

Chapter 3

Annual Monitoring, Periodic Review and Internal Audit

Updated October 2020

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
INTRODUCTION	3
ANNUAL MONITORING	4
Annual Monitoring of modules and programmes	6
Departmental Annual Monitoring.....	6
Table 1: Departmental Planning Units (updated October 2020).....	6
Affirmation of Standards and Quality.....	8
Quality Enhancement Plans	8
Annual Monitoring for PSRBs.....	9
Annual Review of Academic Partnerships	10
University Annual Monitoring Report.....	11
Academic Assurance Report (Board of Governors)	11
PERIODIC REVIEW.....	12
Table 2: ‘Edge Hill University Periodic Review Cycle’ (updated October 2020).....	12
Programme Transfers between Departments.....	14
INTERNAL AUDIT	15
Developmental Enquiry.....	15
Extraordinary Audit	15
Departmental Risk Assessment.....	15

INTRODUCTION

Annual Monitoring, Periodic Review and Internal Audit are the principal mechanisms by which Edge Hill University ensures the continuing standards and quality of its academic provision as defined by the Core and Common Practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education¹ and Quality and Standards Conditions B1-5 of the Office for Students' Regulatory Framework for higher education in England².

Annual Monitoring considers comprehensive evidence on programme performance and the student learning experience and alerts the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC)³ - and through it, the Academic Board - to any internal or external factors that could place academic provision including academic partnerships⁴ at risk. It also enables the identification of good practice for wider dissemination within the University for the purpose of quality enhancement⁵. Outputs from departmental annual monitoring are used to inform the University's academic planning⁶ and budget-setting processes.

The purpose of **Periodic Review** is to review and evaluate all taught provision within an academic department or other grouping of cognate programmes in the context of its performance, aims and aspirations in a broader University, regional and national context. Each academic department undergoes Periodic Review once every five years.

The purpose and process of **Internal Audit** varies according to particular requirements and may *risk-focused*, e.g. Departmental Risk Assessment or Extraordinary Audit; or *enhancement-focused*, e.g. Developmental Enquiry.

The University processes described below also take account of Advice and Guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation which supports the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (published November 2018)⁷.

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.

² www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/.

³ For AQEC's constitution and terms of reference see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/08-academic-governance.pdf.

⁴ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/05-academic-partnerships.pdf.

⁵ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/01-the-quality-strategy-management-of-quality-and-standards.pdf.

⁶ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf.

⁷ www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/monitoring-and-evaluation.

ANNUAL MONITORING

Annual monitoring is one of the key mechanisms by which Edge Hill University systematically ensures the continuing standards and quality of its academic provision and is based on the premise that:

- Staff at all levels of the Institution are responsible and accountable for maintaining standards and enhancing the quality of students' learning opportunities.
- Shared responsibility and accountability require frank and open exchanges between departments, Faculties, support services and the University (Directorate).
- The processes by which both opportunities and threats to standards and quality are defined, identified and assessed should draw fully on a range of expertise and experience from within and outwith the University's executive and deliberative structures.

Key characteristics of Annual Monitoring are that it is:

- **Evidence-based** – this includes staff and student feedback e.g. module leader reports, undergraduate Student Pulse Surveys⁸, minutes of Programme Boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCFs)⁹ and other evidence of feedback as appropriate; reports of external examiners¹⁰ and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs); statistical data on student recruitment¹¹, retention¹², progression¹³ and completion¹⁴; National Student Survey (NSS)¹⁵; and Graduate Outcomes¹⁶ and Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO)¹⁷ data on employment and earnings outcomes of graduates.
- **Evaluative** (rather than 'descriptive')
- **Predictive** (as well as 'reflective').

⁸ Or module and programme surveys for PGT provision.

⁹ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 6 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/06-quality-assurance-of-learning-and-teaching.pdf.

¹⁰ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 2 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/02-external-examiners.pdf.

¹¹ To comprise applications, conversions and enrolments. Data may be disaggregated by entry qualification and protected characteristic.

