumstances where reviewing at School level might be difficult were the School had diverse subject areas, i.e. in the level of attention that the Panel would be able to give to each subject and the requirement to include an external subject specialist on the Panel; we would need to find someone with a matching range of experience or increase the number of external members on the Panel. It was also noted that where a School has several subject areas that are reviewed separately, staff at School level are involved in PSR much more frequently than the six year cycle, particularly in the Schools of Social and Political Sciences and the School of Humanities.

It is therefore **recommended** that we continue with the currently defined areas of review and maintain flexibility to respond where organisational arrangements change. Senate Office will discuss with Schools prior to each year’s reviews to establish the most appropriate level to conduct reviews. Discussion regarding the next review of PGT programmes in the School of Medicine is underway but a firm decision on the way forward has yet to be reached.

#### **2. Preparation of documentation in advance of the review visit**

Feedback from recently reviewed Schools and Subject areas reported that the amount of work required to prepare for PSR was substantial. The area under review is required to provide a range of ‘off the shelf’ documentation and prepare a Self Evaluation Report (SER).

Comments were made that the amount of documentation generated was too much and that it did not contribute to driving change. The range of documentation that should be considered by Universities in internal subject review is set out by the SFC and QAA. PSR follows this closely and there is little scope to reduce it. It was acknowledged that the introduction of Sharepoint as the means of gathering and submitting the documentation had reduced the administrative load of that aspect of preparation, but concern remained

around the SER, which was thought to be too long and onerous to produce. The load tended to have a significant impact on the person identified as the main editor despite best efforts to work collegially and devolve part of the work.

The SER is discussed further in the next section and more effective use of the documentation is considered in section 4. A suggestion that the guidelines on the preparation of the documentation could be clearer regarding which elements will be provided by the Senate Office will be taken forward.

### **3. Self Evaluation Report**

The process of producing the SER is central to the PSR process. It provides a means for the School/Subject area to communicate their aspirations and difficulties to the Panel that would be difficult otherwise. It also serves as a trigger for the area to undertake reflection (which can be forced out by other pressures). Assuming it is accepted that the SER remains part of the process, the only way to reduce its load on the authors is to alter the format.

Comments on the current format of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) noted the following points:

- Reports could be overly long (averaging 40 pages);
- Reports tended to be repetitious (reflecting the topic prompts under each heading in the guidelines);
- There is a tendency to outline provision rather than reflect on it;
- Writing the report is often regarded as a chore;
- Relies too much on the effort of one individual or a small group of authors;
- Requires a lot of effort and is not seen to directly drive change.

In response to these points, the consultation groups suggested:

- Simplify guidelines so they can be used in a less prescriptive and more creative way that might encourage reflection and communication of strategic vision;
- Give more freedom for the area to set its own agenda through more flexibility in SER;
- Emphasis should be placed on *opportunity* to reflect;
- Encourage focus on setting out future vision for Learning and Teaching and an action plan for achieving it;
- Update the suggested headings to provide more strategic/reflective focus and relevance to current developments;
- encourage evaluation to be evidenced based.

Over the past two years, the Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching) has attended the initial briefing meetings with key staff in the area under review. The purpose of this is to emphasise the need for reflection and strategic focus and to promote the mindset that PSR is a supporting, enhancing process. The VP (L&T) also encourages an open and honest approach to the SER, reassuring staff that self-criticism will not be used against them but be welcomed by the Panel because it allows them to engage in an informed discussion that will be useful in what the area is aiming to achieve.

The outline used for the ELIR technical report was suggested as a potential template for the SER. This was discussed with the consultation groups who were supportive of this as a change with potential to address some of the issues noted above. The University's recent experience with ELIR 3 has been positive. The guidance provided on preparing the Reflective Analysis (equivalent document to the SER) was very simple and allowed the University flexibility to reflect on areas relevant to its current situation and to set the agenda for the visit. It also supported the University taking the same open and honest approach that is advocated for PSR Self Evaluation Reports.

The main headings for the ELIR technical report are:

- Context and strategic framework
- Enhancing the student experience
- Enhancement of Learning and Teaching
- Academic Standards
- Self evaluation and management of information
- Collaborative activities

The full outline is attached as Appendix 3. The headings would also be adopted for the PSR reports, if agreed.

