



Procedures for the annual monitoring of courses

Education Committee

Valid from Michaelmas Term 2015

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Version history

1.0	October 2015	Original publication	Approved by Quality Assurance Subcommittee.
1.1	September 2016	Minor change and new annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to deadline for division submission of UG Barometer & NSS report to QASC and provision for a combined report from OUDCE (para 5.2) • Addition of Annex B containing officer guidance on reporting • Other minor textual changes. <p>Main additions approved by Quality Assurance Subcommittee.</p>
1.2	August 2017	Minor changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of reference to the <i>Common Framework for supporting disabled students</i> (para 1.5). • Amendments as a consequence of changes to the structure of panels and subcommittee reporting to EdC. • Revisions to Annex B as a result of 2016-17 experience. <p>Revisions approved by PVC (Education).</p>
1.3	September 2018	Minor change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition to clarify that external examiners' comments specific to joint courses should be passed to the relevant course organising committee (para. 3.6) <p>Revision approved by PVC (Education).</p>

1. Background

- 1.1. This document sets out the procedures in place across the University to monitor the quality and standards of undergraduate (UG) courses, postgraduate taught (PGT) courses and postgraduate research (PGR) programmes.
- 1.2. The University undertakes monitoring of courses through a range of processes rather than a single event. These processes include the annual consideration of admissions statistics, examiners' and external examiners' reports, annual programme statistics, student feedback and evaluation, and data on the destinations of graduates. The overall cycle of consideration is set out here and is also reflected in the *Quality assurance calendar template* and divisional quality assurance calendars.¹
- 1.3. Annual monitoring provides an opportunity to review evidence and observations from a range of internal and external sources, in order to identify actions to be taken and report on progress being made. It is a key mechanism by which the University assures itself of the standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities which it offers students. The full cycle of consideration of student evaluation and feedback, annual programme statistics and the destinations of graduates is included (beyond the monitoring of individual courses) for completeness.
- 1.4. This document incorporates sector expectations in the form of the UK Quality Code, in particular elements of Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review.
- 1.5. The processes set out in this document provide opportunities for departments, divisions and University committees to monitor and evaluate activity in relation to the responsibilities set out in the *Common Framework for supporting disabled students*.²
- 1.6. In this document all references to departments should be read as also referring to faculties. Both department and divisional roles described below will be undertaken by the appropriate bodies within the Department for Continuing Education.

2. Admissions statistics

- 2.1. UG and postgraduate (PG) admissions statistics are published annually and are available through the University website.³ More detailed reports on UG admissions and PG admissions data are available to departmental and divisional users.⁴

Consideration by departments

- 2.2. In relation to UG admissions, statistics for the application cycle in progress should be scrutinised by the relevant department committee in Hilary term immediately after the main admissions activities have taken place (i.e. 'in cycle'). For PG admissions,

¹ www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/qa/qualityassuranceoverview

² <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/aad/swss/disability/>

³ www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/admissions-statistics

⁴ Links are provided in the SDMA Report Catalogue which is available via <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/aad/studentregistry/sdma/>

statistics for the application cycle just completed should be scrutinised by relevant department committees in Michaelmas term.

2.3. Data should be reviewed to:

- identify any overall trends in numbers, source and quality of applications;
- consider in particular any trends in relation to key demographic characteristics including sex, ethnicity, disability and (for undergraduates) contextual flags;
- for postgraduates also consider over-offer ratios, withdrawals and take-up of places, funding and studentship awards and use of English language waivers;
- confirm admissions processes are meeting the requirements of the *Common Framework for Admissions*, the *Policy and Guidance for postgraduate taught courses* or the *Policy on research degrees* as appropriate;
- note and report any changes in or enhancements to process or practice for subsequent admissions' rounds.

Consideration by division

2.4. Divisions may choose to undertake analysis of admissions statistics, particularly looking at any cross-divisional trends.

Consideration on behalf of Education Committee

2.5. The Admissions Committee of Conference and Graduate Admissions Committee are responsible for consideration of matters relating to admissions, and for making policy recommendations on admissions matters to Education Committee. These two committees should consider institution-level results, both as a whole and in comparison to sector trends, including analysis by key characteristics, to identify broad areas of strength or weakness which could inform future policy development.