¹² The **Retention Rate** is the % of students registered on the programme who returned to the University the following academic year (however briefly), including those who are repeating the year, interrupting or transferring to another programme. This measure is not meaningful for finalists so it is only calculated for non-finalists.

¹³ The **Progression Rate** is the % of students who 'pass' the year and are eligible to progress to the following year, or who have completed the programme (if they are finalists). Any students who do not have a result yet because they have interrupted, or are referred or deferred, are excluded from the calculation.

¹⁴ **Completion** is where a student has finished a programme of study and been awarded a university qualification.

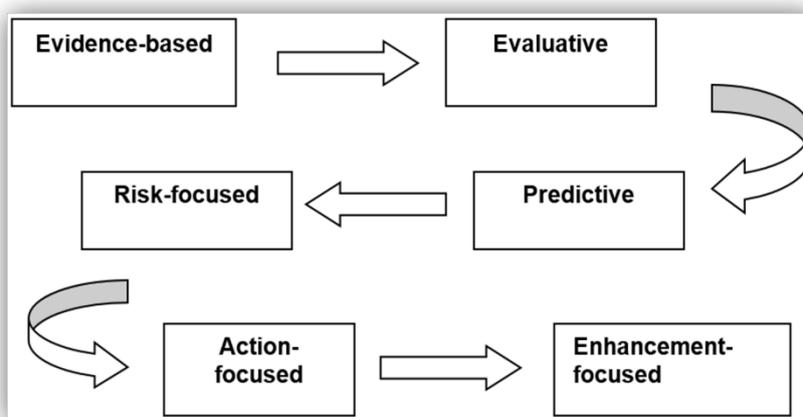
¹⁵ www.thestudentsurvey.com/.

¹⁶ www.graduateoutcomes.ac.uk. Replacement for the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey w.e.f. 2020.

¹⁷ <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/a-beginners-guide-to-longitudinal-education-outcomes-leo-data/>.

- **Risk-focused**¹⁸ - drawing upon the experience and expertise of staff and other stakeholders¹⁹ to identify and evaluate opportunities and threats. In helping AQEC to form a view about a department's ability and capacity to manage risk Annual Monitoring plays an important part in confirming confidence in the University's managers and staff.
- **Action-focused** – proposing actions to *mitigate* risk.
- **Enhancement-focused**²⁰ – enabling the identification and evaluation of good practice that is suitable for general dissemination for the purpose of enhancing quality across the Institution.

Key characteristics of Annual Monitoring



The Annual Monitoring process described in this chapter is focused primarily on academic departments, however the engagement of Faculties and academic-related professional support services enables full and holistic consideration of issues affecting academic standards and quality at Institutional level; for example, outputs from Annual Monitoring can be used to inform Directorate decisions on academic strategy and resources. The minuted discussions of Faculty Boards (or their sub-committees) and AQEC help assure staff and students that issues raised by them during Annual Monitoring have received appropriate consideration. While fixed-point Annual Monitoring²¹ provides a clear focus for identifying and resolving risks, monitoring itself should be continuous²² and it is inevitable that some matters will require action outside the annual reporting cycle. To this end, all

¹⁸ For a more detailed description of the University's approach to academic risk management see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/01-the-quality-strategy-management-of-quality-and-standards.pdf.

¹⁹ Who may include: relevant academic and professional communities; external examiners; regulatory bodies; collaborative partners; employers; service users and carers; and graduate alumni.

²⁰ For a detailed description of the University's approach to academic quality enhancement see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/01-the-quality-strategy-management-of-quality-and-standards.pdf.

²¹ Departmental annual monitoring typically takes place in Semester 1.

²² For example, AQEC receives updates on progress against Quality Enhancement Plans (QEPs) during the academic year, typically through the receipt of Faculty quality committee minutes.

staff are made aware of their responsibility to alert managers to any issues affecting standards and quality that require the immediate attention of the Directorate, PVC Deans of Faculty, the Director of Quality Assurance, AQEC or other relevant Academic Board committees.

