

To: Heads of Department; Chairs of Boards of Studies; Chairs of Graduate School Boards; Faculty Deans; Associate PVC for Teaching, Learning & Students; Associate Deans for Teaching, Learning & Students; Academic Support Office; YUSU (Matt Johnstone, Nick Glover, Gabby Morgan); GSA (Jane Baston, Isobel Hall), Departmental Managers/Administrators, University Executive Board

3 July 2020

FOR ACTION: NSS and Annual Programme Review reporting processes

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to explain the Annual Programme Review (APR) (2019-20) reporting process and to outline the process for the analysis and reporting of the National Student Survey (NSS) results for 2020.

Annual Programme Review reporting process

Last year we streamlined the process significantly, removing duplication within NSS and APR reporting and making other simplifications to reduce workload for departments. These changes (specifically the incorporation of the NSS pro forma within the APR pro forma) and the move to a Google Doc format (with some pre populated sections) are retained. We recognise the demands on departments at this time and have taken further steps to simplify the process and reduce departmental workload. Central to this approach is the removal, for this year, of the requirement for reflection at the programme-level (or cluster of related programmes) (via completion of individual programme pro forma).

Other changes:

- role of the UTC departmental contact: departments may wish to involve their UTC contact, as an opportunity to share good practice, but it is no longer an expectation for the UTC departmental contact to attend the APR meeting;
- the FLTG/UTC/PPSC response to the APR report (circulated in previous years via a Word format at the end of the Spring term) has been incorporated within the template (it is envisaged that this change will provide a more effective way of providing the FLTG/UTC/PPSC response to departments);
- a signpost to the Annual Programme Review Tableau Workbooks (available on the Management Information Gateway) has been included in the guidance - these Tableau Workbooks provide, in one place, key data sets relating relating to the student experience (e.g. degree outcomes, completion/progression and withdrawn rates).

Departments will be asked to complete those sections of the form that relate to the National Student Survey (section A) by **Monday 17 August** - at 9am on that day, ASO will copy

Departments' entries in those sections for insertion (verbatim) into the institutional NSS report. Departments will be asked to submit the remainder of the form by **Monday 16 November**.

NSS reporting

NSS results will be released by the Office for Students on **Wednesday 15 July**. All data except for open comments will be publicly available from the outset. This removes the window that HE providers had in previous years for private access to their own results before public release and media analysis.

The attached flow chart summarises the process and the PDF document explains further how and when information will be released and analysed. The Academic Support Office and Business Intelligence Unit will work with me, to publish the results and to give access to the data as quickly as possible whilst maintaining confidence that the data is accurate and presented in the most accessible format.

Accessing the Results and Open Comments

Results will be presented in Tableau and accessed via the ASO webpage: <https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/quality-assurance/nss/> according to the timeline in the attached document. Our aim is to publish summary presentations on **17 July** and then more sophisticated and detailed views of University and Department data through the following weeks. All appropriate staff in academic departments and Professional Services should have access to this page through UoY login. The open comments will also be accessed via the webpage in Excel format, but due to their added sensitivity, access is restricted to a smaller group of senior staff including HoDs, Chairs BoS and professional services managers. The open comments will be released at the end of July to give time for the data to be checked to ensure its anonymity and to format it for ease of reference.

Department Action

Departments will be asked to complete Section A of the APR document on a GoogleDoc, that is: update on progress with actions arising from the 2019 survey; initial interpretation of 2020 results; and identifying three key priorities for action this year. The Departmental APR GoogleDoc will be made available no later than **20 July**. The deadline for completion of the elements that relate to the NSS is 9am on **Monday 17 August**.

Public messages about NSS Performance

The University is concerned that before it issues public messages about its performance in the NSS it is confident in the accuracy of the results released by the Office for Students.

I ask that you support this work and wait until the summary presentations are released on 17 July before publishing any NSS messages about your department's position within the sector or the Russell Group. The Business Intelligence Unit will work to check the reliability of comparative data, and to format and present the results in an accessible way.

This will ensure you can be supported by colleagues from Communications and Marketing and Recruitment teams and the BIU to publish suitably strong messages of your achievements, and ensure compliance with Advertising Standards Authority guidance.

