Chapter 4

Programme Design, Approval, Validation, Monitoring and Review

4. PROGRAMME DESIGN, APPROVAL, VALIDATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

4.1. Principles

4.1.1. The University is committed to providing high quality learning experiences for its students, and so the quality of its programmes is of fundamental importance. Its processes for programme design approval, validation, monitoring and review exist to ensure that programmes are of an appropriate academic standard, properly resourced, and that they continue in good standing over time.

4.1.2. It is a requirement that all programmes of study:
- are designed to comply with the requirements of the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* published by QAA and other relevant external requirements and guidance;
- lead to awards that are comparable with awards granted and conferred throughout higher education in the United Kingdom with respect to standards, objectives, duration and level of entry and adhere to national qualification frameworks;
- be formally approved and validated prior to their introduction;
- be subject to continuing monitoring and formal annual review;
- normally be subject to a formal revalidation in the fifth year of delivery or sooner.

4.1.3. In addition, the following principles underpin approval, validation, monitoring and processes:
- the encouragement of continuous enhancement of programmes;
- the embedding of best practice, innovation and creativity in learning and teaching;
- the embedding of the UWTSD graduate attributes;
- the inclusion of feedback from external stakeholders (e.g. employers, PSRBs, third sector organisations, alumni);
- the inclusion of feedback from internal and external specialists;
- the inclusion of students as key stakeholders.

4.1.4. Senate is responsible for the approval, validation and review of programmes leading to awards of the University and for ensuring that the University offers a portfolio reflective of its mission and strategic objectives. The Senate may delegate operational responsibility for the conduct of these processes to its sub-committees and officers of the University. It is an expectation that the processes will be underpinned by close communication and cooperation between the University's professional services and its Institutes.

4.1.5. The University recognises the importance of appropriate training and support for staff involved with the validation and review of programmes.

4.1.6. This chapter sets out:
- the regulations governing the processes of programme design, approval, validation, monitoring and review for taught programmes of study
- the regulations governing the processes of programme design, approval, validation, monitoring and review for research degree programmes, including for research degree programmes with a taught element (MRes and Professional Doctorates);
- the principles that are expected to be adhered to by Institutes and partnership institutions.

4.1.7. The University's arrangements for managing collaborative partnership institutions are described in Chapter 9 of the AQH. The current chapter, which summarises the principles adopted for programme validation, monitoring and review in relation to programmes of study offered through collaborative partnerships, should be read in conjunction with Chapter 9. Where appropriate, the University may modify processes if this is considered necessary to address particular aspects of the provision concerned. Details in respect of research degrees offered through partnership institutions are described in Chapter 9.

4.1.8. Regulations and principles relating to the approval of programmes outside the national credit framework are outlined in Chapter 11 of the AQH. Chapter 11 also contains regulations for the approval of joint awards.

4.1.9. The regulations and principles described in this chapter take into account the QAA Advice and Guidance Documents in relation to 'Monitoring and Evaluation' and 'Course Design and Development'.

4.1.10. All processes relating to programme design, approval, validation, monitoring and review are evaluated and, where appropriate amended, on an annual basis as part of the annual review of the Academic Quality Handbook in order to ensure that such processes are continually enhanced.

4.2. Programme Approval (Stage 1) (Taught and Research Degrees)

4.2.1. The University makes a distinction between:

- programme approval, which is a business decision overseen by the Academic Planning Team (APT) on behalf of Senate, via its Programme and Client Approval Group (PCAG);
- programme validation, which is an academic activity overseen by the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) on behalf of Senate.

4.2.2. No programme may be advertised or submitted for validation unless first approved by the Academic Planning Team with the authority of Senate. No programme may be delivered unless first validated by ASC with the authority of Senate. (See Appendix PV7 for validation timelines.)

4.2.3. Any proposal for a new programme or for a major change to an existing programme requires approval first at Institute/other designated University department and then University level. Proposals from collaborative partnership institutions, including structural partners, must be submitted via the relevant University Department.

