

UCL Academic Manual 2019-20

Chapter 9: Quality Review Framework

Chapter 9 is UCL's regulatory framework for monitoring standards, the student experience and strategic quality enhancement activities across UCL. It includes the regulations for Annual Student Experience Reviews (ASER), Internal Quality Review (IQR) and External Examining as well as Peer Observation of Teaching, Staff-Student Consultative Committees, Student Representation on UCL Academic Standing Committees and Sub-Committees and Academic Committee Review Panels.

1 INTRODUCTION......4

7	STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON UCL ACADEMIC STANDING COMMITTEES	AND
	SUB-COMMITTEES	33
7.1	Representation at Departmental and Faculty Level	33
7.2	Student Academic Representatives	34
7.3	Representation	

Staff are supported to deliver high quality student experiences. Innovation and creativity in the design and delivery of the curriculum is actively supported.

6. See Annex 9.2.1 ASER Main Steps for more details.

DHLE* Data

7. UCL acknowledges that time lapses in the production of each cohort of DLHE data means that cohorts will not correlate and cannot be compared (i.e. there will be no direct relationship between the DLHE data produced for evaluation in 2017 and the graduating cohort but Departments are expected nonetheless to evaluate their own performance in the DHLE survey and will have to work with the most recent complete dataset available.

2.3 The Role of the Quality Review Sub-Committee

1. As noted in <u>Section 2.2 Publication and Circulation of ASER Data</u>, consideration of the datasets produced and analysed by Student Data Services will be undertaken by

2.6 Publication of ASER Reports

- ASERs and their associated Development and Enhancement Plans, once approved by the QSRC, should be published on either departmental or faculty intranet sites, for viewing by UCL staff and students. They should also be made available to External Examiners.
- 2. Before publication, it is requested that colleagues exclude anything from their DEPs that could identify individuals. They are therefore asked not to name course tutors or individual students.

2.7 ASER and Student Evaluation Questionnaires

- 1. The proforma for Departments to summarise the information arising from consideration of SEQs has been designed to provide a clear overview of the main matters of interest arising from the analyses of the SEQs and any action taken. It can be found at Annex 9.2.2 ASER Departmental SEQ Summary. The SEQ summary should inform the Department's Report and Development and Enhancement Plan.
- 2. The following points should be considered in completion of the proformas for departmental and faculty consideration of the SEQ data:
 - It is advisable that analysis of the SEQs is conducted by Departments and academic units in time for the beginning of the following academic session;
 - ii. The departmental proformas should be submitted, as part of the ASER

3 Internal Quality Review (IQR)

3.1 Introduction

1. Internal Quality Review is UCL's central academic quality management and enhancement process. IQR is a rolling programme of peer review, in which all academic units of UCL¹ (as well as a small number of interdepartmental degree programmes) are reviewed on a six-yearly cycle.

2.

- 3. Scrutiny of the SES and supporting evidence by the review team.
- 4. A visit by the review team to the Department, normally lasting 1.5 working days when interviews with relevant staff and students of the Department take place. **See Annex 9.3.2 IQR Sample Timetable.**
- 5. Production of an IQR Report.
- 6. Preparation by the Department of a preliminary plan of action to be taken in response to the recommendations contained in the IQR Report.
- 7. Subsequent consideration by the Internal Quality Review Panel of (i) the IQR Report and (ii) the Department's action plan.