To make sure we can still respond quickly to a good news story, we will be promoting our results in two stages:

15 July

We will know the overall position of the University and those subjects with high overall scores (90% or above). This information will be used in two ways:

1. In the case of a strong overall result, Media Relations (Communications) will produce a news story about the University's overall position - they will also lead on any reactive press statements required if the results are poor
2. Subjects receiving over 90% overall satisfaction will be included in any positive University news story, and the Faculty Marketing Managers will lead on the production of department news stories and will produce appropriate social media graphics for each of those departments

17 July

When the summary presentations are released, the Faculty Marketing Managers will work with BIU to identify positive comparative messages which they will use in the following places:

1. department news stories
2. department pages and course pages – to update existing stats or add new strong results
3. new social media graphics

If you have any particular messages that you would like the Marketing team to highlight, please contact your Faculty Marketing Manager.

Using and Sharing the Data

Colleagues are asked to use their discretion in how they circulate the open comments amongst their staff, as through their free text composition there can be quite specific references to modules, staff or issues even after all reasonable attempts to anonymise the comments have been undertaken.

Care also needs to be taken in the sharing of results data. The reporting threshold for the public data is 50% response rate and a minimum of 10 responses. Data for internal use only continues to be where at least 10 students responded at programme/ department level, for the indicative rankings and for some of York's departments/ schools. Detailed notes provided with the Tableau Workbooks will explain what can be publicly shared and what is for internal use only.

Guidance on the sharing of results and how departmental performance in the NSS can be publicised can be found at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/quality-assurance/nss/>. Please can I also draw your attention to the [Policy on student surveys and guaranteeing confidentiality of feedback](#)

If you do not already have access to Tableau and the MI Gateway, please complete the appropriate [form](#). (Please note that to be able to fully access Tableau from off-campus you need to use the [VPN](#)) If you have queries about the calculations and methods used in compiling NSS data, please contact business-intelligence@york.ac.uk. If you have general queries about the NSS, please contact sally.oconnor@york.ac.uk in the Academic Support Office.

Kind regards

Professor John Robinson
PVC Teaching, Learning and Students

UNIVERSITY OF YORK
TEACHING COMMITTEE AND
YORK GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

Annual Programme Review (APR) Pro Forma: Summary Review of the Academic Year 2019/20

Department	
Programmes covered by this report Please list all taught and PGR programmes covered by this report. Combined programmes should be included in the report of the Lead Department, of which the Programme Leader is a member. The Partner Department for combined programmes, of which the Associate Programme Leader is a member may also wish to comment on the programme from your departmental perspective.	<i>Programme Titles</i>
Did your UTC departmental contact attend the APR meeting? NB: the UTC contact's attendance is <i>optional</i> and can be at the Department's invitation or by the request of the UTC contact to the Department to attend the meeting.	<i>Y/N (delete as appropriate)</i>
Did your student representatives (taught (all levels) and PGR) attend the APR meeting? If not, please state why.	<i>Y/N (delete as appropriate)</i>
Undergraduate external examiner table completed? NB: the table takes the form of a Google Sheet and thus there is no need to append the completed table.	<i>Y/N (delete as appropriate)</i>
Updated periodic review action plan appended (as appropriate)? If you had a periodic review in 2019/20 <u>or have outstanding actions from an earlier review</u> , please save your action plan with an update on progress in your departmental APR google folder.	<i>Y/N (delete as appropriate)</i>
Form completed by?	<i>Name(s)</i>
Form approved by (eg full BoS, Chair of BoS, HoD, APR meeting)?	<i>Name(s)/body</i>

Please see guidance notes for prompts on the content of this report.

SECTION A: REPORTING ON LAST YEAR'S LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTION PLAN (Q1) and the NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (Q2 & Q3)

It is appreciated that action plans to respond to NSS 2019 results (and wider APR priorities) may have been affected by the COVID-19 contingencies. In explaining how priority actions from 2019 have been addressed, you are only required to provide an update on those actions/ issues you feel most pertinent to bring to the attention of FLTG/ UTC.