4.2.4. The purpose of the approval process is to check:
- that the proposal is consistent with University and Institute Strategic Plans and fits in with the strategic approach to portfolio management;
- that resources are available to meet the likely financial demands of the programme(s);
- that there are appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver the programme(s);
- that facilities, learning resources, any specialist resources, and student support services are in place / will be in place to deliver a high quality academic experience;
- that there is a clear and distinct market for the programme;
- that the programme fits appropriately within the national qualification framework;
- that the programme will be designed taking into account the needs and feedback of employers and industry as well as the requirements from any external stakeholders (such as PSRBs or Apprenticeship Standards), and embeds as appropriate employability within the programme;
- that there is no conflict with other areas of the University's activities and that there has been dialogue and collaboration with other areas in the University as appropriate (e.g. for interdisciplinary developments).

4.2.5 Where a proposed programme involves collaboration between two or more Institutes or professional units, a Unit must take responsibility for overseeing the process of programme development and approval (and will, subsequently, 'own' the programme for the purposes of validation, annual review and revalidation).

4.2.6 The expectation is that a programme, once approved by the University, will be validated within 2 years. In the event that validation is not sought or achieved during this period, further

approval is required. In addition, where following development, the programme to be forwarded for validation is significantly different from that for which approval has been given (for example, the proposed title of the programme has changed), further approval will be required.

4.2.7 In summary, programme approval consists of a number of processes comprising (see PG7):
- preparation of Stage 1 documentation (see Appendix PV1);
- internal scrutiny and comment on Stage 1 documentation;
- preparation of final Stage 1 documentation;
- consideration by Institute of Stage 1 documentation and recommendation of: Approve; Reject; Revise and resubmit;
- consideration by APT and recommendation of: Approve; Reject; Revise and resubmit.

4.3. Programme validation (Stage 2) (Taught Awards)

4.3.1. The purpose of the programme design stage is to ensure that:
- the programme incorporates a relevant and systematic assessment strategy;
- the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy is embedded within the programme as appropriate;
- the University's Graduate Attributes are embedded within the programme as appropriate;
- the programme incorporates key principles of inclusive programme design;
- the needs of the intended student cohort have been taken into account appropriately;
- the programme adheres appropriately to the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the national qualifications frameworks and any subject benchmarks;
- the programme ensures appropriate rigour and stretch;
- the programme takes into account student feedback data (internal and/or external as appropriate);
- the programme adheres to PSRB, Apprenticeship Standards and other employer related standards / code of practices.

4.3.2. It is expected that programme teams will consult and liaise, as appropriate, with the following internal and external stakeholders as part of the validation process:
- at least one external subject adviser;
- employers, PSRB, apprenticeship or other industry organisations;
- students;
- representatives from professional services (e.g. Library and Learning Resources, Registry, IT&S, Student Services, Academic Office, Collaborative Partnerships Office, Doctoral College);
- other stakeholders (e.g. other Institutes, partner institutions, NGOs).

4.3.3. It is expected that students are key stakeholders at the programme design stage. Students can be consulted through a variety of means including:
- cohort consultation meetings;
- consultative meetings with student representatives;
- dedicated focus group with current students;
- consultation with alumni;
- membership of a programme design team;
- membership of a validation related meeting.

4.3.4 It is expected that a student engagement mechanism is chosen that adheres to the 'student as partners' principle and allows for dialogue with students.

4.3.5 In addition, it is expected that, where possible, a variety of student feedback data (survey data, module questionnaire data) as well as student achievement data for students on similar

programmes / within the overarching subject area is systematically taken into account when designing a programme.

4.3.6   Programme validation consists of a number of processes comprising:
- preparation of initial draft documentation (see Appendices PV2a, PV2b, PV2c, PV3, PV3a and PV4);
- external and internal scrutiny and comment on initial draft documentation (see Appendices PV5, PV6 and PV15);
- scrutiny and sign-off of externally/internally approved draft documentation;
- where appropriate a formal validation meeting;
- preparation of final draft documentation;
- confirmation by the Dean or nominee (via Appendix PV16) that the final draft documentation has been completed appropriately, taking account of external and internal input and that all required documentation is available to support the Institute-approved submission which is considered and approved by ASC.

4.3.7   Programme validation of short courses and microcredentials may consist of different documentation than courses that lead to an award, but the process would normally comprise:
- preparation of initial draft documentation (see Appendix PV2f);
- scrutiny and comment on initial draft documentation;
- scrutiny and sign-off of approved draft documentation;
- preparation of final draft documentation;
- confirmation by the Dean or nominee that the final draft documentation has been completed appropriately, taking account of the input provided as part of the process and that all required documentation is available to support the Institute-approved submission which is considered and approved by ASC.