3.3 The Review Team

- 1. The review team will normally comprise six reviewers, a Review Manager and an Administrative Secretary. Three reviewers will be members of staff of UCL, one will be a student reviewer and two will be external reviewers. The members of review teams will be appointed by the Internal Quality Review Panel as follows:
 - i) A Senior Academic Member of staff i.e.: a Vice-Dean Education or Faculty Tutor (from a different Faculty to the Department under review), who will act as Chair.
 - ii) Academic or other senior practitioner. Teaching Fellow or Research Fellow (at least Grade 9).
 - iii) One Head of Department (from a different Faculty to the Department under review).
 - iv) One external reviewer who is a senior member of staff, either academic or administrative, of another institution of higher education with expertise in quality management and enhancement. * This reviewer will only form part of the Team where the IQR Panel decides that the evidence provided by the SES and supplementary documentation make it necessary.
 - v) One external reviewer who is an external subject specialist, with appropriate expertise, nominated by the Head of Department to be reviewed. This must NOT be the current or recent former External Examiner.
 - vi) One student reviewer who will be nominated by the UCL Union.
- 2. The role of the team leader.
 - i) To chair the review team's planning meeting, which will begin the Review Visit. In the planning meeting, the team leader will confirm the areas being explored by each member of the team. The team leader is not, however, expected to be solely responsible for, e.g., reading the SES or other briefing material or asking questions during interviews on the review visit; these are all shared responsibilities of all members of the review team.
 - ii) During the review visit, to introduce other members of the team and explain briefly the purpose of the visit at the start of each interview with staff or students.
 - iii) At the end of the review visit, to develop, in conjunction with the other members, a summary of the review team's main findings and conclusions.
 - iv) After the review visit, formally to approve the IQR Report once a draft of this has been agreed by all other members of the review team and 37.944 reW* nBT.6 590.

body. S/he should not have had any formal links with the Department under review within the previous 5 years. S/he will produce a structured report of maximum 1.5 sides of A4. It will set out any lines of enquiry required by the External Subject Expert.

Both External Reviewers play a vital role in assisting the Team to identify key issues to be explored during the visit to the department and play a full part in the Team's meetings with staff and students. In particular, External subject reviewers are able to identify excellence in pr

Ensure that for authorised users this electronic departmental information is saved and electronically archived so that handbooks and other items from previous years are still accessible for the IQR team. The websites for each Department must be archived or a Sharepoint site used to store all documentation reviewed for the purposes of maintaining an audit trail.

Discuss and confirm during the departmental briefing, the most efficient means of providing the SES and supporting material with the Department concerned. Discuss and confirm with the Department in advance how access to any departmental intranet sites for (i) UCL staff and (ii) external reviewers will be obtained.

Commission the External Subject Expert's Report. This will be a structured report of maximum 1.5 sides of A4 and will set out any lines of enquiry required by the External Subject Expert.

3.4 Departmental Contact

1. The Head of Department/Programme Co-ordinator may nominate a colleague (either academic or administrative) as a Departmental Contact. The Contact's essential role will then be to co-ordinate preparations within the Department for the review visit on behalf of the Head of Department. This will include practical arrangements for the visit, such as the provision of documentation, the drawing up of the visit timetable etc. The Departmental Contact can also help to ensure that the review team has an adequate understanding of the particular nature of the Department in advance of the visit to the Department.

3.5 Preliminary Briefing

At the start of the IQR process each year, Academic Services officers and the Office
of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) will make arrangements to brief
each of the following groups:

Students (including both undergraduate and taught graduate students, wherever the Department teaches at both levels, as well as graduate research students). The Head of Department.

A range of academic staff including senior education leads and professional services staff.

Key Education Staff including programme leads.

- 5. Where the subject of a review is an interdepartmental degree programme, those interviewed should normally include the Programme Co-ordinator and the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners.
- 6. Attendance at each interview session should normally be restricted to those being interviewed within that particular session. Departments should bear in mind the need to provide, as far as possible, a fully representative and balanced sample of staff and students for interview.

3.8 The IQR Report

- The administrative secretary will normally have main responsibility for drafting the Report in consultation with the Review Manager, Chair and other members of the team as appropriate.
- 2. The IQR Report should normally include (in the following order):

The composition of the review team for the current IQR.

A list of good practice in the Department. Review teams should seek out and record good practice where there is clear evidence that it has contributed to outstanding achievement in one or more areas of recruitment, progression, student satisfaction, student achievement and employability.

A list of recommendations for improvement in the Department's operations - the list should clearly distinguish improvements as either 'essential' or 'advisable' or 'desirable'. An essential' action point will be either (i) dictated by policy as defined in the UCL Academic Manual or (ii) concern an issue which the review team considers to represent a significant risk to the vision or direction of travel of the department, sufficient to warrant immediate action by the Department. An 'advisable' action point will be where the Department is not actually contravening UCL policy but the Team feels strongly that practice should be improved. A 'desirable' action point reflects a suggestion for improvement based on the personal views of the review team but which is not (at present) prescribed in the Academic Manual. In the case of 'essential' recommendations, it is expected that explicit timescales should be set for their implementation. These should be appropriate and achievable.