1. Reflection on last year's Learning and Teaching Action Plan: NSS Action Plan (as appropriate) and APR Priorities

Considering your 'top 3' NSS 2019 priorities, provide a brief reflection and progress update on those actions/ issues you feel **most pertinent** to bring to the attention of FLTG/ UTC by **9am Monday 17th August 2020** (that is, the update on progress with NSS 2019 actions should be completed in advance of the completion of the rest of the form).

As part of the full APR process, considering your 'top 3' APR 2019 priorities for learning and teaching identified in last year's APR report, provide a brief reflection and progress update on those actions/ issues you feel **most pertinent** to bring to the attention of FLTG/ UTC .

(Departments that do not participate in the NSS should focus on the top 3 priorities in APR only)

NSS 2019 action/ APR priority	Update (maximum 150 words per action)
(NSS) <i>Will be pre populated</i>	
(NSS) <i>Will be pre populated</i>	
(NSS) <i>Will be pre populated</i>	
(APR) <i>Will be pre populated</i>	
(APR) <i>Will be pre populated</i>	
(APR) <i>Will be pre populated</i>	

2. Reflection on 2020 NSS results (if appropriate)

Note: departments that do not participate in the NSS should ignore this aspect of the form.

It is appreciated that your results for NSS 2020 may have been influenced by the COVID-19 contingencies. However, you are encouraged to focus your interpretation of results on all contextual factors and situations that might have been relevant to the cohort of students that completed the survey as a reflection of their full programme of study.

This section should be completed by **9am Monday 17th August 2020**, in advance of the completion of the rest of the form.

Please provide a **concise** departmental interpretation of this year's NSS results (NSS 2020) – the statistical data and the open comments (MAXIMUM 200 WORDS).

Maximum length: no more than 200 words

3. NSS Action Plan (if appropriate)

Please identify the priority actions that the Department will focus on during the 2020/21 academic year in relation to the NSS 2020 results.

Progress against the actions and the additional overarching APR actions (section B4 below) will be monitored by FLTG (departments can use the 'update' column to support this). Note that there is no need to wait for FLTG endorsement prior to commencing work on the actions.

Departments who participate in the NSS should begin to complete the action plan in response to the NSS results **giving three specific and measurable actions** by **9am Monday 17th August 2020**. These actions should be reviewed prior to completion of the APR form. This may involve revisiting, expanding and/ or revising the actions proposed in response to NSS, if new priorities emerge. **Departments should avoid listing more than 3 NSS actions or subdividing actions, to retain a focus on the small number of actions of highest priority.**

Specific and Measurable NSS Action and Brief Explanation (maximum 150 words per action)	To be completed by whom and when?	Update (for completion, as part of the FLTG mid-cycle review, by 19/04/2021)

FOR ASO COMPLETION: UTC and FLTG comment on NSS reflections, proposed actions and as part of mid-cycle review, on the update provided.

•

SECTION B: COMMENTARY – TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

1. Success and Innovative Practice 2019/20

In the context of the quality of the student and staff experience for taught programmes (both UG and PGT), what has gone well over the past year? Please comment on successes and examples of innovative practice **that are particularly noteworthy**, if these have been introduced in the past year.

This might include, for instance, reference to levels of student engagement; the quality of student work; awards or other recognition (internal or external) for teaching and learning; the outcomes of any projects, working groups or reviews; programme leadership; improvements to employability; or improvements in metrics relating to the student experience.

Indicative length: no more than 300 words.

FOR ASO COMPLETION: UTC and FLTG comment on successes, innovative or excellent practice noted and which may be shared with the wider University

•

2. Reflection on challenges in (i) pandemic context and (ii) other significant (non-pandemic) issues

All departments and the University as a whole have faced the challenges of providing teaching, supporting learning and conducting assessment in the pandemic context. In this section of the APR, we ask departments to summarise the major challenges that remain in relation to the student experience in the pandemic context.

Please provide a short response on University-wide implications, the guidance that has been issued and the consequences for the department, and then reflect on any issues that have been particularly challenging for the department and its programmes.