4.3.8   The Definitive Programme Document is comprised of the documentation that outlines the programme design, structure, learning aims and outcomes, and modules (see Appendices PV2a and PV2b). Where the proposed programme is to be delivered in both Welsh and English, the Definitive Programme Document must be submitted in both languages.

4.3.9   Where the proposed programme is to be delivered in a language other than English or Welsh, the draft Programme Document and the final, definitive version of the Programme Document (DPD) must be produced in English or Welsh.

4.3.10 Delivery of the programme cannot commence until the validation process has been completed. Following final approval, the Academic Office will inform other departments of the University as appropriate.

4.4.   Programme validation (Stage 2) (Research Degrees)

4.4.1. The purpose of the programme design stage is to ensure that:
- the programme incorporates a relevant and systematic assessment strategy including preparing students for their substantive research project (where there are taught elements);
- the needs of the intended student cohort have been taken into account appropriately;
- the programme adheres appropriately to the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the national qualifications frameworks;
- the programme adheres to PSRB, and other employer related standards / code of practices;
- the programme takes into account student feedback data (internal and/or external as appropriate);
- there is sufficient supervisory capacity for the proposed student numbers;
- the research environment is appropriate to support research in the area.

4.4.2. It is expected that programme teams will consult and liaise, as appropriate, with the following internal and external stakeholders as part of the validation process:
- at least one external subject adviser;
- employers or other industry organisations;
- students;
- representatives from professional services (e.g. Doctoral College, Library and Learning Resources, Registry, IT&S, Student Services, Academic Office, Collaborative Partnerships Office,);
- other stakeholders (e.g. other Institutes, partner institutions, NGOs).

4.4.3. It is expected that students are key stakeholders at the programme design stage. Students can be consulted through a variety of means including:
- cohort consultation meetings;
- consultative meetings with student representatives;
- dedicated focus group with current students;
- consultation with alumni;
- membership of a programme design team;
- membership of a validation related meeting.

4.4.4 It is expected that a student engagement mechanism is chosen that adheres to the 'student as partners' principle and allows for dialogue with students.

4.4.5 In addition, it is expected that, where possible, a variety of student feedback data (survey data, module questionnaire data) as well as student achievement data for students on similar programmes / within the overarching subject area is systematically taken into account when designing a programme.

4.4.6 Programme validation consists of a number of processes comprising:
- preparation of initial draft documentation;
- external and internal scrutiny and comment on initial draft documentation;
- scrutiny and sign-off of externally/internally approved draft documentation;
- where appropriate a formal validation meeting;
- preparation of final draft documentation;
- confirmation by the Dean or nominee that the final draft documentation has been completed appropriately, taking account of external and internal input and that all required documentation is available to support the Institute-approved submission which is considered and approved by ASC.

4.4.7 The Definitive Programme Document is comprised of the documentation that outlines the programme design, structure, learning aims and outcomes, and modules. Where the proposed programme is to be delivered in both Welsh and English, the Definitive Programme Document must be submitted in both languages.

4.4.8 Where the proposed programme is to be delivered in a language other than English or Welsh, the draft Programme Document and the final, definitive version of the Programme Document (DPD) must be produced in English or Welsh.

4.4.9 Delivery of the programme cannot commence until the validation process has been completed. Following final approval, the Academic Office will inform other departments of the University as appropriate.

4.5. Partner Institutions

4.5.1 The Collaborative Partnerships Office will be responsible for leading on all validation processes in liaison with the appropriate Institute of the University. There is an expectation that there will be a formal validation meeting associated with delivering a programme in the partner institution.

4.5.2 Further information about the validation of provision at partner institutions, including the approval of new delivery centres for existing partners and University programmes, is provided in Chapter 9.

4.6. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and Apprenticeship Standards

4.6.1 With the approval of the Chair of the ASC (or nominee), the validation processes described above may be modified to reflect the requirements of relevant PSRBs or Apprenticeship Standard. Such modification may include (but is not limited to) the inclusion of additional information within the draft Programme Document; the production of additional documentation to accompany the draft Programme Document; the organisation of a formal meeting to consider specific risks relating to delivery of the proposed programme; and the presence of a PSRB / Apprenticeship Body representative at the relevant meeting of ASC.