A statement from the External Subject Expert concerning whether the learning outcomes etc. of any sampled programmes are valid and current, whether academic standards are measured appropriately, and student achievement is equally appropriate and whether the academic staffing profile is diverse and able to cover the current programme requirements. Any major/minor programme amendment needed as a consequence of the External Subject Expert's statement will be dealt with via the existing programme amendment process.

Before the draft IQR Report is referred to the Department concerned, the administrative secretary to the IQR team should submit the list of recommendations included in the team's draft Report to the Quality Assurance Manager for confirmation that the proposed grading of recommendations as 'essential' or 'advisable' or 'desirable' is appropriate.

3. External Subject Experts' statements may raise issues concerning the currency and validity of programmes reviewed.

each recommendation in order to ensure a direct link between the recommendation and the action proposed and to promote accountability to ensure that it is performed. Recommendations should therefore not be made to 'the Faculty' or 'the Department' but to the specific role of a member (or members) of staff. However, this will be done by the Department as part of its action planning, as it is best placed to know who would be most suitable to implement a particular recommendation. A template will be provided for this purpose by the Administrative Secretary to the review.

- 5. Any recommendations in IQR Report which are to be addressed by the Faculty, another Department or bodies within UCL, rather than by the Department which is the subject of the review, should be clearly indicated as such in the concluding list of recommendations under the heading 'Matters for attention outside the Department'.
- 6. The Review Team would not normally make explicit recommendations for additional resources such as space. However, this may sometimes be necessary. Briefing will emphasise to Review Teams that they must scrutinise departments closely and they should be challenged to provide evidence that the root cause of an issue affecting the student experience is not within its control. Teams will insist on triangulation between what the Head of Department, the students and active academics are telling they f

Manager will write to the other Head(s) of Department(s) concerned, asking them to submit, by a specified deadline, a similar summary of action taken or planned.

- 5. Departments must:
 - i) Ensure that they make the final IQR Report and action plans accessible to students in the Department, e.g. by making these public on departmental intranets. It is proposed that reports and action plans also be circulated to students directly but the feasibility of this is currently under active consultation with the UCL Students' Union.
 - ii) Submit the IQR Report and action plan to the relevant DTC for discussion.
- 6. The IQR Report will be sent by the Quality Assurance Manager to the officers of the Faculty concerned, with a note which makes clear the Faculty's particular responsibilities to:
 - i) Submit the IQR Report and action plans to the FTC for discussion.
 - ii) Note and disseminate within the Faculty good practice and/or recommendations for improvement identified in the IQR Report.

3.10 IQR Panel/Academic Committee

- The Quality Assurance Manager will write to the Heads of Departments concerned, asking them to submit the final summary of action taken or planned by the Department in response to the recommendations of the IQR Report for submission to the IQR Panel.
- 2. On receipt of the action plans, responses and comments requested, the Quality Assurance Manager will refer these for consideration by the IQR Panel, in conjunction with the IQR Reports to which they refer.
- 3. Sustained dialogue between the Department which has been reviewed and those responsible for oversight of the review process is an essential element of IQR. Consequently, after the review visit has taken place, the Head or a nominated representative of the Department will attend the meeting of the IQR Panel which considers the IQR Report and action plan. The Head or other representative of the Department will be invited to discuss with th

3.11 Dissemination of Findings of IQR Report

1. Following the Panel's approval of responses to all the I-g-4(I)6(-g-4(I)6(Rhe)14q42.6 73

4 External Examining

1. External examining provides one of the principal means of maintaining UK academic standards within autonomous higher education providers. External Examining is therefore an important part of UCL's Quality Review Framework (QRF). The following regulations are applicable only to taught programmes of study, including Undergraduate, Initial Teacher Education and Postgraduate.

4.1 Criteria for Appointment

1.