Annual Monitoring of modules²³ and programmes

Academic departments are responsible for the detailed evaluation of module performance and holistic consideration of issues affecting standards and quality at programme level. Faculties have oversight of module and programme monitoring occurring within departments²⁴ - **as a minimum**, this considers:

- Module first-time and overall pass rates²⁵;
- Student Pulse Survey data²⁶ or, for PGT programmes, module and programme evaluations;
- Retention, progression and completion data disaggregated by relevant protected characteristics²⁷;
- External examiner reports and programme teams' responses²⁸

Departmental Annual Monitoring

Departmental Annual Monitoring is informed by programme-level monitoring and assesses an academic department's ability and capacity to manage risk associated with academic standards and the quality of students' learning opportunities. The annual monitoring process at department level is managed centrally by the Academic Quality and Development Unit (AQDU) and consists of a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) of Academic Standards and Quality for all departments listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Departmental Planning Units (updated October 2020)

Planning Unit	Department
Faculty of Arts and Sciences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biology 2. Business School²⁹ 3. Computer Science 4. Creative Arts³⁰

²³ Programmes in Health, Social Care and Medicine that follow a non-modular structure consider this evidence as it relates to each Year of Study.

²⁴ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/01-the-quality-strategy-management-of-quality-and-standards.pdf.

²⁵ First time pass rate includes students who have passed a module in their first attempt at the final assessment point.

²⁶ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 6 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/06-quality-assurance-of-learning-and-teaching.pdf.

²⁷ www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics.

²⁸ External examiners confirm that the standards set at validation meet or exceed national threshold standards and are comparable with similar provision of other UK higher education providers - See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 2 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/02-external-examiners.pdf.

²⁹ To include the PGCert Teaching in Higher Education.

³⁰ Formally the departments of Media and Performing Arts.

Planning Unit	Department
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Edge Hill Language Centre³¹ 6. English, History and Creative Writing 7. Geography and Geology 8. Law and Criminology 9. Psychology 10. Social Sciences 11. Sport and Physical Activity
Faculty of Health Social Care and Medicine ³²	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allied Health Professions 2. Applied Health and Social Care 3. Medical Education 4. Nursing and Midwifery Education³³ 5. Social Work
Faculty of Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children, Education and Communities 2. Early Years Education 3. Professional Learning 4. Secondary and Further Education

A factual DBA report summarising the Department's performance during the previous academic year is prepared in partnership with the Head of Department and a representative from the Strategic Planning and Policy Unit (SPPU).

In assessing standards the report considers:

- The Department's academic portfolio in the reporting year including any academic partnership arrangements;
- academic and professional benchmarking;
- external examiners' reports, and instances of academic malpractice; and,
- Quality Enhancement Plans (updated from the previous annual monitoring round).

In assessing indicators of quality the report reviews 3-year data against Key Performance Indicators³⁴ for:

- Student attainment – first-time and overall module pass rates, progression, retention and degree outcomes;
- Student satisfaction – National Student Survey data; and,
- Graduate Outcomes – employment, highly skilled employment or further study³⁵ and Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data.

³¹ Credit-bearing provision comprises the University Foundation Certificate International Foundation Programme and foreign Language Study modules. Also includes the level 3 Fastrack programme.

³² A new School-based structure was introduced in the Faculty in 2019-20 however departments retain their individual identities for monitoring and review purposes.

³³ Combined department from 2020-21. Includes programmes transferred from the Partnerships and Practice Learning Unit in September 2019.

³⁴ Key Performance Indicators are defined by the University's Directorate (senior management team).

³⁵ HESA defines "Employed or Studying" as graduates who say they are working or studying (or both) as a percentage of all those who are working or studying or seeking work. All other categories are excluded from

In **assessing other areas of potential academic risk** the report considers:

- The department's academic portfolio in the context of Institutional, national and international drivers; and,
- student recruitment data including applications, conversions and enrolments at programme level.

Heads of Department are provided with detailed datasets disaggregated by relevant protected characteristics to enable a full evaluation of their portfolio.