3. Examiners' reports

3.1. This section considers the use of examiners' reports, both those produced by the board of examiners and the separate report from the external examiner, in the monitoring of UG and PGT courses. The policy framework for the production of examiners' reports is provided in the *Policy and Guidance for examiners*.⁵

3.2. The usual timing of consideration is summarised below:

Consideration of examiners' reports by departments (including discussion at JCC/GJCC).	MT
Department reports considered by divisions	HT
Summary report to Quality Assurance Subcommittee (QASC)	TT

For some courses on non-standard timetables, an adjusted timetable may be required, with consideration taking place as soon as possible after receipt of the relevant reports.

⁵ www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgexaminers/

Consideration by departments

- 3.3. Each board of examiners produces a report which should be considered by the relevant academic committee(s) within the department at the first available opportunity. This will usually be during Michaelmas term. In the case of joint courses this consideration may be undertaken by the course organising committee.
- 3.4. By submitting their report examiners fulfil their duty to account for their actions to their academic colleagues and demonstrate their careful stewardship of the examination process. This supports transparency in the conduct of examination process and the sharing of information, good practice and lessons learned. It also provides the opportunity for examiners to raise issues relating to the examination process, assessment methods, teaching methods or curriculum which require wider discussion or action.
- 3.5. The relevant academic committee should assure itself of the integrity of the examination process that has taken place by receipt of the examiners' report, and should review and reflect on the course as a whole, drawing on the information received and issues raised. This includes consideration of:
 - overall student outcomes compared with previous cohorts;
 - performance analysed by gender;
 - whether UK threshold standards and the standards set out in the examination conventions are being maintained.

For departments operating multiple UG or PGT courses, the consideration of examiners' reports should also involve comparison and contrast between courses.

- 3.6. Alongside the board of examiners' report the relevant academic committee will also receive and give detailed consideration to the comments and recommendations of external examiners. Comments and recommendations specific to joint courses should always be passed to the relevant course organising committee.
- 3.7. In considering the reports from the examiners and from the external examiner, the academic committee should take the opportunity to reflect on the course as a whole, rather than focusing exclusively on assessment or on the specific recommendations made within the reports. The committee will agree on and record any action to be taken within the department, in relation to the curriculum, teaching methods, examination regulations, examination conventions or examination process, and identify which matters require referral on to the division or Education Committee.
- 3.8. The committee considering examiners' reports will have appropriate student representation. The reports, both from the board of examiners and the external

examiner, will be made available to students directly⁶ as well as being provided to the joint consultative committee (or equivalent).⁷

- 3.9. Departments will provide for consideration by the division a report consisting of an extract of the minutes of the committee at which the examiners' reports were considered, and/or a commentary describing their consideration of the examiners' reports, actions agreed locally, and any issues or proposed actions they wish to be considered by the division. They will also provide the original board of examiners' reports and external examiner's reports (and draft/actual response to the external examiner as required by local divisional practice) for all courses.

Consideration by divisions

- 3.10. The examiners' reports are the divisions' primary mechanism for the oversight of academic standards, and for the assurance and enhancement of learning opportunities of its courses each year. Consideration takes place in Hilary term.

- 3.11. Divisions will consider the reports from their departments at the relevant academic committee and identify any:

- specific issues (either raised by the departments directly or identified in the reports) for discussion and/or action by the division;
- matters to be referred back to the department for further consideration, development or action;
- any matters to be referred on to Education Committee for wider consideration.

- 3.12. Looking across the reports received, the division will identify themes common across departments and identify where these should be the subject of further discussion or action within the division, or where they should be referred on to Education Committee.

- 3.13. In their identification of specific issues and thematic analysis divisions will be mindful of any issues highlighted to them through the initial consideration of external examiners' reports provided by QASC (see paragraph 3.20 below).

- 3.14. Divisions will provide QASC with a report which:

- confirms that a response has been provided to all external examiners;
- confirms that the division has carried out its oversight function; and
- identifies any specific issues or arising themes they wish to draw to Education Committee's attention.

- 3.15. Examiners' reports will be provided by exception as appendices to the report only where required to illustrate specific issues. Guidance for officers reporting to QASC is provided in Annex B.