- 14. Boards of Examiners should avoid appointing excessive numbers of External Examiners.
- 15. Exceptions to the foregoing stipulations may on occasion be permitted, for example, in the case of subjects taught only in a very small number of institutions or subjects with an unusually high number of specialisms. These exceptions must be granted by the Chair of Education Committee or their nominee.
- 16. External Examiners will be asked at the time of appointment, or continuation in appoint5(I)39External

13.2 Boards of Examiners

13.2.4 Candidate Anonymity

Annex 4.3.6 Covid 19 Boards of Examiners Emergency Procedures

- 2. The primary responsibilities of a Taught Programme External Examiner are to approve summative assessment tasks prior to students being assessed and to submit an annual report via Portico, based upon their professional judgement, about the following aspects of the programme(s) they examine:
 - i) Whether the academic standards set for the programme qualifications are appropriate.
 - ii) The extent to which the assessment processes are rigorous, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted within UCL's regulations and guidance.
 - iii) The standards of student performance in the programme, or parts of programmes, which they have been appointed to examine.
 - iv) To formally delegate authority to Sub Boards to make decisions on their behalf.
 - v) Where appropriate, the comparability of the standards and student achievements with those in some other higher education institutions in the UK.
 - vi) Identify comparable practice.
- 3. The External Examiner's Report Form requests External Examiners to suggest recommendations based on areas of concern not satisfactorily resolved at the meetings of the Board of Examiners.
- 4. The form must be completed on Portico (UCL's student and assessment record system) within one month of the final meeting of the Board of Examiners so that External Examiner's comments can be taken into account for the next academic session. The External Examiners Reporting procedures are set out in <u>Annex 9.4.1 Main Steps: Response to External Examiners' Reports</u>. Payment of the External Examiner's fee is authorised when the report is received via Portico by Student & Registry Services and within the one month timeframe.
- 5. External Examiners should consider the totality of the degree in respect of both the syllabus and examination². The major part of their role should be devoted to modules and the assessment elements which are the main determinants of the degree classification.
- 6. Departments and Divisions should invite External Examiners to comment on the appropriateness of new or amended methods of assessment.
- 7. All forms of assessment and dissertations must be comprehensively moderated

- make arrangements for External Examiners to review final projects and dissertations when they visit UCL for a Board of Examiners meeting.
- 12. External Examiners should also receive the assessments of borderline students where the External Examiner is examining a whole programme (not just a component).
- 13. An External Examiner may recommend to the Board of Examiners changes to the marks already arrived at by the Internal Examiners if these appear to them to be inappropriate. Where significant changes are recommended by the External Examiner it is essential for them to see all the assessments for that component of the assessment.
- 14. When reviewing students' assessments External Examiners should comply with data protection regulations, maintaining confidentiality of the content of students' work.
- 15. At least one External Examiner present at the final Board of Examiners is required to sign a statement that the examination has been conducted according to the general UCL regulations and the specific programme regulations to the best of their knowledge, and that they have agreed to the results.

4.4 Nomination and Appointment

4.4.1 Process of Nomination

- 1. The Chair of a Board of Examiners will nominate a new External Examiner for all or part of a taught programme.
- 2. New External Examiners must be appointed before the start of the first academic session so that they can approve assessment tasks in good time. Nominees must not be asked to undertake any duties until their appointment is confirmed.
- 3. In making a nomination, the Chair will take account of the appointment criteria specified in <u>Section 4.1 Criteria for Appointment</u>, including confirmation of approval of the nomination from the relevant Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners and the Quality Review Sub-Committee.
- 4. As part of the nomination process on Portico, the Chair will ensure that the External Examiner's Right to Work documentation is checked before approving the nomination (see further guidance below).

Further Guidance

- In order for External Examiners to complete the nomination form on-line External
 Examiners need access to a restricted area of Portico (UCL's student records system).
 NB This is particularly important because External Examiners will submit their annual
 reports to UCL also using an on-line tool constructed for this purpose.
- 2. Access is gained by providing all of the information listed below via the pre-nomination form which can be found below:

External Examiner Details for Nomination Form

Please note that you should no longer send the below details via email. Prospective External Examiners data should be collected, stored and processed in compliance with general data protection regulations (GDPR). For further information please see <u>UCL General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</u>.