4.6.2 For Apprenticeships, the Programme Team must work with the Apprenticeship Unit in ascertaining the precise requirements of the appropriate apprenticeship standards.

4.6.3 Where the proposed programme has been wholly designed by the PSRB and the PSRB is the awarding body, the Programme Team is responsible for ascertaining the precise requirements of the relevant PSRB and advising the Academic Office accordingly. (See also Chapter 10 of the AQH for further information.)

4.7. Revalidation

4.7.1 Every programme is subject to formal revalidation at least once every 6 years. The revalidation should normally be completed one full year before the commencement of the revalidated programme (e.g. a programme which commenced delivery in 2022/23, would be due for revalidation by 2026/27 for delivery in 2028/29). Within this overall timeframe, the Institute may propose that a programme is revalidated earlier (including where changes proposed through the annual review process would result in material changes to the programme).

4.7.2 The revalidation schedules for programmes will be incorporated into the Institute validation schedule presented to the Academic Standards Committee (see Appendix PV17). Where a programme requires revalidation as a result of the annual review process, the Institute validation schedule will be amended and re-presented to ASC.

4.7.3 Formal revalidation will be conducted following the same procedures as for Programme Validation as set out in Section 4.3 above.

4.7.4 ASC may recommend a streamlined revalidation process within the 6 year programme cycle. The streamlined process will be determined on the nature of changes required by the programme and the format of the process will be set by ASC prior to the commencement of the revalidation process.

4.7.5 In the event that a Programme Team wishes to change the title of an existing programme as part of the revalidation process, the Team should submit a proposal for a Major Modification (Appendix PV1a) before commencing work on the draft programme documentation.

Collaborative Partner Institutions

4.7.6 The formal revalidation processes described above apply in their entirety to proposals for collaborative programmes. In following the procedures for Programme Validation as set out in Section 4.3-4.4 for revalidations of collaborative programmes, the normal expectation for a formal meeting as set out in paragraph 4.4.1 will not apply, although a formal meeting may be required where specific risks have been identified.

4.8. Modifications to existing programmes

4.8.1 Programme Teams may be permitted to modify aspects of their approved programmes and may be permitted to make changes to content to ensure that the programmes remain up-to-date. ASC, on behalf of Senate, has oversight of all such modifications in order to ensure that academic quality and standards are maintained, and to enable the Academic Office to maintain accurate, definitive records of all programmes.

4.8.2 The following principles apply in all cases:
- changes will not normally be applied retrospectively;
- the changes should not conflict with any formal conditions and/or recommendations made at validation, revalidation, or last annual review of the programme without strong justification;
- the implications of module changes for any other programme of study that utilises the module(s) (if any) must be taken into account before the changes can be approved. In the event that Programme Teams are unable to reach agreement on changes, it may be necessary to propose the creation of a new module;
- where the programme is or will be delivered by more than one Institution or by one or more collaborative partner institutions in addition to the University, all parties are consulted about the proposed modifications and have the opportunity to contribute to discussions.

Major Modifications requiring Academic Planning Team and Academic Standards Committee approval

4.8.3 In addition to proposals for new programmes of study, the Academic Planning Team approval is required for the following:
- a change to the title of the programme or award, or the introduction of a new award within a programme;
- a change to the mode of delivery (full-time/part-time/blended learning/language etc.);
- a change to the location of delivery (different campus, off-site or outreach);
- the introduction of a new named pathway within an approved award;
- introduction of new material or new modules which result in a material change;
- a change that carries additional requirements in respect of resources, including any additions or changes to intake dates.

4.8.4 In such cases, the proposal must first be considered and approved by the relevant Institute/other designated University department and then submitted centrally, using the relevant form (Appendix PV1a). Following central approval, the PV1a form must be forwarded to the Academic Office with the relevant supporting documentation. The Academic Office will arrange for the proposal to be considered at the next appropriate meeting of ASC, which will either approve the proposal as presented, or will determine the approval process to be followed. The timing of when the major modifications are requested will affect when the changes can be implemented. Where relevant, the Academic Office is responsible for notifying the relevant PSRB of modifications approved subsequently by ASC.

