**U N I V E R S I T Y O F Y O R K**

**TEACHING COMMITTEE**

**YORK GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL**

**Annual Programme Review (APR) *Pro Forma***

**Summary Review of the Academic Year 2015/16**

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| --- | --- |
| **Department?** | *Name* |
| **Did your UTC departmental contact attend the APR meeting? If not, please state why.**  NB Your APR meeting date should be set in coordination with your UTC departmental contact to facilitate their attendance. | *Y/N (delete as appropriate)* |
| **Did your student representatives (UG, PGT, and PGR) attend the APR meeting?** | *Y/N (delete as appropriate)* |
| **Updated periodic review action plan appended (as appropriate?**  If you had a **periodic review** in 2015/16 or have ongoing issues from an earlier review, please return your action plan with an update on progress. | *Y/N (delete as appropriate)* |
| **Form completed by?** | *Name(s)* |
| **Form approved by (e.g. full BoS, Chair of BoS, HoD, APR meeting)?** | *Name(s)/body* |

**Please see guidance notes at the end of the pro forma for prompts on the content of this summary report.**

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| 1**. In the context of the quality of the student and staff experience (UG, PGT, CPD), what has gone well over the past year at module and programme levels?**  ***You may wish to refer to the*** [***Learning and Teaching Strategy***](https://www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/learningandteaching/documents/L&T%20strategy%202015%20to%202020%20final.pdf) ***and other policies when completing this section.*** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 500 words* |
| **2. What significant issues (UG, PGT, CPD) were identified and resolved by the department, and how were they resolved?**  ***This may include contributions from student representatives or others such as UTC, student surveys (e.g. NSS, PTES), external examiners, advisory boards, graduate destinations data (DLHE), professional bodies or placement providers.*** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 500 words* |
| **3. What significant issues (UG, PGT, CPD) were identified that have not been resolved, and what actions are being pursued/are required to resolve these issues?** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 500 words* |
| **4. If the department’s provision (UG, PGT, CPD) includes programmes delivered in collaboration with external providers (e.g. FECs or other HEIs in the UK or overseas) please highlight whether any significantissues have been identified relating to these programmes ,and how they have been resolved.** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 500 words* |
| **5. Are there any further issues (UG, PGT, CPD) that the department wishes to raise with UTC?**  ***Please give brief details.*** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 300 words* |
| *This section will be considered by the York Graduate Research School.*  6. In relation to **postgraduate research students (Master’s by research, MPhil, PhD, EngD) ONLY**:  **a) What has gone well over the past year?**  **b) What significant issues were identified and what actions have been taken or are being pursued/are required to resolve these issues? *This may include contributions from student representatives or others such as YGRS/UTC, student surveys (e.g., PRES) and completion data.***  **c) If the department’s PGR provision includes programmes delivered in collaboration with: (i) other departments at York (e.g. inter-departmental DTPs/CDTs), or (ii) external providers (e.g. other HEIs in the UK or overseas) please highlight whether any significant issues have been identified relating to these programmes and what actions have been taken or are being pursued/are required to resolve these issues?**  **d) Are there any further issues that the department wishes to raise with the York Graduate Research School? *Please give brief details.***  *This section of the form should be completed by (or, as a minimum, with input from) the Chair of the Graduate School Board or departmental equivalent. Where a department’s PGR provision includes programmes delivered in collaboration with others (inter-departmentally or externally) input should be sought from those with responsibility for those programmes – see guidance note for more details.* |
| *Indicative length: no more than 600 words* |
| **7. Looking forward, what are the top 3 priorities for the department relating to teaching and learning (including PGR) in the next 12 months?** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 300 words* |
| **8. Please outline the department’s mechanisms for student representation in 2015/16, including how students were involved in the APR process, any enhancements that have arisen in your department as a result of student engagement, and how these were communicated to students.** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 300 words* |

The completed APR pro forma and undergraduate external examiners’ table (and updated periodic review action plan where applicable) should be returned to the Academic Support Office ([aso@york.ac.uk](mailto:aso@york.ac.uk)) by email **before *Friday 25 November 2016.***

**ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW: GUIDANCE NOTES FOR DEPARTMENTS**

The following guidance notes are divided into two parts: Part A provides specific advice on completing the pro forma; Part B provides general background information on the APR and the process by which departments are expected to identify the salient points to present to UTC/YGRS through the pro forma.

