



University of Sussex

# **Handbook on Annual Monitoring (Interim arrangements relating to 2011-12 provision)**

Academic Office  
University of Sussex  
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*NB: Throughout this documentation the newly adopted University nomenclature is used: Course and Module, in line with University policy for 2012 onwards. As annual monitoring is a retrospective exercise, it should be noted that documentation used as part of the process will refer to Programme and Course.*

## Introduction

Annual monitoring is one of the University's key quality assurance processes and, along with processes of curriculum approval and periodic review, is intended to assure and enhance the quality of the University's taught provision, and the student teaching and learning experience, both undergraduate and postgraduate. Annual Monitoring **includes modules or courses franchised to a partner institution or taken off campus** (e.g. year abroad, placements)

***These guidelines are designed to support Schools in the implementation of the annual monitoring process for modules and courses delivered to full-time undergraduate and postgraduate taught students in 2011-12 only. It is recognised that the timing of postgraduate examination boards does not currently enable complete reporting at the end of the Autumn Term.***

***The University Teaching and Learning Committee has established a Task and Finish Group to advise on improving the current procedure, time frame, and evidence base to provide a streamlined inclusive process for all University awards in the light of the University's adoption of a new academic year structure and related policies and procedures. The Group will report to the TLC in the Summer Term.***

## The purpose of annual monitoring reports

The Annual Monitoring process is an important component of the University's quality assurance framework. It provides the opportunity to use a range of evidence to evaluate and the quality and standards of the University's awards, including data on student progression and achievement and the views of external peers, particularly external examiners. It provides the means by which the School and the University can evidence the quality of teaching and learning and the student experience overall. It is an essential tool in identifying and sharing good practice and in promoting consistency in quality assurance across the University.

Schools are expected to produce an annual reflective report both for their own purposes, and to share with students and external audiences where appropriate.

## Information to be included in the reports

The Annual Monitoring process takes place at the level of the module, the course, the School and the University.

### **STAGE 1 (A): MODULE EVALUATION – Conducted by Module Convenors**

Individual module evaluation is done by module convenors. There is no specific 'pro-forma' for this report set by the University. School guidance should be followed.

In most cases, the module evaluation is done at the end of the term that the module finishes, and if there are issues that are identified, they are dealt with at that point and reported through the Annual Monitoring Process.

For example:

“students noted that it was difficult to distinguish which books on the reading list were the most important to read. The list was then divided into three categories (essential, recommended and background reading). The document on the website was updated, and the module handbook will be updated for next year.”

Each module convenor needs to review their module and present a report to their Head of School (or nominee) as evidence to support the preparation of *Stage 2 : Course report* (see page 3). The report by the module convenor should include and refer to the following information as a minimum:

***Student Evaluations (Received at the end of the module)***

The University requires each module to be evaluated annually for the first three years of its delivery, and every third year thereafter (although Schools may evaluate more frequently if they choose). For further guidance, please refer to *Student Evaluation of Courses Policy*, which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/documentsandpolicies/policies/studentevaluationofcourses>

The evaluations should be processed as soon as they are available, and the results passed to the module convenor if s/he is not the person administering the evaluations.

***Student performance***

Module Convenors should use the marks available at the end of the teaching period for the module. Module monitoring should not be delayed until end of year marks are available from the Stage 1 Exam Board process. End of year results provide further information on overall student performance and may be used in preparing the module and course -level report later in the review cycle.

***Comments by the tutor(s) who taught the module***

The module convenor should provide an evaluative summary of the module based on teaching staff feedback.

***Numbers of students on the module***

The report should indicate the number of students registered on the module.

***Identify good practice for dissemination***

The Module Convenor should identify any good practice and say why the practice has been identified as such.

***Proposals for module changes***

As part of good teaching practice, the Module Convenor should reflect upon the success of the module and consider whether any amendment to the current practice is desirable in light of the evaluations by students, external examiners' comments, or other relevant reasons, including student performance.