Indicative length: no more than 300 words

(i) Major challenges in the pandemic context

Please provide a short commentary on the University-wide implications, the contingency guidance that has been issued and the consequences for the department.

Please reflect on the issues that have been particularly challenging for the department and its provision.

This section also provides an opportunity to raise any pressing or unresolved issues with FLTG/ UTC that have not been covered above.

APR should not be used as a form of feedback to support offices and services – departments should contact these offices and services directly about any issues as they arise to ensure a timely response/ action. Any issues raised here that are outside UTC’s remit will be forwarded to relevant committees/ offices with a request for a response/update where appropriate.

Indicative length: no more than 300 words

(ii) Significant (non-pandemic) student-experience related issues

Please identify any other (non-pandemic) issues that have emerged in relation to the student experience that have not been resolved? If these do not form part of the Department’s action plan (below), what actions (if any) are being taken to resolve these issues?

FOR ASO COMPLETION: UTC and FLTG comment on challenges noted (including points raised for information/ response with professional services)

-

3. Graduate employability

Please report on **significant developments** in respect of the way in which the Department’s taught provision prepares students for employment.

Commentary here could be informed by the data provided by Careers and Placements within the Department Employability Plan, and also other metrics. Please work with your Faculty Employability Manager within the Careers and Placements team to access and navigate the relevant datasets.

Indicative length: no more than 300 words

4. Learning and Teaching Action Plan

Please identify the specific and measurable priority actions that the Department will focus on during the 2020/21 academic year in relation to taught programmes (UG and PGT).

This should take into account the reflections above for UG and PGT programmes, the NSS 2020 results and proposed actions above (if the Department delivers UG provision)

Progress against the actions will be monitored by FLTG (departments can use the ‘update’ column to support this). Note that there is no need to wait for FLTG endorsement prior to commencing work on the actions.

Departments are asked to note that actions on employability should be recorded in the Department Employability Plan (organised by Careers and Placements); but might be listed here if they are particular priorities.

Departments should avoid listing more than 3 specific APR actions or subdividing actions, to retain a focus on the small number of specific and measurable actions of highest priority.

Specific and Measurable APR Action and Brief Explanation (maximum 150 words per action)	To be completed by whom and when?	Update (for completion, as part of the FLTG mid-cycle review, by 19/04/2021)

FOR ASO COMPLETION: UTC and FLTG comment on progress towards the completion of taught undergraduate and postgraduate programme action plans (to be completed by 19 April 2021)

-

5. Collaboration

If the department's provision (all taught programmes) includes programmes delivered in collaboration with external providers (such as, but not limited to FE Colleges and UK or overseas HEIs, commercial or statutory partners) please highlight notable successes and any significant issues that have been identified relating to these programmes and how they have been resolved.

Indicative length: no more than 500 words

FOR ASO COMPLETION: Further UTC and FLTG comment on taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (including points raised for information/ response with professional services)

-

SECTION C: DEPARTMENT-LEVEL COMMENTARY – RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

This section will be considered by the York Graduate Research School. Please note that the APR is for reporting on the PGR student experience and PGR academic quality – PGR strategy (for example funding of studentships) should be reported in the department’s Annual Department Research Review.

It is recognised that all departments have faced challenges in supporting the PGR student experience in the pandemic context. Reflection herein should be cognisant of strengths/challenges in relation to the student experience in the pandemic context and also include, as appropriate, other [non-pandemic] issues that have emerged in relation to the student experience.

In relation to PGR students (including those on research programmes delivered in collaboration with others e.g. through inter-departmental DTPs and double and joint PhDs with other institutions):

1) Which aspects of the PGR student experience have been of particular note (strengths and/or challenges) in the past year?

This could include reference to quality and frequency of supervision, annual progression rates, percentage of successful outcomes (for example pass without referral), training and development and other student-focused activities. Where appropriate, you should comment on any ongoing actions arising from the 2019 PRES results to address identified issues.

2) Have any new PGR programmes (for example by distance learning or in DTPs), PGR programme changes (e.g. taught requirements or thesis format) or PGR organisational changes (e.g. student representation in decision making) been implemented this year? If so, what successes and challenges have you faced?

3) Are there any further PGR programme or PGR student experience issues that the department wishes to raise with YGRS? *This may include space, facilities, access to training and entrant quality.*

4) Looking forward, what are the top 3 priorities for the department relating to the student experience of PGR students or the academic quality of PGR programmes in the next 12 months?

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 800 words

FOR ASO COMPLETION: PPSC comment on the Department’s Section C report (including points raised for information/ response with professional services)



SECTION D: STUDENT VOICE – ALL PROGRAMMES

Please reflect on the department’s mechanisms for engagement with the student voice in 2019/20, including student representation and (for example) students’ role in module evaluation; and any partnerships with students to enhance learning and teaching (for instance focus groups; projects). Reflection might focus not only on listing any initiatives, but also the benefits and limitations of these mechanisms.

Indicative length: no more than 300 words

The deadline for completion of this form is **Monday 16 November 2020**.

If you had a **periodic review** in 2019/20 or have outstanding actions from an earlier review, please remember to save your updated action plan (with an update on progress) in your departmental APR google folder.

UNIVERSITY OF YORK
TEACHING COMMITTEE AND
YORK GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL
ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20
GUIDANCE NOTES FOR DEPARTMENTS

The following guidance notes provide advice on completing the Departmental review pro forma and, more generally, background information on the APR process and the process by which departments are expected to identify the salient points to present to Faculty Learning and Teaching Groups (FLTG), 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 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 FLTGs, 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 and postgraduate research programmes (including CPD and distance learning programmes);
- encompass overarching departmental themes and priorities;
- support enhancement of provision through reflection and action planning;
- 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 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:

- 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.

Completion of the Departmental Review pro forma

Departments are asked to complete the Departmental Review pro forma by commenting on those matters which are of *particular significance* to students 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 FLTGs, UTC and YGRS, rather than providing a lengthy descriptive account or set of data. It will also help FLTGs, 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 study (foundation, undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate taught and PGR provision) 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.

- Section A relates, *for the most part*, to undergraduate provision. Section 1 (reflection on last year's Learning and Teaching Action Plan) relates to all taught provision. Sections 2 and 3 apply only to provision that is within the scope of the National Student Survey.
- Section B relates to all taught provision only.
- Section C relates to PGR provision only (PhD, MPhil, Master's by Research, EngD).
- Section D Student Voice, relates to all levels.

Indicative *maximum* word lengths are provided for each section which departments are asked to respect.

Section A – Learning and Teaching Action Plan (Q1) and National Student Survey (Q2 & Q3)

1. Reflection on Last Year's Learning and Teaching Action Plan

Please use this table to provide an update to FLTG and UTC on progress against:

- (if the Department participates in the NSS) the three priority actions identified in the Department's response to last year's NSS results; (*the update on progress with NSS (2019) actions should be completed by 9am on **Monday 17 August 2020**, in advance of the completion of the rest of the form*)
- the 'top 3' APR priorities identified in last year's APR.

If the Department has evidence on the impact of actions taken (e.g. within student feedback; survey results), it would be useful to list this here.

2. Reflection on NSS 2020 Results

Please provide a concise departmental interpretation of this year's NSS results – the statistical data and the open comments. This section of the APR form should be completed by 9am on **Monday 17 August 2020**, in advance of the completion of the rest of the form. This is to support institutional

reporting and oversight of the response to the NSS results. Departments / centres who do not participate in the NSS should leave this section of the form blank.

3. NSS Action Plan

This section of the form asks departments to identify priority actions in relation to NSS 2020 results.

Departments who participate in the NSS should complete the action plan in response to the NSS results (giving three specific and measurable actions) by 9am on **Monday 17 August 2020**.

The 'By Whom / When' column allows departments to identify who in the Department has responsibility for supporting the identified actions, and when it is expected they will be complete. The 'Update' column can be used to keep track of progress against the actions.

Section B – TAUGHT PROGRAMMES (All Taught Programmes)

1. Success and Innovative Practice

Please use this section of the form to comment on what has gone well over the past year and to highlight innovative practice introduced during the year.