It is **recommended** that the ELIR technical report structure be used as the basis for much simplified guidance on preparing the SER. If this is agreed, the ELIR 3 guidance will be adapted to ensure relevance at School/Subject level rather than institution and extended, if necessary, to include any specifically subject level matters that are not covered by the existing headings. Encouragement will also be given to use this guidance in a non-prescriptive way.

#### 4. **Frontloading Quality Assurance**

Another aspect of ELIR that was found beneficial was the Advance Information Set. Similar in range to the documentation currently supplied for PSR, it is used by the Review Team to establish, before the visit, that quality assurance procedures are in place and being operated effectively (or to flag any issues that need to be explored during the visit). This then allows the time of the visit to focus on enhancement rather than identifying potential issues. Both St Andrews and ELIR reviews "frontload" quality assurance aspects of their activity in a similar desk based audit approach.

The current role of documentation in PSR is in line with the ELIR Advance Information Set. PSR requires documentation to be supplied to the Panel and each member of the Panel to review a section of it. It is suggested that this exercise could be strengthened and given a clearer sense of purpose by clarifying its role in confirming quality assurance activities. It is also suggested that the Panel members' views should be recorded. This would be done via a simple proforma asking panel members to confirm and/or comment on a series of statements relating to quality assurance matters based on their reading of their allocated part of the documentation. This would be submitted to the Clerk to the Panel along with comments on the SER. Statements would be constructed in the form that "evidence has been seen that x process is working well" with space for positive comment and flagging any points that need to be followed up in advance or at the visit.

It is **recommended** that the operation of quality assurance procedures are considered by the Panel and confirmed prior to the review via a proforma to ensure conversations during the visit itself can focus, as much as possible, on enhancement. Where issues are identified, these will be flagged for discussion with the School/Subject area.

## 5. Post-review support

In consultations, groups agreed that support to subject areas after the review visit could be improved. There were reports of anxiety in waiting for feedback in terms of the publication of the review report and then in preparing responses to ASC. It was noted that all consultation groups had appreciated the debriefing aspect of the consultations as they provided an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes and contribute to enhancing the process.

The current process includes a final meeting on the day of the review that is intended to provide the Subject or School with a summary of strengths and areas for improvement, but, in practice, the effectiveness of this was variable. It was suggested that the Senate Office Panel member could provide some additional feedback in writing. Various groups in the consultations had been impressed by the idea of the ELIR Outcome letter provided to institutions one week after the review visit. Panel members consulted expressed concerns that the production of an outcome letter, or similar, could restrict the Panel in the process of drafting the report and agreeing the commendations/recommendations. It was also noted that the production of an “outcome letter” from PSR would represent an additional burden on the Panel, particularly the clerk (usually from Senate Office) and it was agreed that the resource was best directed at ensuring the full report was produced in a timely fashion, with the Panel Conveners being asked to ensure the feedback given at the final meeting of the visit was as detailed and informative as possible..

The consultation groups were also interested in the de-briefing meeting that takes place 2/3 months post review in the Warwick model. It was thought that some form or adaptation of this activity would serve as a prompt for the School/Subject area to continue the reflection process. It could also facilitate a co-ordinated approach to follow-up activity in Colleges where more than one subject is engaged in PSR activity (either being reviewed or following up on recommendation) to enable any generic issues to be picked up for wider action. The Colleges or Schools would need to take ownership of this activity as part of their enhancement of learning and teaching via L&T Committees. The Senate Office could provide prompts to relevant areas to consider cross College consideration of the outcomes.

Further support could be offered directly to Schools/Subject areas that have been recently reviewed via de-brief meetings with the Senate Office PSR Manager. These would be arranged on circulation of the confirmed report and could provide guidance on responses if necessary and advice on transmission through ASC. It would also be an opportunity for Senate Office to gather feedback on the process to inform ongoing enhancement.

It is recommended that:

- Colleges (or Schools) where more than one subject is engaged in PSR activity (either being reviewed or following up on recommendations) should consider a co-ordinated approach to follow up activity via L&T Committee business, to enable any generic issues to be picked up for wider action;

- Recently reviewed Schools/Subject areas are offered meetings with the PSR Manager for post review support and feedback.

## 6. Commendations/Recommendations

Some concerns were raised relating to recommendations in PSR reports over the past year and during the consultation process. These concerns focused on:

- The need for the wording of recommendations to be clear with regard to the panel's intentions, provide some context and to stand alone to facilitate action and transmission through ASC;
- The need for recommendations to be supported by evidence, with care taken by the Panel not to react solely to opinions/perspectives of small groups of students and staff;
- The length of time between the review visit and the response to recommendations. This was particularly the case where follow up responses were required and, in occasional cases, leading to similar issues being raised in subsequent reviews.