⁶ *Policy and Guidance for examiners* (section 4.4)
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgexaminers/

⁷ *Policy and Guidance on student representation and engagement* (paragraph 4.26)
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pandgstudentengageandrep/

Consideration on behalf of Education Committee

- 3.16. On receipt of the reports from the division, Education Policy Support (EPS) officers will identify the appropriate avenue for the issues and themes raised. The most appropriate avenue might be Taught Degrees Panel or QASC.
- 3.17. Officers will provide a summary report to QASC in Trinity term noting the completion the reporting cycle. That report will highlight matters to be discussed by the committee, and note where matters have been referred to other bodies.

Initial consideration of external examiners' reports by QASC

- 3.18. Alongside the main process outline above, a high level consideration of all external examiners' reports is undertaken by EPS officers soon after their receipt. The outcome of this process is reported to QASC in Michaelmas term for UG reports, and in Hilary term for PGT reports.
- 3.19. This process provides a safety net and early warning system. It ensures that external examiners' comments highlighting any area which would be of institutional concern in relation to quality and standards are identified quickly and highlighted to the divisions for transmission on to the relevant department.
- 3.20. The process is also used to identify cross-cutting themes which are then referred to divisions to inform their consideration of department reports (see paragraph 3.13 above).

4. Annual programme statistics

- 4.1. Annual programme statistics (APS) cover UG, PGT and PGR students. They provide an overview of degree classifications for UG, outcomes for PGT and progression and submission rates for PGR students, based on the census date of 1 December each year.⁸

Consideration by divisions

- 4.2. Student performance at course level is considered by departments via Examiners' reports, which include three years of performance data, including analysis by sex (see paragraph 3.5 above). Consideration of other characteristics is often not statistically meaningful at this level and therefore routine consideration of APS at department level is not required.
- 4.3. Divisions consider whether there are issues of performance between students with different characteristics at the divisional and course/department level. Divisions can decide to cascade their analysis down to all or specific departments depending on what their evaluation highlights. Divisions will identify any actions to be taken at department or division level, or matters to be referred on to be considered by the appropriate body at University level.

⁸ <https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/central/aad/adm/sdma/reporting/aps>

Consideration on behalf of Education Committee

- 4.4. Taught Degrees Panel and Research Degrees Panel are responsible for consideration of student progress and performance at an institutional level on behalf of Education Committee. In addition to consideration of overall performance by level of study and division, a number of characteristics are considered in isolation and combination to monitor and reveal trends over time.
- 4.5. Annual reviews of UG and PGT outcomes are both considered by Taught Degrees Panel in Trinity term. Three years of data are considered. Annual review of PGR milestones and outcomes is considered by Research Degrees Panel in Hilary term. Six years of data are considered.
- 4.6. Characteristics considered will vary over time, depending on particular areas of interest and policy priorities, but consideration to date has involved the following characteristics by level of study.

UG performance			PGT performance	PGR performance	
FPE	FPE to FHS	FHS		Meeting milestones	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • division • sex • ethnicity/ domicile • OFFA flag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • division • sex • ethnicity • disability • OFFA flag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • division • sex • ethnicity • ethnicity/ domicile • disability • fee status • school type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • division • sex • ethnicity • disability • fee status • previous study • mode of study • funding source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • division • sex • ethnicity • disability • fee status • previous Oxford study 	

- 4.7. The panels also consider related issues including international student performance

5. Student evaluation and feedback

- 5.1. Consideration of the results of the Student Barometer and National Student Survey (NSS) is undertaken through three separate cycles of consideration to ensure that:
- Course-level results are considered promptly by the departments responsible for them, with divisional oversight to ensure that where appropriate action plans are put in place to respond to issues identified during the consideration of the results;
 - Detailed consideration is given to results relating to learning and teaching from an institutional perspective by Taught Degrees Panel and Research Degrees Panel to inform future policy development; and
 - In some years, high level consideration is given by Education Committee to the overarching results of the surveys across all domains to inform wider policy development and action.

- 5.2. The timetable for consideration is given in the table below. In some cases, it may be appropriate to consider UG Student Barometer results on a more rapid timetable, mirroring that for PG Student Barometer results.