Comments might include reference to:

- innovative practice that has been introduced in delivery of module content;
- a module/ programme which adopted innovative learning and teaching techniques and received exceptional feedback;
- improvements in student achievement through progression rates, classification grades or completion rates (*but please do not simply summarise your student achievement data for the year*);
- *changes to practice* designed to support employability;
- improvements in student support (academic or non-academic);
- funded or non-funded enhancement projects which have resulted in exceptional student feedback and/or developed themes such as student engagement;
- improvements which have been made in response to student feedback;
- an increase in the number and quality of admissions (*but please do not simply summarise admissions data*);
- contributions by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs);
- 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 external stakeholders such as employers or a professional body;
- student successes in award or recognition schemes related to their academic activities;
- the successful resolution of problems or challenges identified since the previous APR;
- improvements in response to recommendations by UTC during the programme approval process.

2. Reflection on Challenges in (i) pandemic context and (ii) other significant (non-pandemic) issues

It is recognised that all departments have faced challenges in supporting the student experience in the pandemic context. Reflection herein should be cognisant of the challenges in relation to the student experience in the pandemic context and also include, as appropriate, other [non-pandemic] issues that have emerged in relation to the student experience.

The first section asks departments to summarise the major challenges that remain **in relation to the student experience in the pandemic context**.

The second section asks departments to identify any **other (non-pandemic) issues that have emerged in relation to the student experience that have not been resolved**.

The discussion might encompass challenges evident in, for instance, student engagement or student experience data. Student input in this discussion is very important as the University is committed to gathering, acting upon and monitoring the outcome of responses to student feedback. This section helps to assure FLTGs and 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 FLTGs and UTC of issues that are being experienced around the University. This may make it easier to find solutions to common problems, and will inform FLTGs' 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 FLTGs and UTC to identify or refine institutional priorities. Departments should therefore complete this section openly and honestly.

APR should not be used as a form of feedback to support offices and services for issues that are best resolved directly. Departments should contact relevant support offices 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.

3. Graduate Employability

Please use this section to report on **significant developments** in respect of the way in which the Department's taught provision prepares students for employment.

The commentary here can be informed by the employability data provided by Careers and Placements as part of the Department Employability Plan, as well as other metrics.

If you need support accessing the relevant data, please contact your designated Faculty Employability Manager within the Careers and Placements team:

- Arts and Humanities: Nancy Baines (nancy.baines@york.ac.uk)
- Sciences: Nicola Clemmit (nicola.clemmitt@york.ac.uk)
- Social Sciences: Kelly McDonald (kelly.mcdonald@york.ac.uk)

4. Learning and Teaching Action Plan

This section of the form asks departments to identify top priorities / actions relating to teaching, learning and the student experience in the next 12 months, crossing both *UG and PGT* provision. These priorities should be identified as a result of the reflection captured within the APR form. The identification of priorities and actions helps FLTGs and UTC to identify patterns and shared issues across the University and offer timely support and guidance.

Note that there is no need to wait for FLTG endorsement prior to commencing work on the actions.

The 'By Whom / When' column allows departments to identify who in the Department has responsibility for supporting the identified actions, and when it is expected they will be complete. The 'Update' column can be used to keep track of progress against the actions.

Departments with ongoing Periodic Review action plans may wish to cross-refer to those plans.

5. Collaboration

If the department's provision (all taught programmes) includes programmes delivered in collaboration with external providers (such as, but not limited to FE Colleges and UK or overseas HEIs, commercial or statutory partners) please highlight notable successes, any significant issues that 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 *external* providers (that is not combined programmes solely involving University of York departments). This will include collaborations with Further Education Colleges, Higher Education Institutions (e.g. Erasmus Mundus consortia) and other agencies or employers (e.g. the NHS) who share in the delivery of the programme.

As there are further levels of risk associated with such programmes FLTGs and UTC need to be aware of any issues that have come to light during this period. This section might include comment on:

- how effective channels of communication are for the smooth delivery and administration of the programme;
- any internal or external influences (positive and negative) on recruitment to the programmes and to their sustainability;
- any innovative developments to teaching and learning methods on the programme;
- any notable staff or student achievements directly related to the collaboration;
- any issues arising from the delivery of work-based learning partnerships.