If changes to the curriculum are required, these require approval School and University Teaching and Learning Committees in accordance with course change policy and procedure. For further guidance please refer to the *Handbook for Curriculum Approval* which can be found on the Academic Office website at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/services/curriculumdevelopment>

***The module evaluation reports should be sent to the person (s) organising the Course Annual Monitoring report. Copies do NOT need***

*to be sent to the Academic Office.*

### **STAGE 1 (B) : COURSE EVALUATION – Conducted by Course Convenor**

Annual course monitoring will focus on **undergraduate full-time** provision in this round. The Course Convenor is responsible for ensuring that the report is produced. However the work can be delegated as appropriate.

The report should comment on key trends indicated by the data (e.g. consistent improvement in retention, static recruitment, static profile of Firsts, comparative performance on single and joint courses, and so forth).

The data - which will be provided centrally and distributed through school administrators (and at departmental level where appropriate). The intention is that analysis should be brief. There is provision in the data-set for drilling down to individual course level, where there is a need to disaggregate information, or identify variant trends within specific provision. School administrative staff will be able to provide the drill-down data on request.

The key issues to identify from the data are trends in:

- Student recruitment
- Student retention rates (based on PWD)
- Student performance (based on degree outcomes)

The data will become available during the autumn term.

### **STAGE 2 : COURSE REPORT – Conducted by the Course Convenor**

The course report combines annual monitoring of modules and the course overall, incorporating commentary on Peer Observation of Teaching (PoT) and Exam Board reports and outcomes.

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that an overview report is produced for each course and that the report is submitted to the School Teaching & Learning Committee.

The person(s) producing the course report should examine and refer to the following information:

- Evaluations by students (appending any statistical analyses)
- Module organisers' reports
- Course evaluation information
- External examiners' comments
- Peer Observation of Teaching reports
- Exam Board minutes & marks arrays
- Annual course data (see above)

In light of the above information, the School Learning and Teaching Committee should consider the following:

- (a) whether there are changes to be made, actions to be taken or good practice that can be shared across the / School / University. The School needs to consider what action should be taken in the forthcoming academic year in light of the module and course evaluations;
- (b) whether there are significant changes to be made to modules / courses that will need to be approved through the Committee process;
- (c) whether module and course documentation for students needs to be updated for the following academic year, such as:
  - Module description
  - Reading list
  - Teaching methods
  - Module work requirements / assessment arrangements

Schools may also want to consider publicising changes it has made as a direct result of student evaluation questionnaires. This is a good way of getting students to engage in the process of completing evaluation questionnaires in future years.

- (d) whether there were any modules and courses taught that recruited fewer than 5 students or were not taught for a second successive year

A pro-forma for the Course report is available at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/services/annualmonitoring>

### ***How to complete the form***

The pro-forma has been designed to allow all relevant information to be directly added to it. The form can be downloaded from the website and saved as your own document. Once you have done this, you can 'tab' through each section. You will need to place your cursor at the start of each box. Where there are 'drop-down' menus, you will need to click inside the start of the box.

Each box will expand to fit the full text that you answer. Once you have completed a question, you can simply 'tab' to the next box.

If you experience any difficulties in completing the form, please contact the Academic Office.

## **Section 1 : Remit of the report**

### **1.1 UG and PGT**

Note that the report will cover undergraduate and postgraduate provision and **include any module or elements franchised to a partner institution or taken off campus** (e.g. year abroad, placements)

### **1.2 List all modules covered by this report**

All the modules run by the School should be covered by the report (noting the caveat regarding the timing of postgraduate examination boards. If all modules have been monitored simply state the fact in this box. Module lists are available via IWR web-reports.

1.3 *List all courses covered by this report*

This box clarifies the courses that are covered by the report. If there are considerable number of courses covered by the report, again, a list can be appended. This box should note that a full list of courses is attached.