Affirmation of Standards and Quality

DBA reports contain a judgement on threshold Standards and Quality³⁶. Reports are required to affirm, based on consideration of the evidence, that the Department continues to meet the following Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (March 2018)³⁷:

1. The academic standards of courses meet the requirement of the relevant national qualifications framework³⁸.
2. The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.
3. Courses are well-designed, provide high quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
4. From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

Judgements are reached by triangulating external examiner reports and responses, PSRB reports (where available) and 'contextualised' performance data. Beyond threshold, comparisons are made between programme performance data and a set of Institutional benchmarks set by the Directorate. Any data which falls below Institutional benchmark is discussed and contextualised with the Head of Department as part of the DBA process and actions formally recorded in a Quality Enhancement Plan (below).

Quality Enhancement Plans

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is divided into two sections:

1. Agreed actions in response to indicators of Standards and Quality (performance data); and
2. A summary of good practice linked to evidenced improvements/ exemplary performance against Institutional benchmarks.

this indicator. The TEF defines "Highly Skilled Employment/Study" as the proportion of graduates who were available for employment and had secured graduate-level employment or further study (any level).

³⁶ i.e. whether programmes have met or not met the national Expectations for Standards and Quality as set out in the [UK Quality Code, p3](#).

³⁷ Where a positive affirmation cannot be made, it is addressed directly through revisions to the Quality Enhancement Plan.

³⁸ 'Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland' (QAA, 2014) www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_14.

In part 1 of the QEP, Heads of Department formally respond to any data which falls below benchmark. Responses state concisely what is being done and / or will be done to improve performance (in the spirit of SMART action planning). This means that actions are linked directly to programmes or areas where performance has fallen below the benchmark set by the University. Actions should be developed and refined using feedback received from students (NSS, Pulse Survey, PGT module and programme evaluations, programme boards/ SSCFs and committee representation), staff and external examiners (via in-year feedback and their annual reports). Actions are set at an appropriate, departmental level and need not contain operational details.

Part 2 of the QEP provides a summary of specific features of good practice with the potential for wider dissemination across departments and/ or Faculties. Good practice citations are linked to external examiners' reports, previous validation and/ or periodic review reports, evidenced improvements in performance data between academic years or programmes/ subject areas which show exemplary performance against Institutional benchmarks.

Faculties consider if the issues raised by the data have been addressed sufficiently and where this is deemed not to be the case, plans are referred back for further work. QEPs are submitted to AQEC³⁹ for final approval along with the Department's DBA Report.

Part 1 of the QEP is considered a live document which can be updated by departments at any time during the academic year when data becomes available or progress has been made. Faculties monitor progress against the actions contained within part 1 of the QEP. During the year Faculties receive updated plans for discussion, exploring where updates have not been provided or if updates require more detail. All progress updates are expected to be completed by the end of the academic year when updated QEPs are received by AQEC⁴⁰. The Academic Quality and Development Unit uses the final versions of QEPs as part of the evidence for the next Annual Monitoring round.

Departmental Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) comprise a Desk-Based Assessment Report and a Quality Enhancement Plan.

Department AMRs are made available to staff and students via the AQDU Wiki page⁴¹ and Programme and/ or Faculty Boards⁴² respectively.

The AQDU produces an overview document which highlights key themes from departmental annual monitoring. As well as providing the basis of discussion by AQEC⁴³, this overview also informs production of the University Annual Monitoring Report (below).

Annual Monitoring for PSRBs

Programmes that are regulated by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) may be required to submit external monitoring reports to meet their specific requirements.

³⁹ Normally at the February meeting.

⁴⁰ Normally at the June meeting.

⁴¹ <https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu> (EHU staff login required).

⁴² Or delegated committee.

⁴³ At its February meeting.

These will normally be received for approval by Faculty Boards (or their committees) but should be referred for additional consideration by AQEC where any issues requiring University level attention are identified.

A full description of the Departmental Annual Monitoring process and associated documentation is contained in 'Preparing for Departmental Annual Monitoring: A Guide for Contributing Authors of Desk-Based Assessment Reports'⁴⁴.

Annual Review of Academic Partnerships

Edge Hill University develops academic partnerships with a wide range of third-party organisations, from UK-based employers, colleges and awarding bodies to overseas higher education providers, for the delivery of modules or programmes leading to the award of University credit or qualifications; or the provision of student learning opportunities including work placements, international exchanges and arrangements for entry with advanced standing (articulation). The Annual Review of Academic Partnerships operates in conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring but is a separate process reflecting the level of risk associated with partnership working. Full details are provided elsewhere in this Handbook⁴⁵, however for partnerships in Category C and above including Higher and Degree Apprenticeships this entails the completion of an **Annual Review Form** at the start of each new academic year for any provision delivered in the previous academic year. This is usually completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor with support and input from the Faculty Partnership Lead, and supporting evidence includes external examiner reports, retention and other performance data, and student feedback. Annual Review may also revisit current programme Delivery Plans, due diligence, online marketing materials and staffing arrangements. Completed forms receive Faculty-level scrutiny and approval⁴⁶ prior to their submission to AQEC⁴⁷, which:

- assesses, on the basis of the evidence provided, the ability and capacity of the partner organisation (working with the University) to identify and manage academic risk;
- provides feedback to Faculties, departments and partners or, where necessary and appropriate, requests additional information from them; and
- considers any additional scrutiny and/ or support for a partner or host University department that may be indicated by the Annual Review Form or other relevant evidence.

An Academic Partnerships Annual Monitoring Report⁴⁸ provides an Institutional summary of all partner-delivered programmes and is received by AQEC at its March/ April meeting. This summary informs the production of the University Annual Monitoring Report (below).

⁴⁴ Available at <https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Key+Guidance+Documents> (EHU staff login required).

⁴⁵ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/05-academic-partnerships.pdf.

⁴⁶ With representatives of partner organisations attending by invitation.

⁴⁷ At its February meeting.

⁴⁸ Jointly authored by the AQDU and Faculties.

University Annual Monitoring Report

The University Annual Monitoring Report, which is received by AQEC⁴⁹ and approved by the Academic Board⁵⁰, assesses and evaluates the key risks identified through the annual monitoring of departments and their programmes including the annual review of academic partnerships. It is presented in the context of Faculty Academic Development Plans⁵¹ and the outcomes of annual budget-setting in so far as these impact the delivery and quality of both current and planned provision. Drafted by the AQDU on behalf of the PVC (Student Experience) & University Secretary⁵², the University AMR highlights issues for attention by the Academic Board, Faculties and professional support services, giving particular emphasis to the longer-term and strategic implications of its assessment of risk in the context of external market and regulatory conditions. The University AMR is a key mechanism in promoting a culture of mutual accountability for the maintenance of standards and enhancement of quality and in so doing addresses the following audiences:

- **Academic departments and academic partner organisations**, which expect to see the broad concerns raised by them through the Annual Monitoring process have been considered and responded to; and
- **AQEC and Academic Board**, which require assurance that the University's academic governance is being managed appropriately.

Academic Assurance Report (Board of Governors)

The Academic Assurance Report (AAR) provides supporting evidence of the maintenance of standards and quality for the Board of Governors' annual accountability return to the Office for Students (OfS)⁵³. Authored by the Director of Quality Assurance on behalf of Academic Board and informed by the University AMR, the AAR maps current Institutional processes and outcomes to the OfS's General Ongoing Conditions of Registration, specifically Conditions B1-5 for Quality and Standards, in order to confirm that:

- The University is delivering successful outcomes for all of its students which are recognised and valued by employers and/ or enable further study.
- Courses meet the academic standards described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) at level 4 and higher.
- Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
- From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
- There are processes in place to ensure that qualifications hold their value at the point of qualification, and over time, in line with sector recognised standards.

⁴⁹ At its June meeting.

⁵⁰ At its July meeting.

⁵¹ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf.

⁵² Also the Chair of AQEC.

⁵³ For more detail on the Office for Students and associated sector regulation see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/01-the-quality-strategy-management-of-quality-and-standards.pdf.

A draft AAR is approved by the November meeting of Academic Board with the final version received for consideration by the Board of Governors at its November meeting.

PERIODIC REVIEW

The purpose of Periodic Review is to review and evaluate all taught provision in a particular department/ subject area or other cognate grouping of programmes (planning unit⁵⁴), in order to:

- Confirm that the academic standards set at programme validation remain appropriate and are being demonstrated by students through assessment and achievement of their awards.
- Confirm that the quality of the student learning experience is being maintained and enhanced.
- Address, in an holistic way, any issues concerning curricula, teaching, learning and assessment, student support, staffing and resources, course organisation and quality assurance that apply to the department's whole provision.
- Consider the department's academic strategy and direction in the context of the University's mission, provision and students as well as national and regional agendas, exploring new areas for programme development or the re-focusing or closure of existing provision⁵⁵.
- Consider trends in student recruitment, retention, attainment and progression, including graduate employment, across the whole of the department's portfolio from sub-degree to Masters level.
- Capture the 'voices' of current students, employers and alumni (through focus groups).
- Use evidence of standards and quality to support continued approval of the department's programmes and awards.

Periodic reviews are programmed on a five-year cycle, the schedule and any changes to it being confirmed annually by AQEC:

Table 2: 'Edge Hill University Periodic Review Cycle' (updated October 2020)

Year no. in cycle	Academic Year	Faculty	Unit of periodic review
1	2020-2021	FAS	Performing Arts ⁵⁶
		FAS	Sport and Physical Activity ⁵⁷
		FOE	Secondary and Further Education ⁵⁸

⁵⁴ See also Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf.

⁵⁵ Informing discussions that will take place during Departmental Academic Planning – see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

⁵⁶ Deferred from 2019-20. Next scheduled review in 2023-24 (Department of Creative Arts).

⁵⁷ Deferred from 2019-20. Next scheduled review in 2024-25.

⁵⁸ Deferred from 2019-20. Next scheduled review in 2024-25.

Year no. in cycle	Academic Year	Faculty	Unit of periodic review
		FHSCM	Midwifery ⁵⁹
		FHSCM	Social Work
		FHSCM	Medical Education
		Institution	Taught Degrees Framework ⁶⁰
2	2021-2022	FAS	Biology
		FAS	Business School ⁶¹
		FAS	Computer Science
		FAS	English, History and Creative Writing
		FAS	Geography and Geology ⁶²
		FAS	Social Sciences ⁶³
		FOE	Early Years Education
3	2022-2023	FAS	Law and Criminology
		FOE	Children, Education and Communities
		FOE	Professional Learning
4	2023-2024	FAS	Creative Arts ⁶⁴
		FAS	Edge Hill Language Centre ⁶⁵
		FAS	Psychology
		FHSCM	Applied Health and Social Care
		FHSCM	Allied Health Professions
5	2024-2025	FAS	Sport and Physical Activity
		FOE	Secondary and Further Education
		FHSCM	Nursing and Midwifery Education ⁶⁶

An Institution-level⁶⁷ panel drawn from the membership of the Validation and Audit Standing Panel⁶⁸ makes judgements on the overall academic health of the department and its programmes based on its reading of review documentation and separate discussions held with staff, students and employers. Periodic Review reports are received by AQEC where the review panel's recommendations are considered and continued approval of all validated

⁵⁹ Hybrid review/ revalidation deferred from 2019-20. Next scheduled review in 2024-25.

⁶⁰ Using a variation of the process for Internal Audit (see below).

⁶¹ To include the PGCert Teaching in Higher Education.

⁶² Deferred from 2020-21. Next scheduled review in 2025-26.

⁶³ Deferred from 2020-21. Next scheduled review in 2025-26.

⁶⁴ Formerly the departments of Media and Performing Arts.

⁶⁵ Credit-bearing provision comprises the University Foundation Certificate International Foundation Programme and foreign Language Study modules. Also to include the level 3 Fastrack programme.

⁶⁶ Combined department from 2020-21. Includes programmes transferred from the Partnerships and Practice Learning Unit in September 2019.

⁶⁷ Faculties conduct their own internal scrutiny of departments and their submissions prior to Institution- level review, for example the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine conducts a critical review of departments during the year preceding a Periodic Review.

⁶⁸ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf, also <https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=71188453> (EHU staff login required).

programmes normally confirmed although individual programmes may be referred to the host Faculty for modification or re-validation before the next student intake. Periodic Review considers any programmes delivered by or with third-party organisations (academic partners) for the purpose of continuing programme approval, however these are also reviewed individually as part of a separate five-year cycle of partner and delivery re-approval⁶⁹.

Faculties are advised against instigating standalone re-validation in the year of, or year before, a department's scheduled Periodic Review, although circumstances may make this unavoidable, such as the need to implement revised PSRB standards. Where a programme's re-validation⁷⁰ is scheduled *in same year* as Periodic Review, the requirement for a Critical Review document is replaced by the standard validation documentation and the Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) completed in the same year as part of the Annual Monitoring process. If scheduled separately, Periodic Review and re-validation events should ideally be held three months apart to allow some opportunity for the review's outcomes to inform the validation process.

Where Periodic Review is scheduled for *the year following re-validation* the review process is determined by the re-validation's scope, for example:

- where the majority of the department's programmes were re-validated the previous year, the requirement for a Critical Review document is replaced by the DBA, which supports continuing programme approval; or,
- where a minority of programmes were re-validated, a standard periodic review is completed.

Application to AQEC for deferment of a scheduled Periodic Review is normally supported by a Departmental Risk Assessment (see section 3, below). Reviews may be deferred for one year only.

Programme Transfers between Departments

Where programme transfer between departments creates the risk of individual programmes not being reviewed within a five-year period, the DBA process, carried out at the next available monitoring point, supports continuing programme approval.

A full description of the periodic review process and associated documentation is contained in '[Preparing for Periodic Review: A Guide for Panels and Departments](#)'.

⁶⁹ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/05-academic-partnerships.pdf.

⁷⁰ See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf.

INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal audits are commissioned by AQEC, LTC or the Directorate and may be prompted by:

- a) The University's strategic imperatives;
- b) reports of external examiners, Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, annual monitoring, validation or periodic review; or,
- c) by specific request of Academic Board committees, the Directorate, Faculties or professional support services.

Internal audits are serviced by staff of the Academic Quality and Development Unit who convene panels, distribute documentation, minute meetings and produce final reports according to timescales set by the commissioners (c, above). Whilst panels are normally constituted by members of the Validation and Audit Standing Panel⁷¹, additional specialist expertise may be co-opted which could include external contributors.

Developmental Enquiry

Thematic and enhancement-focused by nature, Developmental Enquiries (DEs) explore specific aspects of the learner experience; recent DEs have focused on cross-Faculty approaches to managing placement-based learning, the joint honours student experience and developing students' assessment literacy. Written and oral evidence is taken from key Institutional stakeholders and the report, which is normally received by LTC, contains recommendations for development as well as highlighting good practice for wider dissemination. LTC decides upon any action to be taken in response to the report's recommendations and progress is monitored through separate update reports, the timing and frequency of which are determined by the committee.

Extraordinary Audit

An Extraordinary Audit may be convened at very short notice and enables a rapid response to a specific presenting issue, incident or set of circumstances, for example an adverse external examiner's report. An Institutional panel chaired by a senior manager is convened and considers written and oral evidence with a report submitted to AQEC and the Directorate within two to six weeks of commissioning.

Departmental Risk Assessment

Whether or not academic provision is deemed to be at risk depends on the interaction between the internal or external threats to which it is exposed and its owner's capacity to manage these, resulting in an evaluation of net risk; thus a department operating in a high-risk environment may be assigned a rating of medium or even low net risk based on its perceived ability to manage those risks. Departmental Risk Assessment is a useful tool for confirming the continuing academic health of a department or programme, enabling swift conclusions to be drawn and any immediate support needs identified.

⁷¹See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/04-programme-and-module-approval-and-modification.pdf, also <https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=71188453> (EHU staff login required).

Commissioned by AQEC and conducted by the Academic Quality & Development Unit, Departmental Risk Assessments normally comprise the department's most recent Annual Monitoring Report and updated Quality Enhancement Plan, accompanied by the reporting officer's summary estimation of net risk. Departmental Risk Assessment may also be used to support an application to defer a scheduled Periodic Review which is considered by AQEC at its next available meeting (reviews may be deferred for one year only).