Section C – Research Provision Only (Masters by Research, MPhil, PhD, EngD)

This section will be considered by the York Graduate Research School Policies and Programmes Subcommittee.

The focus of the APR report should be the student experience of PGR students and the academic quality of PGR programmes. **Matters relating to delivery of the department's Research Strategy (e.g. funding of studentships, recruitment against targets, on-time (and within funded period) submission rates, PGR contributions to publications, enhancements to Department's research**

environment that impact on PGR students etc.) should be reported via the department's Annual Department Research Review (ADDR).

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 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 interdepartmental programme(s) should be asked to contribute to this section of the APR report.

Where a department collaborates externally to offer a PGR programme (e.g. with another university in the UK as part of a DTP/CDT, or a university overseas 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.

It is recognised that all departments have faced challenges in supporting the PGR student experience in the pandemic context. Reflection herein should be cognisant of strengths/challenges in relation to the student experience in the pandemic context and also include, as appropriate, other [non-pandemic] issues that have emerged in relation to the student experience.

1) Which aspects of the PGR student experience have been of particular note (strengths and/or challenges) in the past year?

This could include reference to:

- quality and frequency of supervision;
- annual progression rates;
- percentage of successful outcomes (e.g. pass without referral) but you do not need to summarise all completion data;
- improvements as a response to student feedback;
- employability, training and development and other student-focussed activities.

In years when PRES results are available please comment on your (2019) PRES results and note any actions being taken to address identified issues. In subsequent years, it would be helpful to receive an update on actions initiated in previous years.

2) Have any new PGR programmes (e.g. by distance learning or in DTPs), PGR programme changes (e.g. in terms of taught requirements or thesis format) or PGR organisational changes (e.g. student representation in decision making) been implemented this year? If so, what successes and challenges have you faced?

3) Are there any further PGR programme or student experience issues that the Department wishes to raise with YGRS? This may include space, facilities, access to training, entrant quality or policy/regulation (e.g. TAP, annual progression, examination).

4) Looking forward, what are the top 3 priorities for the department relating to the student experience of PGR students or the academic quality of PGR programmes in the next 12 months?

Although the main focus of APR is reflection on the previous academic year, YGRS is interested to hear about the department's 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 only to the student experience or academic quality pertaining to PGR provision.

Section D (Student Voice) – All Programmes

Please reflect on the department’s mechanisms for engagement with the student voice in 2019/20, including student representation; and any partnerships with students to enhance learning and teaching. Reflection might focus not only on listing any initiatives, but also the benefits and limitations of these mechanisms.

This section should be completed with reference to all students – foundation, undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate taught and research.

It will outline how the department provides opportunities for effective partnership with students, and how it addresses any issues that may have arisen as a result of student engagement. 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 other opportunities for student partnership.

If the department has introduced any 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.

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, an exceptional Board of Studies or, where ‘normal business’ permits, the BoS held early in the Autumn term).

However, *all staff* who teach or 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.

Student involvement

The involvement of student representatives in the APR meeting is crucial. To facilitate this, it is recommended that the Chair holds 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 and any other students based off campus at the time (such as those studying abroad or on work placements) 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. In such cases please ask the previous year's representatives 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 completing the APR documentation by mid-November. FLTGs, UTC and 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 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 or employability skills and tracing the student experience through programmes and modules;
- 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 FLTGs, UTC and 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 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 surveys 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 and thesis advisory panel reports;
- 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 exercises/visits, and how they have been used to facilitate programme development and improvements;
- 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);

Departments are encouraged to make use of its Annual Programme Review Tableau Workbook (available on the Management Information Gateway via the Student Experience and Outcomes section) - these Tableau Workbooks provide, in one place, key data sets relating relating to the student experience (e.g. degree outcomes, completion/progression and withdrawn rates). These Workbooks (updated, where possible, with 19/20 data) will be available early in the Autumn term.

- indicators of the development of employability skills;
- appeals and complaints and data;
- developmental and training opportunities for research students, such as take-up of Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) 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 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 [Academic Quality Team](#) contact in the Academic Support Office 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