**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***

**Supplementary Programmes Review of the Academic Year 2016/17**

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| --- | --- |
| **Department?** | *Name* |
| **Form completed by?** | *Name(s)* |
| **Scope of the APR?** | *List the programmes/range of activities this APR covers* |
| **Form approved by (e.g. Head of Section, Dept. Management Team)?** | *Name(s)/body* |

**Please read the guidance notes at the end of the pro forma before completing this pro forma. The guidance notes include a series of prompts and sub-questions to help you complete this pro forma.**

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/participants in reflection and action planning.

Within the department/section the APR should promote:

* consideration of student/participant feedback in quality review and provide evidence of how programme evaluation and response to feedback has been used to improve and develop the student experience and programme quality;
* reflection and evaluation of current programmes so best practice can be shared;
* honesty and openness of what has gone well and what challenges are being faced or have been overcome;
* forward planning or an overview of the department’s future priorities and aspirations for teaching and learning;
* sharing of experiences and good practice;
* consideration of interdisciplinary and external perspectives and any plans for interdisciplinary programmes or external partnerships/engagement that may impact programmes;
* responsibility 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.

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| --- |
| **1. In the context of the quality of the student/participant (undergraduate, postgraduate and CPD [including online credit and non-credit bearing programmes]) and staff experience, what has gone well (including the implementation of best practice) over the past year?** ***You may wish to refer to the*** [***Learning and Teaching Strategy***](https://www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/learningandteaching/documents/L%26T%20strategy%202015%20to%202020%20final.pdf) ***and other policies when completing this section and may refer to* significant issues that were identified previously and resolved by the department (*please see the guidance notes for a detailed list of prompts*).** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 500 words* |
| **2. What significant issues 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* |
| **3. Are there any further issues relating to teaching and learning activities that the department wishes to raise with UTC? *Please give brief details.*** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 300 words* |
| **4. Looking forward, what are the top 3 priorities for the department relating to teaching and learning in the next 12 months?** |
| *Indicative length: no more than 300 words* |
| **5. Please outline the department’s mechanisms for gathering student/participant feedback, any enhancements that have arisen as a result of student feedback, and how these were communicated (where appropriate) to students/participants.**  |
| *Indicative length: no more than 300 words* |

The completed APR pro forma should be returned to the Academic Support Office (aso@york.ac.uk) by email **before *15 November 2017.***

**ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW: GUIDANCE NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMMES**

For 2016/17 the Annual Programme Review (APR) process and documentation has been revised to facilitate better reflection on the activities of supplementary programme provision. The following guidance notes are divided into two parts: Part A provides specific advice on completing the Review Pro Forma and 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 University Teaching Committee (UTC) and the York Graduate Research School (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/ participants 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 UTC and YGRS. This reflection includes celebrating successes, identifying addressed issues and proposing solutions for any areas which remain unresolved.

The APR process should:

* reflect on both quality and standards;
* encompass undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate, CPD and distance learning programmes/provision;
* encompass individual programme/activity level review and overarching departmental themes and priorities
* 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 key principles of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, particularly: excellence in learning and teaching. 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:

* consideration of student/participant feedback in quality review;
* reflection and evaluation;
* honesty and openness;
* forward planning;
* sharing of experiences and good practice;
* consideration of interdisciplinary and external perspectives;
* responsibility 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.

1. **Completion of the pro forma**

Departments are asked to complete the Review pro forma by commenting on those matters which are of particular significance to students/participants and staff in terms of the teaching and learning 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 and YGRS, rather than providing a lengthy descriptive account or set of data. It will also help UTC and 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 undergraduate and postgraduate study and all modes of delivery, including distance learning and CPD activities, so please bear this in mind when consulting colleagues, arranging meetings and completing the pro forma itself.

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/participant (undergraduate, postgraduate and CPD [including online credit and non-credit bearing programmes]) and staff experience, what has gone well (including the implementation of best practice) over the past year?**

**You may wish to refer to the Learning and Teaching Strategy and other policies when completing this section and may refer to significant issues that were identified previously and resolved by the department.**

This section might highlight achievements such as:

* a programme/initiative which adopted innovative learning and teaching techniques and received exceptional feedback;
* improvements in student achievement through completion rates or grades;
* initiatives to develop students’/participants’ employability skills (reflection which might be informed by comments from employers, placement providers or survey data);
* enhancement projects which have resulted in exceptional student/participant 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/registrations;
* external examiner/stakeholder 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;
* significant issues that were identified and resolved by the department, and comment on how were identified and resolved.