	PG results of the Student Barometer	UG results of the Student Barometer & NSS
Initial consideration by departments including discussion at JCC/GJCC	Early TT	Early MT
Department reports considered by divisions	Late TT / during MT	Late MT / Early HT
Divisional and OUDCE reports considered at QASC	Early HT	Early TT ⁹

Consideration by departments

- 5.3. The Student Barometer surveys part-time and full-time UG, PGT and PGR students.¹⁰ The survey covers the whole student experience including application, teaching and pastoral support, and contains questions specific to both colleges and departments. The survey takes place in late Michaelmas term and results are normally released, via Tableau, in late Hilary term.
- 5.4. The NSS is completed by all UG finalists in Hilary term. The survey covers all aspects of the learning experience. Results are released in August each year.
- 5.5. Departments will also collect evaluation and feedback from students through local mechanisms, and the consideration of this information should dovetail with the consideration of Barometer and NSS data where possible and appropriate.
- 5.6. It is important that the survey results are considered promptly at the department/faculty level so that they can be discussed with student representatives (through the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) or equivalent) and any potential changes to the course or related educational provision be made as soon as possible.
- 5.7. To support departments and faculties in their consideration of Student Barometer and NSS a course-level dashboard report is provided through Tableau.¹¹ This ensures that key variables are considered across the University in a standardised way. Departments are welcome to undertake further analysis should they so wish.

⁹ OUDCE will report on both UG and PG Barometer results in early HT (and so will not need to report in TT).

¹⁰ Except for:

- Undergraduates in their final year - these students are surveyed in the NSS.
- Students of the Doctor of Clinical Psychology - these students are surveyed separately.
- Students in years 2 and 4 of the undergraduate medical course -- to prevent over-surveying.
- Part-time students on non-matriculated courses (these students are surveyed through a tailored form of the Barometer but the resultant data is reported separately).

¹¹ Barometer dashboard: <https://bits.uas.ox.ac.uk/views/StudentBarometer/SatisfactionComparison>;

NSS dashboard: <https://bits.uas.ox.ac.uk/views/StudentBarometer/SatisfactionComparison>

- 5.8. Departments will provide for consideration by the division two reports (UG and PG) consisting of an extract of the minutes of the committee at which the student survey results were considered, and/or a commentary describing their consideration, any actions agreed locally, and any issues or proposed actions they wish to be considered by the division.
- 5.9. Departments should ensure that student representatives, through the JCC or equivalent or via other means, are provided with updates on the ways in which the department is responding to the matters identified as a result of reviewing student survey results.

Consideration by divisions

- 5.10. By receiving reports from each department the division is able to ensure that student evaluation and feedback has been considered systematically by all departments and that any necessary action plans are in place. Divisions may also take this opportunity to undertake cross-divisional analysis of results.

Consideration on behalf of Education Committee - QASC

- 5.11. Divisions will provide QASC with reports (UG and PG) which confirm that consideration of student evaluation and feedback has been undertaken by all departments, and will note any areas of particular concern or improvement and planned action. Guidance for officers reporting to QASC is provided in Annex B.
- 5.12. EPS officers will also consider all results shortly after release to ensure in the event of a significantly anomalous result that the attention of the department and division are drawn to the issue promptly.

Consideration on behalf of Education Committee - Panels

- 5.13. Taught Degrees Panel and Research Degrees Panel, as subcommittees of Education Committee, are responsible for consideration of matters relating to teaching and learning.
- 5.14. Consideration of results by the panels relating to learning and teaching focuses on comparison of the University to the sector and the identification of broad areas of strength or weakness which could inform future policy development.
- 5.15. Student Barometer results (UG and PGT) are considered in Trinity term by Taught Degrees Panel with NSS results being considered in Michaelmas term. PGR Student Barometer results are also considered each year by Research Degrees Panel.

Institutional overview by Education Committee

- 5.16. Periodically (not necessarily every year), an institutional overview, drawing on the full range of results from the Student Barometer (including, but not limited to, those relating to teaching and learning) at summary level, is considered at Education Committee. Any areas identified for further investigation or action are referred to panels or subcommittees as appropriate.

6. Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE)

6.1. The Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) is an annual survey, undertaken by higher education institutions nationally, which collects information from all leavers from higher education about what they are doing six months after receiving their qualification. Results are released in August. The University's DLHE results are presented on Tableau.¹²

Consideration by divisions

6.2. Divisions will undertake analysis of DLHE looking at key characteristics of the student population during Michaelmas term. Divisions can decide to cascade their analysis down to all or specific departments depending on what their evaluation highlights. Divisions will identify any actions to be taken at department or division level, or the appropriate body at University level.

