

Periodic Review: a Brief Guide for Employer Panel Members

Why does the University carry out periodic reviews?

Operating alongside annual monitoring, periodic review is one of the principal means by which the University of Worcester assures itself of the current and future health of its taught degree programmes, identifying and assessing actual and potential risks to their quality, standards and viability and highlighting areas for development as well as good practice with the potential for wider dissemination (for quality enhancement). Periodic review enables the University to take a holistic and strategic view of a Department's complete portfolio of courses with critical advice from a panel of internal peers and external subject experts.

Periodic reviews are programmed on a six-yearly cycle, and Judgements are made on the overall academic health of the department as well as the individual courses delivered by it. An outcome from the Review may include a requirement to re-approve a course within a certain time period in order to guarantee standards or the quality of the student learning experience, or exceptionally, suspension or closure.

Employer Panel Members receive payment for their role in this process. This covers:

- Attendance at the First Review Meeting (in person or remotely).
- Attendance at the Second Review Meeting.
- Reading of the documentation and advance submission of written comments by email to the review Academic Quality Officer no later than three working days before the review events.

Who conducts the review?

The University's Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) is responsible for periodic reviews. Each review is carried out by a review team consisting of:

- Chair: independent senior member of UW staff
- Academics from external universities x 2
- Student representative
- Staff member from within the School but from a different Department
- Senior experienced member of staff from outside the School
- AQU officer
- Other post holder (i.e.: international officer, employer representative)

What happens during a review?

The process of review begins with the Department writing a self-evaluation document called the Evaluation and Development Document (EDD). The EDD and a range of supporting documentation is considered by the review team in advance of the meetings. There are two review meetings, usually held six weeks apart; the first review meeting includes the student group meeting and the stakeholder/employer group meeting. The second review meeting is with senior managers and the Department teaching team. Review panels will be required to make a Judgement against each of the University Expectations that are mapped to the strategic goals of the University Learning and Teaching Strategy. Verbal feedback will be given to the Department on the key issues identified at the end of the second review meeting.

Role and Responsibilities of Employer Panel Members

As an Employer Panel Member you are a full member of the panel. You will be expected to be fully participative, actively contributing to the discussions and the decision-making process. Your views will be equal to those of any other panel member.

You will be expected to:

- Acknowledge receipt of the EDD and supporting documentation. The documentation in total may, at first glance, appear overwhelming; do not be put off by this. The main focus is the EDD, the statistical digests relating to student recruitment and outcomes and the student survey results; and Work-based Learning Handbook(s); the other documents will contain supportive evidence which you may wish to refer to as you read. Seek guidance from the AQU Officer if you have any concerns about the documentation or your role in the review; feel free to ask as many questions as you need, we want to ensure that you feel supported in this important role.
- Spend some time reading through the EDD, making notes of key points as you read. Highlight points of good practice and areas on which you would like further clarification. These will form the feedback you submit to the AQU Officer. When reading the documents it might be useful for you to ask yourself:
 - Are practical and vocationally relevant skills embedded within the curriculum?
 - Does the course enhance student employability, through creating a suitably skilled graduate population?
 - Do students have the opportunity to gain work experience, and are they effectively prepared for this?
 - Is appropriate information made available to employers, clarifying arrangements, roles and expectations around work placements?
 - Do students get graduate level jobs at the end of the course?
 - Is relevance, validity and currency of the programme ensured by links with employers in informing curriculum development?
 - Are employers involved with the provision of careers advice and guidance?
 - Does the Department have productive relationships with employers, designed to enhance and support student employability?
- Do not worry that you are not an expert in the subject matter or in educational quality standards; those are the areas of expertise for which the other members of the panel have been appointed. You are on the panel to offer the employer viewpoint, the other panel members will be happy to help if you have questions about some of the more complex issues.

Effectively, you will need to:

- Provide initial comments on the documentation (using the template provided) to the AQU Officer within the specified deadline
- Attend both panel meetings
- Review the final report and approve or suggest amendments as necessary within the specified timescales.

What are the outcomes of the review?

After the final review meeting, the review panel will collectively arrive at a Judgement about each of the University Expectations based on the evidence provided and the discussions that take place during the review event itself. AQU will produce a detailed report, and (in consultation with the Department) an action plan.

The report includes areas for the Department to develop further and also identifies good

practice. You will:

- receive a summary of the outcomes within one week of the second review meeting;
- receive a Chair approved draft of the final report within two weeks of the review event, with the expectation that you will confirm approval or return comments within two weeks.

The final report is submitted to ASQEC. The Department keeps ASQEC informed of progress with actions via its annual programme review reporting. Students should be kept informed of the outcomes of the review, and progress with actions.