Minor Modifications (approved by Institutes / other designated University department)

4.8.5   The following non-material changes may be approved by the relevant Institute Board and reported to ASC using Appendix PV9:
- changes to the learning outcomes, the assessment methodology, or the indicative content of existing modules;
- a change to the title of an approved module;
- the addition of an approved module to a named pathway;
- the introduction of new material or new modules which do not result in a material change (see 4.8.8) to the programme (where a material change would occur, then the procedures for major modifications (4.8.4) or revalidation set out in Section 4.7 should be followed);
- minor structural changes;
- offering an approved module within the programme in a different language.

4.8.6   In such cases, the approved changes must be submitted to the Academic Office for reporting to ASC and relevant University departments. Where relevant, Institutes are responsible for liaising with the relevant PSRB in regard to the changes.

Material changes (approved by Academic Standards Committee)

4.8.7   Material changes may be approved by ASC either through a full or streamlined revalidation process.

4.8.8   The introduction of new material or modules would result in a material change if:
- the types of assessment tool used are significantly changed (for example, introducing assessment by examination, where previously examinations had not been used at all);
- the number of optional modules offered is significantly reduced and the number of compulsory modules is significantly increased;
- changes to the programme specification (including learning outcomes) for an existing programme;
- the programme loses professional body accreditation.

Modifications to Programmes of Study at Collaborative Partner Institutions

4.8.9   The modification processes described above apply in their entirety to collaborative partnership programmes.

Suspension or Withdrawal of Programmes of Study

4.8.10   Senate is responsible for confirming the measures to be taken to notify and protect the interests of students registered for, or accepted for admission to, the programme. In dealing with legacy issues, Senate must ensure that appropriate actions are taken to assure academic standards and quality, the equivalence of the student experience and manage any reputational or financial risks that might arise as a result of the decision.

4.8.11   The proposal to suspend or withdraw a programme must first go through the Institute's/other designated University department's deliberative structures setting out the reasons and indicating any arrangements necessary to protect the status and choice of existing and potential students. Where the programme is offered in collaboration with a partner institution, the proposal must include information about how the collaborative partner institution has been consulted.

Suspensions and Withdrawals requiring Academic Planning Team approval

4.8.12   Where an Institute recommends that programme(s) are suspended for at least one academic year or permanently withdrawn and there are potential staffing implications; that programme(s)

move into teach-out; or where a programme has a small number of applicants then the Institute must make a recommendation to Academic Planning Team to approve the suspension or withdrawal of the programme(s). The decisions of Academic Planning Team should be reported to the Registry and to the next meeting of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC).

Suspensions and Withdrawals requiring Institute approval

4.8.13 Institutes can approve the suspension or withdrawal of programme(s) where there are no students or applicants; or where the suspended or withdrawn programme is replaced by a programme with a new title through the (re)validation process. The decisions of the Institute should be reported to the Registry using the appropriate form (which is published on the Academic Office tile on the Hwb), and Registry will report all decisions to the next meeting of ASC.

Requests to suspend individual intake dates for programmes of study

4.8.14 Institutes can approve the suspension of individual intake dates where there are multiple intakes per academic year. The decisions of the Institute should be reported to Registry using the appropriate form (which is published on the Academic Office tile on the Hwb), and Registry will report all decisions to the next meeting of ASC.

4.8.15 Where an approval to withdraw or suspend a programme is approved, Institutes are required to communicate the changes to Registry, students and applicants as appropriate.

4.9. Programme Monitoring and Annual Review

4.9.1 The University considers programme monitoring and review to be a continuous process - an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment activities, through which student feedback is gathered, issues are addressed, and good practice is promoted. This process culminates in the annual review process.

4.9.2 The purpose of programme monitoring and annual review is to reflect upon the effectiveness of the University's academic portfolio and to ensure that:
- programmes are well designed and of a high quality;
- effective assessment mechanisms are in place;
- appropriate support systems are in place to ensure that all students are provided with the support they need to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes;
- quality and standards are maintained.

4.9.3 It is acknowledged that there will be differences in how the processes outlined in this framework are applied. For example, many programmes employ flexible delivery modes: programmes offer multiple intake points, are delivered on an accelerated basis and across academic years. As a result, in some cases, programme delivery does not match the University's overall cycle of programme monitoring and annual review. It is acknowledged that this may impact on the nature of the reflection and analysis by some programme teams. To accommodate these differences, Institutes are, within the overarching framework, principles and time-lines, able to decide themselves on the exact process followed for annual review and programme monitoring. The regular evaluation and monitoring framework remains of key importance to aid reflection on performance and drive continuous improvement and enhancement.

4.9.4 The annual review process also allows Programme Teams to ensure that the programmes remain up-to-date and to recommend modifications to aspects of their approved programmes. As part of the annual review process information from a range of sources is considered. These include:

- key student journey data (regarding enrolment, progression, attainment, outcomes);
- module mark data;
- student feedback data (module and programme evaluations, survey results);
- minutes from Student Staff Committees;
- External Examiner comments.

In relation to data, trends will be considered as well as performance relating to relevant sector and subject benchmarks.

4.9.5   The annual review process within Institutes and collaborative partnership institutions comprises of:
- a report at Programme Cluster level, in accordance with the template provided in Appendix 11a;
- a report at Cross Institute level, in accordance with the template provided in Appendix 11b;
- a report at Academic Discipline Cluster level, in accordance with the template provided in Appendix 11e;
- a report at Institute level, in accordance with the template provided in Appendix 12;
- the formal monitoring of progress made against any action plans by ASC during the academic year.

4.9.6   For Research Degrees, this annual review process is undertaken by the Doctoral College and reported to ASC as part of the Annual Monitoring Meeting.

4.9.7   Institutes and partnership institutions may determine the exact processes of annual review, in accordance with the principles set out below. The University expects that the following principles are being adhered to:
- APR reports are discussed as appropriate with student representatives (e.g. within Student Staff Committees) and students are informed about the outcomes of APR processes;
- APR reports are discussed as appropriate with academic staff within Institutes;
- APR reports are considered as appropriate within Institute management structures;
- Progress against action plans is monitored;
- Systematic engagement with professional services occurs so that any issues highlighted with professional services can be considered and actioned as appropriate;
- Institutes are required to ensure that annual review outcomes are communicated as appropriate to staff, students and external stakeholders (e.g. a PSRB).

4.9.8   Following the completion of the processes within the Institutes, all Institute and Academic Discipline reports as well as a sample of Programme Cluster reports will be considered by the ASC.

4.9.9   Where delivery of a programme has been formally withdrawn by the University, it is expected that the programme will be included in the programme cluster review until such a time as any remaining students have completed their studies.

4.9.10 Where a programme with the same title and content is delivered in multiple Institutes and has a number of different locations or modes of delivery and it is logistically not possible to employ the same external examiner across the programme, (e.g. because of the scale of the provision), an additional stage is required for the Annual Programme Monitoring process in the form of Appendix PV11b Cross Institute Annual Monitoring Report.

4.9.11 In addition to the annual review processes at programme, academic discipline and Institute / collaborative partnership institution level, there are a number of central annual overview reports that are produced by the Academic Office and Collaborative Partnerships Office to maintain oversight at an overarching University level. These include:
- an External Examiner overview report;
- a Research Degrees overview report;

- a Degree Outcomes Statement;
- a student cases overview report;
- a validation overview report;
- a partner overview report.

Annual review at programme cluster level

4.9.12 At programme cluster level, the annual review process must include:
- a summary of key developments to the programme(s) since the last annual review;
- reflection of key data associated with the student journey (enrolment, withdrawal and progression, attainment and outcomes);
- reflection on engagement with students during the review period, including student feedback and responses to such feedback;
- identification of areas of strength and further enhancement;
- confirmation of how issues raised by external examiners have been addressed;
- where applicable, confirmation that the University Student Placements Protocol is observed;
- an updated programme action plan (including any recommendations to professional services);

4.9.13 Where delivery of a programme involves more than one Institute, one Institute will lead on the preparation of the documentation, but it is expected that representatives of each Institute normally participate in the annual review process.