## **Section 2: Module & Course content**

2.1 *Note significant issues raised by module / course convenors and the School response to them*

2.2 *Identify any major issues highlighted by external examiners that require action to be taken. An existing action plan can be appended. Please specify whether issues relate to a specific module / course*

2.3 *Comment on the balance of assessment modes used and their effectiveness in testing the course outcomes and student achievement*

2.4 *Confirm that the assessment criteria used were made available (published) to students and issued to all examiners. Include any comments about the implementation of assessment criteria and their appropriateness*

## **Section 3 : Course analysis**

*Please comment briefly on the following, reflecting on absolute performance levels and trends:*

3.1 *Student recruitment*

3.2 *Student retention rates (based on PWD)*

3.3 *Student performance (based on degree outcome)*

## **Section 4 : Examinations**

4.1 *Note information about any errors / problems discovered during examinations and what action was taken*

Reference should be made to the Exam Board minutes and to the External Examiner report.

4.2 *Note whether any aberrant sets of marks were discovered during the marks assurance process and if so what action the Exam Board took*

Reference should be made to minutes of the Stage 1 Exam Board process.

## **Section 5 : Student evaluation**

5.1 *Note significant issues and strengths raised from student evaluations, and the School's response. Identify the methods used by the School for student evaluations.*

Note here significant issues raised by students that relate to the curriculum / academic issues. For example, did students comment on contact hours? Or the

number / type of assessment for modules? If students have provided positive feedback (“all staff were very approachable”), don’t forget to include it here.

As well as using questionnaires, student evaluations can be gathered by a number of methods, such as: student representative comments at School meetings, the School Student Experience Group, informal discussions between students and staff, periodic subject review, focus groups etc.

Feedback to students on the outcomes of evaluation can be provided through meetings, circulation of minutes of meetings, emails to student cohorts, announcements on notice boards and / or in lectures, in module handbooks etc.

In this box, please note all the means of receiving comments from students and how they are responded to.

## **Section 6 : Peer Observation of Teaching (PoT)**

- 6.1 *Was Peer Observation of Teaching carried out?*  
The form need only note ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to this question.
- 6.2 *Have any issues raised through Peer Observation of Teaching been addressed?*  
The form need only note ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to this question. If deemed appropriate, the report can include details of what issue(s) was (were) raised and how they were addressed.

## **Section 7 : Good practice**

- 7.1 *Identify and note any examples of good practice that were identified through the annual monitoring process. Please include a contact name and email address for each piece of good practice identified.*  
Contact details for staff who work on areas of good practice should be included so that staff in other departments are able to seek further details if interested in implementing similar projects in their own School. It is hoped that this will help facilitate good practice across the University.

## **Section 8 : Summary**

- 8.1 *Summarise actions to be taken over the forthcoming year*  
Note here any action that the School will take as a result of the annual monitoring process. Next year you will be asked to comment on these ‘actions’ – whether they were completed, whether work is on-going, if they had a positive impact on the curriculum, etc.
- 8.2 *Comment on the action plan from last year – what work has been done as a result of the annual monitoring process. Where actions from last year have not been acted upon, please note why*  
If actions were recommended as a result of your annual monitoring process last year, please note them here. This box ‘closes the loop’ on work started last year, and gives the opportunity to demonstrate that the School has acted upon issues raised through the annual monitoring process. It may be that all work was not completed, but there could be a number of reasons for this. For example work may have been put on hold because a member of staff leading a project may have left.
- 8.3 *Other comments – please note any comments / significant issues for consideration through the annual monitoring process*



This is an opportunity to note any miscellaneous information for consideration that does not easily 'fit' into the other boxes. It is also a good place to include comments on the annual monitoring process itself – has it been helpful, were there problems in locating information for the report, how could the process itself be improved, etc.

***An electronic copy of the Course Report should be uploaded by  
Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012 to the annual monitoring website:  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/annualmonitoring>***

### **STAGE 3 : SCHOOL REPORT – SCHOOL TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE**

The School Teaching & Learning Committee is responsible for scrutinising the course reports and confirming that the School has comprehensively completed its part in the annual monitoring process, has proposed appropriate action to be taken and has identified good practice for dissemination.