Consideration on behalf of Education Committee

6.3. Taught Degrees Panel, as a subcommittee of Education Committee, is responsible for consideration of matters relating to employment outcomes of students, as part of wider consideration of employability matters. The Panel will consider DLHE institution-level results, both as a whole and in comparison to sector trends, including analysis by key characteristics (including gender and ethnicity), to identify broad areas of strength or weakness which could inform future policy development.

7. Review of these procedures

7.1. EPS and officers from the divisions and the Department for Continuing Education will review this document on a triennial basis.

7.2. The next review of this document is due to take place during 2017-18.¹³

¹² http://public.tableau.com/views/DLHE_stu/Whatalumnihavedone?:showVizHome=no

¹³ That review will encompass consideration of the appropriate levels of consideration of Longitudinal Employment Data (LEO) data, released experimentally in June 2017.

Annex A Schedule of course monitoring activities

N.B. paragraph numbers for relevant section of the *Procedures* are given in brackets.

Level	Michaelmas Term	Hilary Term	Trinity Term
Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG admissions statistics (2.2) • Examiners' reports (including external examiners' reports) (3.3-3.9) • UG results of the Student Barometer & NSS (5.2-5.9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UG admissions statistics (2.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG results of the Student Barometer (5.2-5.9)
Divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG results of the Student Barometer (5.10) • DHLE (6.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examiners' reports (including external examiners' reports) (3.10-3.15) • Annual Programme Statistics (4.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UG results of the Student Barometer & NSS (5.2-5.9)
University level committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG admissions statistics (2.5) (GAC) • UG and PGT DLHE outcomes (6.3) (TDP) • UG results of the NSS (5.13-5.15) (TDP) • Conclusion of cycle – PG results of the Student Barometer (5.11) (QASC) • Initial consideration of UG external examiners' reports (3.18-3.20) (QASC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UG admissions statistics (2.5) (ADCOM/ADEX) • Initial consideration of PGT external examiners' reports(3.18-3.20) (QASC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate outcomes/APS (4.4-4.7) (UG Panel) • Postgraduate outcomes/APS (4.4-4.7) (Grad Panel) • Teaching & learning results of the Student Barometer (5.13-5.15) (TDP and RDP) Institutional overview of Student Barometer (5.16) (Education Committee) • Conclusion of cycle - UG results of the Student Barometer & NSS (5.11) (QASC) • Conclusion of cycle – examiners' reports cycle (3.17) (QASC)

Annex B Officers guidance on reporting

1. Examiners' reports

Divisions are asked to provide two reports to Quality Assurance Subcommittee: one covering undergraduate examinations and one covering postgraduate examinations. Each report should cover the following.

Part 1: Specific aspects of oversight

Divisional reports should confirm that:

- a. all departments have provided a report to the division (with the original board of examiners' reports and external examiners' reports attached) in respect of all applicable boards from that department;
- b. all examiner's reports contain an analysis of examination performance by gender and a comparison with performance by gender in relation to previous cohorts; and
- c. all external examiners have received an appropriate response to their report covering all issues raised.

Where it is not possible to confirm the above points, please provide commentary on any areas of exception and follow-up action taken/in progress.

Part 2: General oversight

Divisional reports should also comment on any themes, issues or aspects of University policy or regulation which the division believes require consideration by Quality Assurance Subcommittee (or one of the other subcommittees of panels of Education Committee).

Please note that, as set out at section 3.15 of the *PAMC*, examiners' reports do not need to be provided, and should only be included as annexes to the report where required to illustrate specific issues.

2. Reports on the Barometer and NSS (UG and PG)

For divisional reports to Quality Assurance Subcommittee, these should cover:

Confirmation that departments have:

- Discussed the results at their JCC or equivalent
- Discussed the results at the relevant department committee
- There is an action plan in place to address any identified issues
- That the action plan has been/will be fed back to students (through JCC/WebLearn etc.)

Any divisional comments on the issues raised by departments/actions taken, particularly in relation to any themes arising across departments.

Any outcomes of note from the (optional) cross divisional analysis.