Annual review at Academic Discipline level

4.9.14 At Academic Discipline level, the APR documentation produced by programme clusters is reviewed. The exact process is determined by each Institute (see 4.6.3). As part of this stage of the process, an overview report is then produced at Academic Discipline level. This report may contain a number of different academic subjects depending on the structure of the Institute.

4.9.15 The report produced at this level must include:
- confirmation that quality and standards have been maintained across the programmes within the Academic Discipline and, where applicable, in collaborative partner institutions;
- confirmation that appropriate responses have been given by programme teams in response to External Examiner reports;
- confirmation that APR reports have been produced for all programme clusters within the Academic Discipline;
- confirmation that engagement with professional units has taken place on issues raised within the programme cluster reports;
- a high level summary of areas of risk, weaknesses, and good practice within the programmes covered by the Academic Discipline;
- identification of any themes and / or issues identified in the programme cluster reports that need to be addressed at Academic Discipline level;
- reflection on the effectiveness of student engagement mechanisms at Academic Discipline level;
- a high level reflection on any significant differences in progression, attainment and outcomes between the different programme clusters or programmes delivered on a number of locations, identifying any issues that need to be addressed;
- where applicable, evaluation of collaboration with partner institutions (the latter to be informed by consideration of the reports of Partnership Team Leaders and the APR report submitted by the partner institution);
- an updated list of Academic Discipline strategic priorities.

Annual review at Institute level

4.9.16 Following completion of the APR process at Academic Discipline level, there is a process at Institute level. The exact process is determined by Institutes (see 4.6.3). As part of this stage of the process, the Institute produces a report to ASC. This report includes:
- confirmation that the process has been completed in accordance with the principles outlined in the AQH;
- confirmation that all relevant Academic Discipline reports and APR reports have been completed and considered as appropriate;
- a response to any recommendations for the Institute made by programme clusters and Academic Disciplines;
- confirmation that Academic Discipline priorities are aligned to Institute and University strategic priorities;
- confirmation that appropriate consultation has taken place with relevant professional services in relation to any issues identified;
- the identification to good practice to share across the Institute and University;
- consideration of any action(s) that need(s) to be taken in regard to the Institute's portfolio of programmes.

Annual review by the Academic Standards Committee

4.9.17 ASC is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for ensuring that the annual review process is conducted in accordance with the University's requirements and is fit for purpose. To this end, the ASC will:
- consider the Institute reports, the Academic Discipline reports, and the Partner Overview reports in order to confirm that the annual review process has been carried out in accordance with requirements at all levels;
- consider a sample of programme cluster reports;
- discuss any matters requiring consideration at institutional level.

4.9.18 A sample of programme cluster reports from Institutes and Collaborative Partnership Institutions is considered at ASC. The sample must include programmes where:
- a recent inspection by a PSRB has identified matters requiring attention;
- the most recent external examiner report has raised matters of concern in relation to academic standards;
- the most recent Partnership Team Leader report has raised matters of concern in relation to academic standards;
- they are in new subject areas to a Discipline or Institute;
- the programme has an NSS satisfaction rating below the relevant benchmark;
- programmes identified by the Institute or relevant unit that may require institutional review (e.g. particular risks, external requirements, or good practice).

4.9.19 The reports outlined in 4.6.5 will be discussed at one of the meetings of ASC. For the purposes of this section of the relevant meeting, ASC's membership must include at least one person external to the University.

4.9.20 The central review of APR documentation at ASC ensures that:
- the University assures itself that any issues are identified by programme teams, Academic Disciplines, the Institutes and collaborative partnership institutions and that appropriate action plans are in place to address any issues;
- there is consistency of quality, standards, and achievements across the different programmes and cohorts;
- good practice can be shared across the University;
- issues can be identified that are most appropriately addressed at an institutional level;
- the effectiveness of review systems is assessed;

- feedback is gathered systematically from key stakeholders about annual review processes so that these, as well as programme design and validation processes, continue to be enhanced.

Programme Monitoring and Annual Review at Collaborative Partner Institutions

4.9.21 Collaborative partner institutions are required to adhere to the principles for programme monitoring and review as outlined in 4.7.6. (See also Appendices PV11a for Partners and PV12a.)

4.9.22 Collaborative partnership institutions will receive feedback on their APR submissions. In addition, programme monitoring and review will be discussed at the annual partner conference to share good practice between partners and continue to enhance practice.