**Purpose of the Annual Programme Review**

The principal objectives of the APR are to ensure that academic standards are maintained and to improve programme quality through the engagement of staff and students in reflection and action planning. This is a continuing process, and should not be confined to the APR meeting.

The APR is an opportunity for departments to reflect on the teaching and learning activity of the previous academic year, and to raise any issues with University Teaching Committee (UTC) and the York Graduate Research School (YGRS). This reflection includes celebrating successes, identifying addressed issues and proposing a way forward for any areas which remain unresolved.

The APR process should:

* reflect on both quality and standards
* encompass undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes (including CPD and distance learning programmes)
* involve student representatives
* engage all staff in the department.

The review is an important part of the University’s quality assurance and enhancement framework, which in turn contributes to the over-riding objective of the Learning and Teaching Strategy: to achieve a *consistent culture of quality*. An important aspect of the APR is to provide assurance that issues identified, both internally and externally, are acted upon and to inform university level priorities for support and policy development.

Within the department the APR should promote:

* student involvement in quality review
* reflection and evaluation
* honesty and openness
* forward planning
* sharing of experiences and good practice
* consideration of interdisciplinary and external perspectives
* ownership throughout the department of the APR outcomes.

**It is important that the review does not replicate existing work; rather that it takes a *holistic* review of provision, drawing on the review activities that take place in the department during the year.**

Involvement of the departmental UTC contact is designed to ensure consistency and continuity and to help departments to think about ways of improving quality and the student experience.

1. **Completion of the pro forma**

Departments are asked to complete the pro forma by commenting on those matters which are of particular significance to the student and staff experience, be they related to successes, good practice, risks to quality, or challenges. This **‘by exception’** approach is intended to encourage reflection and discourse with UTC/YGRS, rather than providing a large volume of descriptive information. It will also help UTC/YGRS to share good ideas more widely, so that the University as a whole can benefit from this experience.

**Please note:** **The APR process is intended to cover all levels of study (including PGR students) and all modes of delivery (including online and CPD activities), so please bear this in mind when consulting colleagues, arranging meetings and completing the pro forma itself.**

**Sections 1-5 relate to taught provision (UG, PGT, CPD) only, section 6 to PGR provision only (PhD, MPhil, Master’s by Research, EngD), and sections 7-8 to all levels.**

We have included indicative word lengths under each section. Please note that these should be treated as an upper limit.

1. ***In the context of the quality of the student and staff experience (UG, PGT, CPD), what has gone well over the past year at module and programme levels? You may wish to refer to the*** [***Learning and Teaching Strategy***](https://www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/learningandteaching/documents/L&T%20strategy%202015%20to%202020%20final.pdf) ***and other policies when completing this section.***

This section might highlight achievements such as:

* a module which adopted innovative learning and teaching techniques and received exceptional feedback;
* particular improvements in areas of the NSS/PTES;
* improvements in student achievement through progression rates, classification grades or completion rates;
* initiatives to develop students’ employability skills (reflection which might be informed by comments from employers, placement providers or DLHE data);
* enhancement projects which have resulted in exceptional student feedback and/or developed themes such as internationalising the curriculum;
* improvements which have been made in response to student feedback;
* an increase in the number and quality of admissions;
* contributions by PGWTs;
* external examiner comments which indicate exceptional achievements;
* successes by individual staff or teams such as Vice-Chancellor’s Teaching Awards, YUSU Excellence in Teaching and Supervision awards, commendation from a professional body;
* improvements in response to recommendations by UTC during the programme approval process.

1. ***What significant issues (UG, PGT, CPD) were identified and resolved by the department, and how were they resolved?***

This section will outline weaknesses, challenges and/or areas of risk to academic standards and the quality of the staff and student experiences. Sources may include:

* student feedback/evaluation;
* contributions from student representatives;
* external examiner reports;
* recommendations from advisory boards;
* student application data;
* poorly performing modules or programmes;
* evidence relating to student employability and destination data;
* feedback from organisations that provide placement/work based learning opportunities or feedback from students during their placement.