It is advised that the School report is produced and circulated prior to the School Teaching & Learning Committee. Members of the Committee can then comment on the report and any amendments can be made before the report is forwarded to the University Teaching & Learning Committee.

The School Teaching & Learning Committee is responsible for deciding who should produce the report.

The report should note action to be taken at a School level, and forward issues for consideration by the University. It is also an opportunity to note examples of good practice that take place within the School and which can be disseminated to all Schools within the University.

A pro-forma report has been produced by the Academic Office and can be found on their website under 'Annual Monitoring' at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/services/annualmonitoring>

The pro-forma has been designed to include all the information needed in the report, and as with the course report form, information can be added directly to the form.

#### **Section 1 : Remit of the report**

##### **1.1 UG and PGT**

Note that the report will cover undergraduate and postgraduate reports and **include any module or elements franchised to a partner institution or taken off campus** (e.g. year abroad, placements)

The School level report must be considered by the School Teaching and Learning Committee before being uploaded to the annual monitoring website page by Friday 30th November 2012: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/annualmonitoring>. It may require a

special meeting to be convened outside of the Committee schedule to ensure that the timescales are met.

## **Section 2 : Student evaluation of modules**

### **2.1** *Note significant issues raised from student evaluations, and the School's intended actions*

Summarise the significant issues raised and the actions that Schools will take.

If no action has been taken, or it has already been acted on, please note it here. For example:

'History – students wanted contact hours to be increased to 10 hrs per student per week. The department does not have the resources to do this, and an email was sent to the cohort explaining why this was not possible.'

### **2.2** *Identify and comment on the methods used for student evaluations*

State here all the methods used for student evaluations. Some innovative methods may have been used that it would be useful to share across the University. This information can be taken directly from box 5.1 on the course and module reports.

## **Section 3 : Peer Observation of Teaching (PoT)**

### **3.1** *Was Peer Observation of Teaching carried out?*

The form need only note 'yes' or 'no' to this question.

### **3.2** *Have any issues raised through Peer Observation of Teaching been addressed?*

The form need only note 'yes' or 'no' to this question. If deemed appropriate, the report can include details of what issue(s) was (were) raised and how they were addressed.

## **Section 4 : Good practice**

### **4.1** *Identify and note any examples of good practice that were identified through the annual monitoring process. Please include a contact name and email address for each piece of good practice identified.*

Contact details for staff who work on areas of good practice should be included so that staff in other Schools are able to seek further details if interested in implementing similar projects in their own Schools. It is hoped that this will help facilitate good practice across the University.

## **Section 5 : Summary**

### **5.1** *Summarise any generic issues that are of a School-wide concern*

Please note here any issues that are specifically related to the School, and can be acted upon / resolved at a School level.

### **5.2** *Summarise action to be taken by the School as a result of the annual monitoring process in the forthcoming year*

This question should be completed following the School Teaching & Learning Committee meeting at which the course and module reports are discussed. It should outline the action to be taken at School level or otherwise .

### **5.3** *Identify University-wide and / or significant issues to be considered by the University Teaching & Learning Committee*

At the School Teaching & Learning Committee meeting where the module and course reports are discussed, there may be issues raised that need to be considered at a University level. This should be noted on the form, and this will be discussed by the University Teaching & Learning Committee. A response to the University-level issues will be included in the summary report produced by the Academic Office that will be circulated back to Schools at the end of the academic year.