Faculty
Board Chair
Board Administrator

Name of outgoing External Examiner

Academic Year duties of nominee will begin in

Please note that if any of the required information is missing you will be asked to provide it before the nomination can proceed as this data is used to generate the External Examiner Unique Personal Identifier.

Academic Services will request the information below from the External Examiner: Nominee's Date of Birth (

- 2. The student(s) spends a minimum of 3 hours observing educational practice (such as a combination of classroom/laboratory teaching, a Moodle site/other VLE and/or assignment brief/ other course documentation).
- 3. Prior to each observation the staff and student(s) discuss the context, aim and content of the observation.

4.

- 6 Student Academic Representation
- 6.1 Introduction

1.

- that programme.
- 3. All representatives should be members of an SSCC; the role should not be split between multiple students, nor should different representatives be invited to attend different meetings of the same SSCC.
- 4. All representatives should normally be appointed by process of election, except where this is not possible or there is insufficient interest in the role. Elections should include a 'Re-Open Nominations' (RON) option to encourage and support the accountability of representatives to the students they represent.
- 5. The appointment of representatives should be completed by the close of the October appointment schedule which is agreed and circulated by the Quality Review Sub-Committee in advance of each academic session. The details of representatives should be reported to the Students' Union via the designated contact in the Faculty.
- 6. Should a representative step down during their term of office prior to the term two reading week, the representative should be replaced by any method approved by the SSCC Co-Chairs.
- 7. The SSCC may choose to co-opt additional representatives to ensure a diverse membership which can effectively reflect students' views and perspectives.
- 8. Any co-opted or replacement representative's details should be reported to the Students' Union via the Faculty in the same manner as during appointment of the Student Academic Representatives in October.
- 9. All departments should take steps to ensure their representatives attend training arranged by the Students' Union as part of taking up their role.
- 10. The term of office for each representative is 12 months from the date of their appointment in October, or the end of their studies, whichever is sooner. At the close of each students' term of office, the role should be re-elected.
- 11. Any representative appointed at a later date through replacement or co-option will also end their term of office in October. SSCC meetings in advance of the October appointment of representatives may utilise the returning membership of the SSCC.

6.4 Staff Student Consultative Committee Meetings

- 1. SSCC membership in each department will be set following consultation between students and departmental staff but must include the following:
 - i) Head of Department (or Deputy)/Programme Director/Senior member of academic staff
 - ii) At least one member of staff responsible for undergraduate students
 - iii) At least one member of staff responsible for taught Masters students*
 - iv) At least one member of staff responsible for research students*
 - v) All student academic representatives in the department

- available to all students via a Department webpage, Moodle or any other appropriate method.
- 7. Where the Co-Chairs agree, the agenda points in 6.5 can be adapted to suit any SSCCs that have more specific needs, particularly postgraduate SSCCs.
- 8. The unconfirmed minutes of an SSCC meeting, as approved by the Co-Chairs, should be displayed to all students via a Department webpage, Moodle or any other appropriate method within ten working days of the meeting. These minutes should also be emailed to sscc@ucl.ac.uk within this timeframe.
- 9. A template for the SSCC agenda and minutes is available at Annex 9.6.1.

6.5 SSCC Terms of Reference

- 1. To act as a focal point of student engagement and partnership in the Department, bringing staff and students together to celebrate successes, to reflect on challenges, and to jointly identify priorities for change in the future.
- To report on priorities and agreed actions to the Department Teaching Committee (and/or doctoral-education equivalent), and to make recommendations where appropriate.
- 3. To ensure joint student and staff discussion at least once during every Academic Session of:
 - i) Information relating to internal and external systems of accountability, to include:
 - a) Professional, statutory and regulatory body reports and Department responses to recommendations
 - b) External examiners' reports and Department responses to recommendations
 - ii) Teaching (including dissemination of good practice and programme/module evaluation)
 - iii) Outcomes of student evaluations e.g. Module surveys, NSS, and action plans arising from these
 - iv) New and revised programme developments
 - v) Assessment and feedback
 - vi) Organisation and management (including timetabling and Departmental processes)
 - vii) Learning resources (including library, IT and other teaching/learning resources)
 - viii) Employment, employability and personal development
 - ix) Personal tutoring
 - x) Student-led projects or events, including UCL ChangeMaker projects
 - xi) The effectiveness of the SSCC and the actions of the Students' Union and Departments in response to it
 - xii) The priorities and actions of the Department Teaching Committee (and/or researcheducation equivalent)
 - xiii) Opportunity for the Department Representative to report on meetings they have attended at the Faculty level
- 4. To facilitate greater communication between students and staff, and report key actions, discussions and recommendations to the wider student body.
- 5. To identify and address areas of concern to students and staff.
- 6. To identify and disseminate examples of good practice.
- 7. To enable the engagement of students through their representatives with processes to enhance students' experiences, such as the Annual Student Experience Review, and the development of strategies to support research students' experiences.