To attempt to address these points, it is proposed that panel guidance will be provided, particularly to Clerks, on clarity of purpose and intention behind recommendations to enable the area under review to take appropriate action and provide good responses. This level of clarity must be balanced by allowing the area to determine for themselves how a problem should be solved. Where a need is identified by the Panel, recommendations should be aimed at the College, School and Subject area looking at a range of solutions to deliver the outcome. Also, all draft PSR reports will be reviewed by the PSR manager or another senior member of Senate Office Staff to "sense check" recommendations from a perspective outwith the Panel prior to submission to ASC (this has been done for 2013-14 reviews).

Heads of Schools/Subject areas who took part in the consultation requested that PSR Panel members be asked to keep a balanced perspective of all the various student feedback mechanisms (NSS, FYLES, PTES, ISB, Course Evaluation, SSLC etc) and not make judgements based solely on the views of the small groups of students who meet with the panel. The Chair of ASC made similar comments. It is therefore **recommended** that guidance on this matter be added to Panel guidance and training materials and that Panel conveners be briefed to maintain awareness of consistency across the full range of student feedback mechanisms and the risk of generalising based on the views of a limited number of students attending the review. Recommendations should direct Schools/Subjects to "explore" issues identified through feedback from small groups. A similar point was raised regarding Schools/Subject areas using the review outcomes as a means of supporting their case for additional resources. The VP (L&T) explicitly advises that PSR is not an opportunity to bid for extra resources during the initial briefing meetings. Where the Panel has identified a resource need, recommendations should ask the resource budget holder to "consider" the need and offer explanation of the decision (There will be competing demands on resources that the Panel will not be aware of, therefore, any recommendations requiring resource allocation beyond the School/Subject control must acknowledge this).

ASC had previously discussed and supported shortening the timescale of reporting responses. While some of those consulted felt that the 12 month response period was appropriate and a good fit with the annual committee structure, others considered that a

shorter timescale for reporting would maintain the focus of the School/Subject area on the outcomes of the review and achieving results promptly. It was noted that the reporting timescale had been 6 months in the past and had been changed as the level of progress achieved in that time meant that follow up reports at 12 months were required more often than not. ASC is asked to consider whether the timescale for first responses to the recommendations should be shortened from one year to 6 months from the School/Subject area receiving the confirmed report (normally June of the year of review, reporting to the January ASC).

In Summary, it is recommended that:

- Panel guidance and training will be strengthened on:
  - maintaining a balanced perspective of the range of feedback formats and not relying solely on the comments of the individuals who attend meetings with the Panel;
  - wording of recommendations to ensure clarity of purpose and intention;
  - ensuring the process is not used to unduly influence resource allocation;
- Reports are reviewed by a member of the Senate Office, who is external to the Panel, prior to submission to ASC;
- The timescale for the initial response to ASC be shortened from 12 months to 6 months.

## **7. Internal/External considerations**

The University's Academic Quality Framework is made up of a number of inter-related processes of which PSR is one. Changes across the range of processes must be monitored as they may impact on the others. At the present time, Annual Monitoring is under review, EvaSys course evaluation software is being introduced and the Course Evaluation Working Group is about to report its conclusions. It will be important to make sure PSR and these processes remain closely aligned and harmonised.

Curriculum mapping and assessment blueprinting is currently being trialled with History and Life Sciences. It has been suggested that this might offer a way forward for subject review, in that it includes aspects of assurance audit and space for conversation about enhancement in a given set of programmes.

None of these have immediate implications for PSR at this point, however, Senate Office will maintain awareness of developments and progress in these and other quality systems.

## **8. Management of process**

The scheduling of reviews on a 6 year cycle was considered against the University of Warwick model, which involves reviewing all subjects in a single event every five years. This was thought to provide a number of benefits, including establishing a single benchmark across all provision that would be useful in informing strategic plans. To adopt a similar model at Glasgow would require change to several aspects of the current process that are valued within the University and recognised as good practice outwith the University. It would also increase pressure in appointing panel members and recruiting significant additional administrative support from across the University. None of the



consultation groups expressed interest in moving away from the current scheduling pattern.

Consensus across the consultation groups was that an opportunity for the Panel to meet as a group, including the External Subject Specialist, ahead of the review visit would be useful. It was thought that a dinner the night before a review would benefit the process by establishing dynamics of the group before the work began in earnest. Staff who had experienced this elsewhere testified it had been useful. The Senate Office would investigate cost and practicalities of requiring the External Subject Specialist to be available for dinner.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

ASC is asked to **consider and approve** the following recommendations arising from the evaluation of the second, six-year cycle of the University's internal subject review process, Periodic Subject Review.

#### **On Level of review**

1. The currently defined areas of review will continue and flexibility will be maintained to respond where organisational arrangements change. Senate Office will discuss with Schools prior to each year's reviews to establish the most appropriate level to conduct reviews.

#### **On Self Evaluation Report**

2. The ELIR technical report structure will be used as the basis for much simplified guidance on preparing the SER. If this is agreed, the ELIR 3 guidance will be adapted to ensure relevance at School/Subject level rather than institution and extended, if necessary, to include any specifically subject level matters that are not covered by the existing headings. Encouragement will also be given to use this guidance in a non-prescriptive way.

#### **On Frontloading Quality Assurance**

3. The operation of quality assurance procedures will be considered by the Panel and confirmed prior to the review via a proforma to ensure conversations during the visit itself can focus, as much as possible, on enhancement. Where issues are identified, these will be flagged for discussion with the School/Subject area.

#### **On Post-review support**

4. Colleges (or Schools) where more than one subject is engaged in PSR activity (either being reviewed or following up on recommendations) should consider a co-ordinated approach to follow up activity via L&T Committee business, to enable any generic issues to be picked up for wider action.
5. Recently reviewed Schools/Subject areas will be offered meetings with the PSR Manager for post review support and feedback.

#### **On Commendations/Recommendations**

6. Panel guidance and training will be strengthened on:

- maintaining a balanced perspective of the range of feedback formats and not relying solely on the comments of the individuals who attend meetings with the Panel;
  - wording of recommendations to ensure clarity of purpose and intention;
  - ensuring the process is not used to unduly influence resource allocation.
7. Reports will be reviewed for clarity and consistency by a member of the Senate Office, who is external to the Panel, prior to submission to ASC.
  8. The timescale for the initial response to ASC be shortened from 12 months to 6 months.

## **Scottish Funding Council Guidance to Higher Education Institutions on quality from August 2012: Extract**

### **Context**

It is institutions, and not the Council, which bear primary responsibility for, and ownership of, the quality of educational provision. The Council however has responsibilities to ensure that quality is being maintained and enhanced across the sector, and that good practice is being shared.

The Council expects institutions to have a clearly articulated, strategic approach to quality assurance and enhancement. The primary mechanism by which institutions assure and enhance the quality of provision is through processes of institution-led evaluation and review.

Institutions have considerable flexibility in how they organise and run these processes but there are clear expectations that all aspects of provision will be reviewed systematically and rigorously over a defined schedule.

Institution-led review processes are themselves subject to scrutiny through periodic ELIR conducted by the QAA.

The following is a summary of the broad generic guidance issued by the Council on how institution-led review processes should be conducted.

### **Key characteristics of institution-led review**

Institution-led quality reviews should include the following characteristics.

- All provision should be reviewed on a cycle of not more than six years
  - It is a matter for each institution to decide how to schedule and aggregate its provision for review.
  - All credit-bearing provision should be included within the review programme
  - There should be appropriate mechanisms in place to facilitate periodic review of the strategic and operational role of support services in relation to their impact on the student experience.
- Institution-led reviews should take full account of benchmarks and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Institution-led reviews should continue to embed and develop the use of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
- Institution-led reviews should provide an objective review of provision based on an understanding of national and international good practice. Each review team should include at least one external member with a relevant background.
- Institution-led processes should fully engage students in quality arrangements
- Institution-led reviews should consider the effectiveness of annual monitoring arrangements and follow-up action for programmes covered by the review
- Assurance and enhancement

The primary purpose of institution-led reviews is to provide assurances about the quality and standards of provision. It is vital that institution-led reviews provide robust, comprehensive and credible evidence that academic standards and quality of provision in Scottish HEIs are being maintained.

However, the Council's approach continues to give a central role to quality enhancement, and we therefore encourage institutions to develop institution-led review processes which also:

- promote dialogue on areas in which quality might be improved;
- identify good practice for dissemination within the institution and beyond (such as engagement in the national quality Enhancement Themes); and
- encourage and support critical reflection on practice.

### From QAA's UK Quality Code for the Higher Education: Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review

#### The Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about programme monitoring and review, which higher education providers are required to meet. Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review.

#### The Indicators of sound practice

- Indicator 1: Higher education providers maintain strategic oversight of the processes for, and outcomes of, programme monitoring and programme review, to ensure processes are applied systematically and operated consistently.
- Indicator 2: Higher education providers take deliberate steps to use the outcomes of programme monitoring and review processes for enhancement purposes.
- Indicator 3: Higher education providers operate a process to protect the academic interests of students when a programme is closed.
- Indicator 4: Higher education providers define processes, roles and responsibilities for programme monitoring and programme review and communicate them to those involved.
- Indicator 5: Higher education providers evaluate their processes for programme monitoring and review and take action to improve them where necessary.
- Indicator 6: Higher education providers make use of reference points and draw on expertise from those outside the programme in their processes for programme monitoring and review.
- Indicator 7: Higher education providers involve students in programme monitoring and review processes.
- Indicator 8: Higher education providers enable staff and other participants to contribute effectively to programme monitoring and programme review by putting in place appropriate arrangements for their support and development.

**QAA: Enhancement-led Institutional Review Handbook May 2012 Third edition**

**Annex 1 - Content of the Technical Report**

The Technical Report will set out the overarching judgement and should:

- place a demonstrable emphasis on enhancement
- provide a sense of the student learning experience
- include all groups of students, irrespective of mode, level or location of study, as appropriate to the demography of the student body and the institution's strategic intentions
- indicate the ELIR team's view in relation to each report section.

**Technical Reports will be structured around the following headings.**

**1 Institutional context and strategic framework**

- i Key features of the institution's context and mission
- ii Strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching
- iii Effectiveness of the approach to implementing strategies.

**2 Enhancing the student learning experience**

- i Composition and key trends in the student population, including typical routes into and through the institution
- ii Supporting equality and diversity in the student population
- iii Engaging and supporting students in their learning
- iv Approaches to promoting the development of graduate attributes including employability
- v Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience.

**3 Enhancement in learning and teaching**

- i Approaches to identifying and sharing good practice
- ii Impact of the national Enhancement Themes and related activity
- iii Engaging and supporting staff
- iv Effectiveness of the approach to promoting good practice in learning and teaching.

**4 Academic standards**

- i Approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards
- ii Management of assessment
- iii Use of external reference points in managing academic standards
- iv Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards.

**5 Self-evaluation and management of information**

- i Key features of the institution's approach
- ii Commentary on the advance information set
- iii Use of external reference points in self-evaluation

- iv Management of public information
- v Effectiveness of the approach to self-evaluation and management of information

## **6 Collaborative activity**

- i Key features of the institution's strategic approach
- ii Securing academic standards of collaborative provision
- iii Enhancing the student learning experience on collaborative programmes
- iv Effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative activity.

## **Annex 2 - Content of the Reflective Analysis**

- 1 The Reflective Analysis (RA) should be structured around the headings of the Technical Report. Its preparation should involve staff and students. The RA should identify:
  - how it was prepared and approved
  - how students were involved and the impact of that student engagement
  - brief background information about the size and scale of the institution
  - the institution's overarching strategic priorities
  - what the institution is seeking to achieve from its engagement with the ELIR, and whether there are any particular matters it would wish the ELIR team to consider.
- 2 In the context of each of the Technical Report headings, the RA should indicate:
  - what is distinctive and what is typical about the institution
  - what the key areas of strength and challenge are
  - how the institution has evaluated its policy and practice
  - how the institution intends to build on good practice or address areas for development.
- 3 Institutions are strongly encouraged to be open and honest in the RA.
- 4 Where there are areas for development, the ELIR team will explore:
  - the extent to which quality or academic standards are potentially at risk
  - the extent to which the institution has identified the issue(s) in advance
  - the plan for addressing the issue, including any wider development work planned and the anticipated timeframe for its completion
  - the likelihood of the issue recurring in future.
- 5 Where there are areas of strength, the ELIR team will explore:
  - the extent to which all of the institution's students can benefit
  - the arrangements for disseminating the good practice
  - the plans for evaluating and promoting the good practice.