Please detail how they have been resolved successfully, which may include input from a departmental visit, a Periodic Review action plan or BoS discussions.

Please also include any issues that have arisen when implementing recommendations from UTC regarding new programme approval and/or major programme modifications (if applicable) and how they were resolved.

Student input in this discussion is very important. The University is committed to gathering and responding to student feedback as a vital resource for bringing about improvement in the quality of the student experience and developing learning and teaching within the institution.

This section helps to assure UTC that departments are self-regulating, committed to a consistent culture of quality and responding to issues as they arise, and are engaging in dialogue with students on matters of quality. The section also informs UTC of issues that are being experienced around the University. This may make it easier to find solutions to common problems, and will inform UTC’s future agenda.

If your department has a teaching and learning action plan(s) that clearly addresses this section, you may choose to append the action plan and cross reference to it rather than repeating information on the form. However, it is important that the action plan can be easily understood as a standalone document by members of UTC/YGRS and the ASO who may not be familiar with the details of issues in the department.

1. ***What significant issues (UG, PGT, CPD)* *were identified that have not been resolved, and what actions are being pursued/are required to address these issues?***

For the APR process to be forward thinking and to take stock of the programmes, discussion of outstanding issues and disappointments is essential. Engaging with difficult issues and discussing the way forward can help to identify solutions which may not have previously been considered, and can help the UTC to identify or refine institutional priorities. It is important that departments complete this section in an open and honest way.

As noted in section 2 above, you may choose to append an action plan for this section, if it can be easily interpreted by UTC and ASO.

1. ***If the department’s taught provision (UG, PGT, CPD) includes programmes delivered in collaboration with external providers (e.g. FECs or other HEIs in the UK or overseas) please highlight whether any significant issues have been identified relating to these programmes and how they have been resolved.***

This section is applicable to those departments who deliver programmes in collaboration with other providers. This will include collaborations with FE colleges (FECs) such as York College and other HEIs who share in the delivery of the programme (e.g. Erasmus Mundus consortia). As there are further levels of risk associated with such programmes UTC needs to be aware of any issues that have come to light during this period.

1. ***Are there any further issues (UG, PGT, CPD)* *that the department wishes to raise with UTC?***

This is an opportunity to raise any issues with UTC that have not been covered in the above sections.

Any issues raised that are outside the remit of UTC will be forwarded to relevant committees/offices with a request for a response/update where appropriate. However, departments should not use APR as a form of feedback to support offices and services. Relevant support offices and services should be contacted directly about any issues as they arise to ensure a timely response/action.

1. *In relation to* ***postgraduate research students:***

***a) What has gone well over the past year?***

***b) What significant issues were identified and what actions have been taken or are being pursued/are required to resolve these issues?***

***c) If the department’s PGR provision includes programmes delivered in collaboration with: (i) other departments at York (e.g. inter-departmental DTPs/CDTs), or (ii) external providers (e.g. other HEIs in the UK or overseas) please highlight whether any significant issues have been identified relating to these programmes and how they have been resolved.***

***d) Are there any further issues that the department wishes to raise with the York Graduate Research School Board?***

This section should reflect on issues specifically relating to postgraduate research students (PhD, MPhil, Master’s by Research, EngD) and will be considered by the YGRS.

This section should be completed by, or in consultation with, the Chair of the Graduate School Board (or equivalent within the department).

Responses to (a) might highlight achievements such as:

* particular improvements in areas of the PRES;
* improvements in student achievement through completion rates;
* improvements which have been made in response to student feedback;
* an increase in the number and quality of admissions;
* improvements in response to recommendations by YGRS during the programme approval process.

Responses to (b) will outline weaknesses, challenges and/or areas of risk to academic standards and the quality of the staff and student experiences. Sources may include:

* student feedback/evaluation (including PRES);
* contributions from student representatives;
* TAP reports;
* external examiner reports;
* PhD completion rates;
* student application data;
* evidence relating to student destinations.

You should note both where issues have been resolved (and how) and where there is an ongoing issue.