Reference to issues/ problems identified and resolved 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. This 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.

1. **What significant issues were identified that have not been resolved, and what actions are being pursued/are required to resolve these issues?**

Drawing on student/participant feedback in this discussion is very important as the University is committed to gathering, acting upon and monitoring the outcome of responses to feedback. This section helps to assure UTC/YGRS 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 UTCYGRS of issues that are being experienced around the University. This may make it easier to find solutions to common problems, and will inform and UTC’s future agendas. The APR process should be forward thinking and so taking stock of outstanding issues and disappointments is essential. Using APR to discuss and reflect on difficult issues can identify solutions which may not have previously been considered, and can help the UTC/YGRS to identify or refine institutional priorities. Departments should therefore complete this section openly and honestly.

You may choose to append an action plan for this section, cross referencing 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 committees and the ASO who may not be familiar with the details of issues in the department.

1. **Are there any further issues relating to teaching and learning activities that the department wishes to raise with UTC?**

This is an opportunity to raise any pressing or unresolved issues of particular concern to the Department, in relation to teaching and learning, with UTC that have not been covered in earlier sections.

APR should not be used as a form of feedback to other departments or services for issues that are best resolved directly. Departments should contact relevant departments and services directly about any issues as they arise during the year to ensure a timely and proportionate response/action.

Any issues raised here that are outside UTC’s remit will be forwarded to relevant committees/offices, where appropriate, with a request for a response/update to the Department/ UTC.

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 APR is reflection on the previous academic year, UTC and YGRS are interested to hear about departments’/programmes’ priorities in the next 12 months to identify patterns/shared issues across the University and to offer any required timely support/guidance. This section should reflect priorities relating to undergraduate, taught postgraduate, research postgraduate and CPD provision.

1. **Please outline the department’s mechanisms for gathering student/participant feedback, any enhancements that have arisen as a result of student feedback, and how these were communicated to students/participants.**

This section should be completed with reference to all students/participants – undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research, and CPD.

It will outline how the department provides opportunities for effective student/participant feedback, how it addresses any issues that may have arisen, and how it uses student/participant feedback in the APR process.

If the department has introduced any supplementary mechanisms to engage with students/participants (such as focus groups, regular meetings between senior departmental staff and students/participants, etc.) these should also be mentioned. Please also outline any improvements within your programmes/activities, or in the student/participant experience more generally, that have resulted from your processes for student/participant feedback and how these changes might have been communicated back to them.

1. **Departmental Annual Programme Review Meeting**

The role of the APR meeting should 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, (i.e., it may take place in a full staff meeting or an exceptional staff meeting).

However, *all staff* who teach or supervise on the programmes/activities concerned should contribute to the APR. The ‘conduct of the meeting’ section below suggests ways of engaging a large group of staff at a single event.

***Student/participant involvement***

**The involvement of students/participants in the APR meeting is encouraged where practicable**. To facilitate this, it is recommended that the Chair briefs any 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.

***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 to the Academic Support Office in mid-November. UTC and YGRS members will then consider the reports and provide departments with feedback in the Spring Term.

**Please Note:** For the APR of the academic year 2016/17 and to accommodate a period of thorough review by FLTGs and UTC, departments will be asked to submit their APR slightly earlier than in previous years.

***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 staff, students/participants and other stakeholders 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 a particular set of skills and tracing the student experience through programmes/activities;
* 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 and YGRS;
* feedback from students/participants, e.g., from internal activity/programme evaluations, cohort meetings, focus groups, exit questionnaires and from external surveys (looking at trends across the last three years where possible);
* feedback from staff, in particular programme/activity leaders’ reports;
* the impact of introducing new programmes/activities or modifications to existing ones;
* experiences of significant new University policies or procedures;
* reports and action plans from UTC reviews or visits, and how they have been used to facilitate programme development and improvements;
* reports from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation exercises/visits, and how they have been used to facilitate programme development and improvements;
* student/participant achievement data from the last three cohorts (completion/ withdrawal rates, grades achieved);
* appeals and complaints and data;
* 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 benchmark statements);
* feedback on public information about programmes/activities (such as handbooks and websites).

***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 responsibility 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., Head of Department, Department Management Team).

***Central Support***

You are encouraged to contact the Academic Quality Team in the Academic Support Office (aso@york.ac.uk) who can 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.