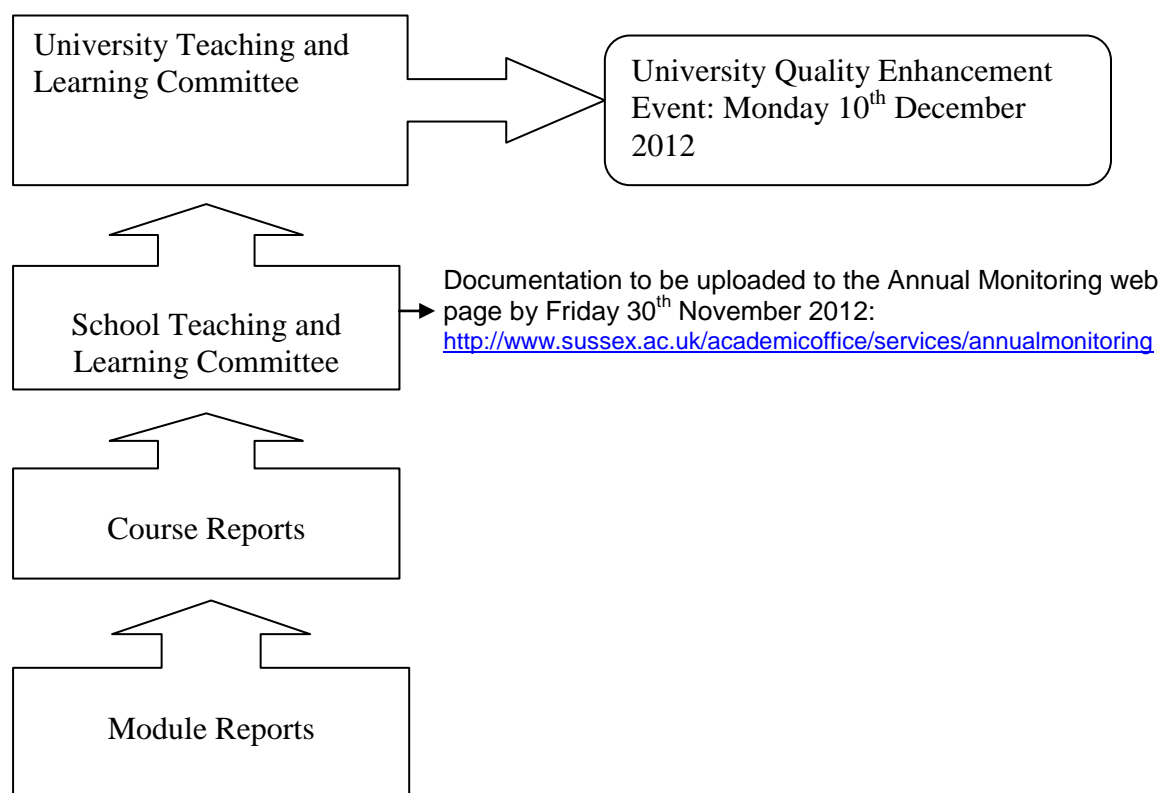
***An electronic copy of the Report should be uploaded, by Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012, to the annual monitoring website:  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/annualmonitoring/>***

#### **STAGE 4 : UNIVERSITY REPORT – ACADEMIC OFFICE**

Once all the Course and School reports have been uploaded to the Annual Monitoring website page (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/annualmonitoring/>) they will be scrutinised by readers who are members of the University Teaching & Learning Committee. A University Quality Enhancement Event will then take place on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012**. Readers will be notified of their tasks in advance of the report publication deadline.

The University Report will consider examples of good practice and University-level action and will be disseminated back to Schools in the Spring Term.

### **Summary of the quality assurance process governing annual monitoring**



## Useful information

### Acronyms

IWR	Internet web report
PoT	Peer Observation of Teaching
PWD	Permanent withdrawal
SEQ	Student Evaluation Questionnaire
SGAM	Subject Group Academic Manager
TWD	Temporary withdrawal

### Useful web site links

*Academic Office*

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/>

*Annual Monitoring page, Academic Office*

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/services/annualmonitoring>

*Handbook for Curriculum Approval*

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/services/curriculumdevelopment>

*Peer Observation of Teaching (Policy)*

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/documentsandpolicies/policies/peerobservationofteaching>

*Student Evaluation of Modules Policy*

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/documentsandpolicies/policies/studentevaluationofcourses>

### Contact

If you have any queries about the Annual Monitoring process or if you have any difficulties in completing the forms, please contact the Academic Office, Room 302, Sussex House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton. BN1 9RH