6.6 Lead Department Representatives

Education Committee

Education Officer,

- 8 Academic Committee Review Panel
- 8.1 Policy

- 7. The Review Panel's provisional report will be sent to the Head of Department or other person responsible for the academic unit or programme concerned. That person will be entitled to notify normally within five working days necessary factual corrections to the report but will not be entitled otherwise to take issue with its findings and recommendations (except where the Head of Department or other person concerned claims that these findings and recommendations are based on factual error).
- 8. The Review Panel's final report and recommendations will be sent, via the Secretary to the Academic Committee, to the Chair of Academic Committee. A copy will be sent to the Head of Department or other person concerned for information. The Chair of Academic Committee will decide what, if any, further action is necessary in the matter.
- The Chair of the Academic Committee will report to the Academic Committee that a Review has taken place according to the required procedure and may, if he/she thinks it appropriate, report to the Academic Committee further details of the Review.
- 10. The recommendations of the Review Panel will indicate what follow-up action is expected on the part of the academic unit or programme concerned and within what period. The academic unit or programme concerned will, in consultation with the Review Panel, produce a written plan detailing the follow-up action that it will take in response to the recommendations for approval by the Chair of the Academic Committee.
- 11. The Chair of the Review Panel will check with the academic unit or programme concerned in due course that such follow-up action has been taken and will advise the Chair of the Academic Committee as necessary.

9 Core Programme Information

For Current UCL Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students, including MRes programmes

- 1) The following information should be included in a single location, available to current students, via handbooks, Moodle pages or online websites/intranets.
- 2) Where a section title or other text is marked (Centrally Provided) this text is available in Annex 9.9.1 Standard UCL Text for Core Programme Information. It should be copied and pasted without any amendments. However departments might like to add additional, local information as appropriate.
- 3) Where a section title is unmarked the department/faculty/school is invited to include the relevant information in a manner of their choosing.
- 4) Information can be provided in any order but the policy below is numbered for ease of reference.

9.1.1 Welcome to UCL

To include:

1) Provost's Welcome

9.1.2 Introduction to the Department and Parent Faculty

To include:

- 1) Introduction to the department and its history
- 2) Explanation of the relationship between department and faculty
- 3) Key staff members within the department and faculty

9.1.3 Departmental Staff Related to the Programme

To include:

 Explanation to students of the roles of the module and programme leaders and other key staff involved in programme delivery

9.1.4 Key Dates

To include:

- 1) Term dates, exam/assessment periods, core activities (Centrally Provided)
- 2) Department- and faculty-level events and key dates
- How UCL and the department will communicate with students (Centrally Provided)

9.1.5 Hours of Study

To include:

- 1) Hours of Study (Central and Local)
- 2) Personal Study Time
- 3) Attendance Requirements (Centrally Provided)

9.1.6 Our Expectations of Students

To include:

Explanation of the expectations (Centrally Provided) and links to policies.

9.1.7 Programme Structure

To include:

- 1) The structure of the programme, duration, credits, qualifications award(s)
- 2) Projects, placements and study abroad (if applicable)
- 3) Professional accreditation (if applicable)
- 4)

- 2) What are the marking criteria and learning outcomes?3) What marking scale is in use on the programme?4)

- 3) Information on how students can access support/information related to Equality and Diversity (Centrally Provided)
 4) Information about UCL's Zero Tolerance policy on harassment and bullying
- Information about UCL's Zero Tolerance policy on harassment and bullying (Centrally Provided)

9.1.16 Employability and Careers

To include: