UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER   Paper No ASQEC/19/21

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE
17 June 2019   Agenda Item 12

CONTINUAL ASSURANCE OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT (CAQE) FOR VALIDATED PARTNERS – PILOT OPERATIONAL PLAN

COVER SHEET

In attendance to present: Mrs N Bartholomew

Action is required of the Committee as indicated below.

To approve the proposed pilot.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER   Paper No ASQEC/19/21

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE
17 June 2019   Agenda Item 12

CONTINUAL ASSURANCE OF QUALITY ENHANCEMENT (CAQE) FOR VALIDATED
PARTNERS
PILOT OPERATIONAL PLAN

Rationale for change:

This paper outlines the revised process for the ongoing monitoring and enhancement of collaborative arrangements with validated partners. This revision aims to align programme monitoring processes to the Continuous Assurance for Enhancement Cycle (CAEC) that has been implemented internally at Ulster, and to subsequently streamline annual reporting undertaken by Faculty Partnership Managers (FPMs).

The QAA UK Quality Code stipulates that 'the awarding organisation will be accountable for assuring the overall quality and academic standards of the provision, regardless of the type of partnership' (QAA, 2018). The extant annual monitoring process for validated partners requires each course committee to submit to the University a self-evaluation report relating to the previous year's cohort. This report comments on a range of quality assurance issues and metrics with appended evidence such as External Examiner reports, FPM reports, Institutional Reviews and minutes from Course Committees and Staff/Student Consultative Committees.

This method of reporting has yielded a number of weaknesses, namely that:

- a number of programmes have persistent issues, particularly in relation to student recruitment and retention;
- there is an increased administrative burden on Faculty staff and central departments due to completion and review of lengthy report documentation.
- the evidence of enhancement resulting from the extant annual monitoring process is not convincing;

CAEC (to be re-named as CAQE - Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement) has been implemented successfully as an annual monitoring process within the University since the beginning of academic year 18/19. The cycle includes the categorisation of programmes according to a range of quantitative and qualitative metrics which are reviewed annually and advised to Faculties. Programmes that do not meet baseline expectations are subject to targeted monitoring activity through supportive measures reporting and Faculty interventions. These are reviewed at Associate Dean (Education) monthly meetings with the PVC (Education).

CAQE outline for NI Partner Colleges:

It is proposed that a version of CAQE will be piloted for validated partner provision from AY 19/20 to:

- enhance Faculty oversight of local quality assurance processes within validated partner institutions
- replace the Self Evaluation Report and reduce administrative burden
- enable targeted enhancement activity and action planning

- monitor articulation with Ulster University programmes

As per the University CAQE process, Quality Enhancement will review programme performance data, and NI Partner Institutions will be advised of outcomes (October). A range of quantitative and qualitative metrics has been determined for collaborative provision (Annex 1). Programme cohort sizes within partner institutions can be below the University's minimum target (15) and it is acknowledged where cohorts are small, performance metrics expressed as a percentage may not be indicative of programme issues or performance. As such, absolute numbers will be taken into account where appropriate.

Where programmes meet or exceed University benchmarks, they will remain within their allocated revalidation year, within the quinquennial revalidation cycle. Programme teams, in collaboration with the FPM, will maintain local quality monitoring and enhancement through established processes namely Course Committees, Staff Student Consultative Committees and Board of Examiners. The Faculty Partnership Manager reports annually on the programmes associated with their Faculty for which they have responsibility and will be used to inform categorisation of programmes requiring Quality Review. This report form and guidance notes have been revised and streamlined (Annex 2) as CAQE will provide a fully articulated approach to annual monitoring. Annual monitoring through CAQE will determine whether a programme remains on the revalidation cycle year on year.

Where programmes do not meet baseline expectations, programme teams in collaboration with the FPM, will be prompted to review the datasets, explore the issues that are associated with below baseline performance and generate action plans. Action plans will be submitted to Quality Enhancement (November) using the template provided (Annex 3). Action plans will be distributed to Faculty ADEs and FPMs for review. If action plans are agreed with no revisions, then programme teams will gain approval to implement and monitor these enhancement activities. The FPM submits a report to the Collaborative Partnerships Forum which is conducted 3 times per academic year. The reports will be used as a mechanism to regularly monitor programme enhancements until the next CAQE cycle.

Should action plans require revision, programme teams will then be subject to a Supportive Measures Panel (December) to explore issues in greater depth and to revise actions. Four panel meetings, one per faculty, will be scheduled over one day and conducted through video conferencing for expediency. Panels will be conducted by the Associate Dean (Education) from the associated Faculty, in conjunction with the Faculty FPM and representation from Quality Enhancement. The Course Director, HE Coordinator and Curriculum Director from the partner institution will report to panel. Programmes enrolling cohort sizes of below 10 students may submit action plans or attend Panel meetings to report on their business model and strategy to grow student numbers. All data will be considered holistically during review (including First-sit data and NSS where available), but only that data which is sensitive to identifying a need for enhancement will be enacted upon.

Potential outcomes from each Quality Review Panel are as follows:

- Action plans to be revised and implemented
- Programme revalidation to be expedited within the current cycle
- Student intakes suspended pending further review

Quality Enhancement may undertake themed audits after evaluating the outcomes from Quality Review Panels.

A report from The Associate Deans (Education) will report on the progress of validated partner action plans through monthly meetings with the PVC (Education).

A CAQE process map for validated Partners is outlined in Annex 4

Annex 1

Quality Monitoring Datasets for NI Partner Colleges

Data generation:

Cohort size >10 – review cohort performance (by year)

Cohort size <10 – FPM to report on business model and action plan to build cohort size

University Benchmarks*:*

Attrition:

- Fd Degree - 10% (or attrition of 2+ students if cohort <10)

- 2Y3S – 10%

- Access course - 20%

First Sit:

- Year 1 – 65%

- Year 2 – 70%

Success 2 – End of Year:

- Fd Degree, Yr 1 - 75% progression

- Fd Degree, Yr 2 – 80% progression

- Access Course – 70% progression

Other Course Data:

- EE/PSRB reports

- CA3/revalidation outcomes

- FPM Annual Report

Programme falls below required Benchmarks:

Attrition: >3% below benchmark

Success 2 (End of Year):

- Fd Degree, Yr 1 <75% progression

- Fd Degree, Yr 2 <80% progression

- Access Course <70% progression

Concerns raised in EE/PSRB reports

Concerns raised in FPM annual report

CA3/revalidation – refused or with conditions

Annex 2

ANNUAL REPORT FORM: FACULTY PARTNERSHIP MANAGER

FPM Name	
Partner Institution	
Campus(es)	
Programme Title/Code	
FT/PT/2Y,3S	

This form should be completed annually by the Faculty Partnership Manager for each active programme at each partner institution. The form should be forwarded to n.bartholomew@ulster.ac.uk in Quality Enhancement by 20 September 2019.

ARTICULATION PREVIOUS YEAR	
Articulation Route	**Total Progressing Students**
Course Title (PT/FT)	
Course Title (PT/FT)	

COMMENT ON ARTICULATION

	FACULTY PARTNERSHIP MANAGER COMMENTS
1. Adherence to programme entry requirements	
2. Operation of Ulster quality assurance procedures	
3. Concerns raised at Staff/Student Consultative Committee Meeting	
4. Concerns raised at Course Committee Meetings	
5. Accuracy of published information	
6. Interaction with Faculty Partnership Manager	

7. Operation of network (where applicable)	

EVIDENCE OF GOOD PRACTICE

AREAS FOR ENHANCEMENT

CONFIDENCE REPORT

How confident are you that:

1. Academic standards have been met	met/Not met
2. Resources continue to support a quality student learning experience	Resources adequate / not adequate
3. Students can be recruited to the agreed intake	Yes / No
4. Students have robust representation within programmes	Confident/not confident
Do you support the programme being put forward for revalidation?	Yes/No

ANNUAL REPORT FORM: FACULTY PARTNERSHIP MANAGER

Guidance Notes

When completing the report form, the Faculty Partnership Manager should consider the following and comment as appropriate:

Articulation Previous Year

The information on total enrolments in final year should be taken from the annual Collaborative Courses digest (March each year). The articulation information should be taken from the Cognos report run around November each year.

Overview of Operation of Ulster Quality Assurance Procedures

Make a general statement concerning the operation and conduct of procedures. Where elements are missing, please refer to the list below to identify issues:

- External Examiner Report and Course Committee Response
- Course Committee meetings
- Staff Student Consultative Committees
- Boards of Examiners
- Procedures for student appeals
- APEL

Concerns raised at Staff/Student Consultative Committee Meeting

- Comment on student views as expressed through the minutes of Staff-Student Consultative Committee meetings
- Comment on student views emerging from annual meetings with FPM
- Is there evidence of student reflection on the External Examiner Report?
- Were the class representatives in place?
- Did the minutes address action from the previous meeting?
- What issues were raised through meetings with the Faculty Partnership Manager?

Concerns raised at Course Committee Meetings

- Where issues have all been minuted, addressed and actioned, you may make a general statement.
- Were any issues left unresolved?

Accuracy of published information

- What published material did you see about this course?
- Comment on your involvement in the approval process of any publicly available information.

Interaction with Faculty Partnership Manager

- Has the Course Director maintained effective communication with the Faculty Partnership Manager during the year?

Operation of network (where applicable)

- Comment on the interaction between partners where the same course is delivered across a number of partners.

Ulster University

Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement Action Plan

Use one form for each programme under review and indicate whether the intervention is designed to address an attrition, progression, cohort size issue.

FACULTY:

Programme:

Intervention	Deadline	Responsibility for undertaking intervention	Responsibility for confirming intervention complete
Inhibitors identified by programme team

Head of Department comments/actions:

HE Coordinator comments/actions:

Assistant Director of Curriculum (Approval of action plan and confirmation of resource required)

Annex 4

Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement – Validated Partner Provision

Local Quality Monitoring
Programme data reviewed and discussed, as and when available, at Course Committee meetings, BoE, SSCS

FPM Reports

Collaborative Partnerships Forum
Sub committee of ASQEC to review, advise and make recommendations on development, monitoring and enhancement of collaborative provision

ASQEC

Quality Monitoring Data to inform ongoing programme design discussions:
- Admission rates, conversion rates, access demographics, comparison to targets, recruitment patterns
- Staff-student ratio and resources
- Stakeholder feedback
- Placement monitoring reports
- Leave of absence data
- Retention, Progression, continuation, attainment/classification
- Difference in attainment across items of assessment, across modules, across cohorts
- Attendance
- Studies Advisor reports – student monitoring
- Module evaluations, SSCC minutes, EE reports, PSRB reports, NSS
- Complaints and appeals
- Graduate outcomes
- Good practice

Quality Enhancement generates and reviews datasets (October)

Data generation:
Cohort size >10 – review cohort performance (by year)
Cohort size <10 – FPM to report on business model and action plan to build cohort size

University Benchmarks:

Attrition:
- Fd Degree - 10% (or attrition of 2+ students if cohort <10)
- 2Y3S – 10%
- Access course - 20%

First Sit:
- Year 1 – 65%
- Year 2 – 70%

Success 2 – End of Year:
- Fd Degree, Yr 1 - 75% progression
- Fd Degree, Yr 2 – 80% progression
- Access Course – 70% progression

Other Course Data:
- EE/PSRB reports
- CA3/revalidation outcomes
- FPM Annual Report

Programme falls below required Benchmarks:

Attrition: >3% below benchmark

Success 2 (End of Year):
- Fd Degree, Yr 1 <75% progression
- Fd Degree, Yr 2 <80% progression
- Access Course <70% progression

Concerns raised in EE/PSRB reports
Concerns raised in FPM annual report
CA3/revalidation – refused or with conditions

Collaborative Partners & FPM
Review data and draft action plans

Supportive Measures Panel
ADE, QE, FPM,
(Dec)

Summary report

Programme meets/exceeds benchmarks

EE/PSRB reports satisfactory
CA3/revalidation – approved, no conditions

Continue on 5 year Revalidation cycle

Potential Panel Outcomes

Continue with action plan

Revise action Plan and review

Expedite Revalidation

Suspend intakes

Monthly AD meetings with PVC (Ed) monitor action planning

(FPM report to AD)