(c) Where a department collaborates with another York department to offer a PGR programme (e.g. through an inter-departmental DTP or CDT), the departments involved should ensure that there are mechanisms in place to enable joint discussion and reporting of key issues via the APR process. As a minimum, the director(s) of the inter-departmental programme(s) should be asked to contribute to this section of the APR report.

Where a departmental collaborates externally to offer a PGR programme (e.g. with another university in the UK as part of a DTP/CDT, or a university oversea for a joint or double PhD programme), the director (or other person responsible for that programme) should be asked to contribute to this section of the APR report.

(d) is an opportunity to raise any issues with the YGRS that have not been raised elsewhere.

1. ***Looking forward, what are the top 3 priorities for the department relating to teaching and learning in the next 12 months?***

Although the main focus of this report is reflection on the previous academic year, UTC/YGRS is interested to hear about department’s/programme team’s priorities in the next 12 months to enable UTC/YGRS to identify patterns/shared issues across the University and to offer timely support/guidance, where needed. This section may reflect both taught and research provision.

1. ***Please outline your mechanisms for student representation in 2015/16, including how students were involved in the APR process, any enhancements that have arisen in your department as a result of student engagement, an how these were communicated to students.***

This section will outline how the department provides opportunities for effective student representation, how it addresses any issues that may have arisen, and how it involves students in the APR process. You may also wish to make reference to how the role of student representative is publicised and supported by the department and what the department is doing to promote and encourage student participation in the student-staff forum and other committees. If the department has introduced any supplementary mechanisms to engage with students (such as focus groups, regular meetings between senior departmental staff and student representatives, etc.) these should also be mentioned. Please also outline any improvements within your programmes, or in the student experience more generally, that have resulted from your processes for engaging students and how these changes have been communicated to students.

1. **Departmental Annual Programme Review Meeting**

The role of the APR meeting should be to serve as a focal point for: (i) consolidating the various discussions on programme quality that take place in different fora in a department, and (ii) formulating a programme of action to address identified issues and build upon identified strengths. It should be useful for the department and not just an exercise required to comply with University policy.

***Attendance***

**The format and constitution of the APR meeting will vary between departments** (e.g., it may take place in a full staff meeting, an exceptional Board of Studies or, where ‘normal business’ permits, the BoS held early in the autumn term).

However, all staff who teach/supervise on the programmes concerned should contribute to the APR. In large departments it might be possible to split the process into separate meetings for different groups of staff, but care should be taken to ensure that this does not compromise the need for a departmental perspective (such as themes that cut across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes) and shared ownership of the APR outcomes. The ‘conduct of the meeting’ section below suggests ways of engaging a large group of staff at a single event.

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| **The UTC departmental contact should also be present** at the main APR meeting. **Please set the date of your APR meeting in coordination with your UTC departmental contact in order to facilitate their attendance, and by the start of the Autumn Term at the latest**. Please ensure that the UTC departmental contact receives meeting documentation in good time. If the APR meeting is lengthy it is not necessary for the UTC departmental contact to attend for the whole period, as long as they attend for the most salient part of the meeting (i.e. discussion and formulation of actions).  UTC contacts attend the meetings as critical friends and to help UTC to better understand issues in departments.  UTC departmental contact list:  <https://www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/sub-committees/teaching-committee/contacts/> |

***Student involvement***

**The involvement of student representatives in the APR meeting is crucial**. To facilitate this, it is recommended that the Chair should hold a briefing with the student attendees in advance of the meeting, to ensure that they understand the process and the opportunities to contribute, and to clarify any matters with regard to possible topics for discussion. Particular consideration should be given to briefing student representatives who may only recently have taken up the role; liaison with YUSU and the GSA may be helpful in this regard. It is also important that the department considers obtaining feedback from distance learning students who are not physically present at the time of the APR meeting.

Occasionally, the APR meeting will be held before the student representatives have been finalised for the current academic year. If this is the case please do ask the previous year’s reps if they would be willing to attend.

***Timing***

The APR process reflecting on the previous academic year is completed in the Autumn Term, but will often start in the Summer Term, with departments submitting APR documentation in November. UTC/YGRS members will then consider the reports and provide departments with feedback in the Spring Term.

***Conduct of the meeting***

**Departments can decide for themselves how they conduct their APR meeting(s).** Suggestions include:

* splitting the meeting into break-out groups to stimulate creative thinking and reflection, asking each to discuss an issue relating to the student experience. This enables all staff to contribute fully to the process and helps to create a greater sense of ownership. It may also be particularly helpful to make meetings more manageable in large departments. Each group could identify examples of excellent practice from within the department and beyond, and consider how to share this across the department, as well as identifying where improvements are necessary (supported by evidence such as programme evaluation feedback or external examiner reports) and how to achieve these;
* identifying recurrent issues raised by external examiners and students over the past 2-3 years and using these as key agenda items to explore where improvements can be made;
* considering a theme such as the development of academic and employability skills, and tracing the student experience through programmes and modules;
* asking programme directors to provide a report on risks, successes and areas for action in advance of the meeting then discussing these reports at the relevant part of the meeting (undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate);
* adopting ‘creative thinking’ techniques such as brainstorming, feasibility/impact matrix, identifying and challenging underlying assumptions.

***Content***

Consideration of the following is a minimum requirement:

* last year’s APR report (in particular progress with issues that were unresolved at that time) and the feedback received from UTC/YGRS;
* comments made by external examiners and the actions to address issues, with any significant matters included on the pro forma. If reports from PGT external examiners have not been received, the minutes of externals’ comments from the PGT Boards of Examiners meetings should be used. If your postgraduate boards take place after the APR meeting, then please remember to carry forward discussion of any points raised, and the actions taken in response, to the following year’s APR (and remember to look back at last year’s PGT reports to pick up any outstanding issues in this year’s APR). Please do share the PGT externals’ reports and your response with your student representatives when they become available.
* feedback from students, e.g., from internal module/programme evaluations, cohort meetings, focus groups, supervisory meetings, exit questionnaires, student representatives and from external reviews such as the NSS, PTES and PRES (looking at trends across the last three years where possible);
* feedback from staff, in particular module/programme leaders’ reports on the year, and thesis advisory panels;
* the impact of introducing new programmes or modifications to existing programmes;
* experiences of significant new University policies or procedures;
* implementation of the departmental VLE strategy;
* reports and action plans from UTC reviews or visits, such as periodic reviews, and how they have been used to facilitate programme development and improvements;
* reports from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation visits, and how they have been used to facilitate programme development and improvements;
* statements from combined executive committees;
* student achievement data from the last three cohorts of students (classifications, degree completion/withdrawal rates, progression statistics, transfer data, PhD submission rates and confirmation data);
* indicators of the development of employability skills, such as analysis of DLHE data and feedback from employers and students. *Careers Liaison Officers and HoDs have access to a tool to undertake in-depth analysis of the DLHE results. Please do make use of this information in your APR discussions;*
* complaints and appeals data;
* developmental and training opportunities for research students, such as take-up of PGWT opportunities;
* any issues of equality and diversity, such as differential attainment rates by students from different groups and/or the effectiveness of support for students with disabilities;
* external reference points (such as subject benchmark statements, especially where revised statements have been published by the QAA);
* feedback on public information about programmes (such as handbooks and websites).

Source information should be made available to the UTC departmental contact, student representatives and other relevant staff in advance of the meeting, to enable full engagement.

***After the APR meeting***

The APR pro forma should be completed. All parties should have the opportunity to comment on the content and should take collective ownership of the key successes, issues and risks, and the identified measurable future actions.

The completed pro forma should be ‘approved’/signed-off by an individual or group with responsibility for teaching and learning matters in the department (e.g., full Board of Studies, Chair of BoS, Chair of GSB, HoD, APR meeting).

***Central Support***

You are encouraged to work with your departmental Quality Support Officer in the Academic Support Office[[1]](#footnote-1) who can attend the annual review meeting (diary clashes permitting), contribute to the process, suggest ideas for ways forward, disseminate good practice from within the institution and generally assist in helping departments to make the most of the APR.

1. <https://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/academic-support/staff/quality-assurance/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)