

## GUIDELINES FOR PERIODIC REVIEW OF COURSES

### Objective

The objectives of Periodic Review are to confirm:

- the continuing validity and relevance of the course;
- the continuing appropriateness of its academic standards;
- the continuing high quality of learning opportunities; and to consider the course team's proposals and plans for the development of the course and the further enhancement of its quality.

The Expectation of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B8 is:

*“Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review.”*

This procedure is designed to ensure that the College continues to meet the above Expectation.

### Scope

Periodic Review applies to all courses including Professional Doctorates, with the exception of the MPhil/PhD. Periodic Review also includes programmes which run under the auspices of the University of London International Academy. Periodic Review applies to collaborative programmes, with the proviso that, where specified in the Memorandum of Agreement, the Periodic Review will follow the partner's procedures. Wherever it makes academic sense Periodic Reviews are combined, for example the review for MSc Wild Animal Biology and MSc Wild Animal Health.

## Schedule of Periodic Reviews

The Periodic Review of a course normally takes place every six years. The following schedule of reviews is subject to change.

<b>Course:</b>	<b>Next Periodic Review to be held autumn:</b>	<b>*Interim Review:</b>
BSc/MSci Bio Sciences	2020	2023
MSc Wild Animal Biology / MSc Wild Animal Health	2021	2024
MRes	2021	2018
Cert AVP	2021	2018
MSc Veterinary Education	2021	2018
Grad Dip Equine Locomotor Research	2022	2025
MSc Veterinary Epidemiology	2022	2019
PG Dip Veterinary Clinical Practice	2022	2025
BVetMed	2023	2020
MVetMed	2023	2026
MSc Livestock Health and Production / MSc Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health	2024	2021
MSc Intensive Livestock Health and Production	N/A as course no longer recruits students (was due in 2018)	N/A
Professional 'Specialist' Doctorates	2019 (Not conducted. A separate review is being undertaken by RDC, reporting to TQC)	2022
MSc One Health	2025	2022
FdSc/BSc Veterinary Nursing & RCVS Reaccreditation of FdSc VN	2025	2022
Grad Dip Veterinary Nursing – changed to a Validation of a Grad Cert AVN and a PG Cert AVN due to commence from May 2021	2027	2024

\* Interim Review – three years after Periodic Review the Internal Panel Members meet with the Course Director and Chair of the Course Management Committee to review progress in the light of the Panel's recommendations and the plans for enhancement set out in the SED.

## Terms of Reference

1. To review:

- 1.1 the continuing validity, relevance and currency of the course's aims, objectives, and content;
- 1.2 the extent to which the aims and objectives are being achieved;
- 1.3 the extent to which the course continues to meet the needs of students and of prospective

employers of graduates; and its continuing and likely future viability in the context of the student market;

- 1.4 the cumulative effect of changes made in the last six years, including those made in response to the recommendations of the last Periodic Review (if applicable);
- 1.5 the academic standards of the course, with particular reference to changes in external reference points including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, any relevant subject benchmarking statements, any relevant legislation or commitments to European or international processes and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and employers;
- 1.6 the quality of the course, under the following headings:
  - teaching, learning, assessment and feedback methods - evaluation of the effectiveness of the educational strategies employed by the programme(s) for providing students with good learning opportunities to support achievement of the intended learning outcomes and academic standards, in the light of contemporary research and practice in the application of knowledge in the discipline, technological advances, developments in teaching and learning, and the College's Learning Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy 2014-19;
  - student admission, progression and achievement - evaluation of the ways in which students' progression through the course is supported and monitored, from intake to completion;
  - learning resources - evaluation of effectiveness of the deployment of the resources, human and material, that support the learning of students, and of the effectiveness of their fit to the intended learning outcomes of the programme(s).
2. To consider plans for future development of the course and for further enhancement of its quality.
3. To consider an assessment of risks to the quality, standards and viability of the course, and proposed action to mitigate them.
4. To make a report and recommendations to the Academic Board, via the Teaching Quality Committee, concerning the continuation of the course, and proposed action, using the Teaching Quality template for periodic review reports, with dates by which it is recommended that action should be taken.

**Note: Courses due to undergo Periodic Review may be excused from submitting an Annual Quality Improvement Report for the preceding academic year.**

## **Review Panel**

### Internal Members

#### Staff:

- 2 members of RVC academic staff, appointed by the Teaching Quality Committee, neither of whom shall be significantly involved in the course under review, and one of whom shall serve as Review Panel Chair.
- Internal members should not be restricted to academic staff in cases where a member of non-academic staff might be more appropriate;

#### Student:

- 1 RVC student, appointed by the Teaching Quality Committee on the recommendation of the SU. They shall not be significantly involved in the course under review. If an RVC student cannot be identified to join the panel, a student from another institution should be sought. Student panel members will be paid a fee for their attendance and input into the report. It is acceptable to appoint a recent RVC graduate, provided they graduated no more than one year ago.

### External Members

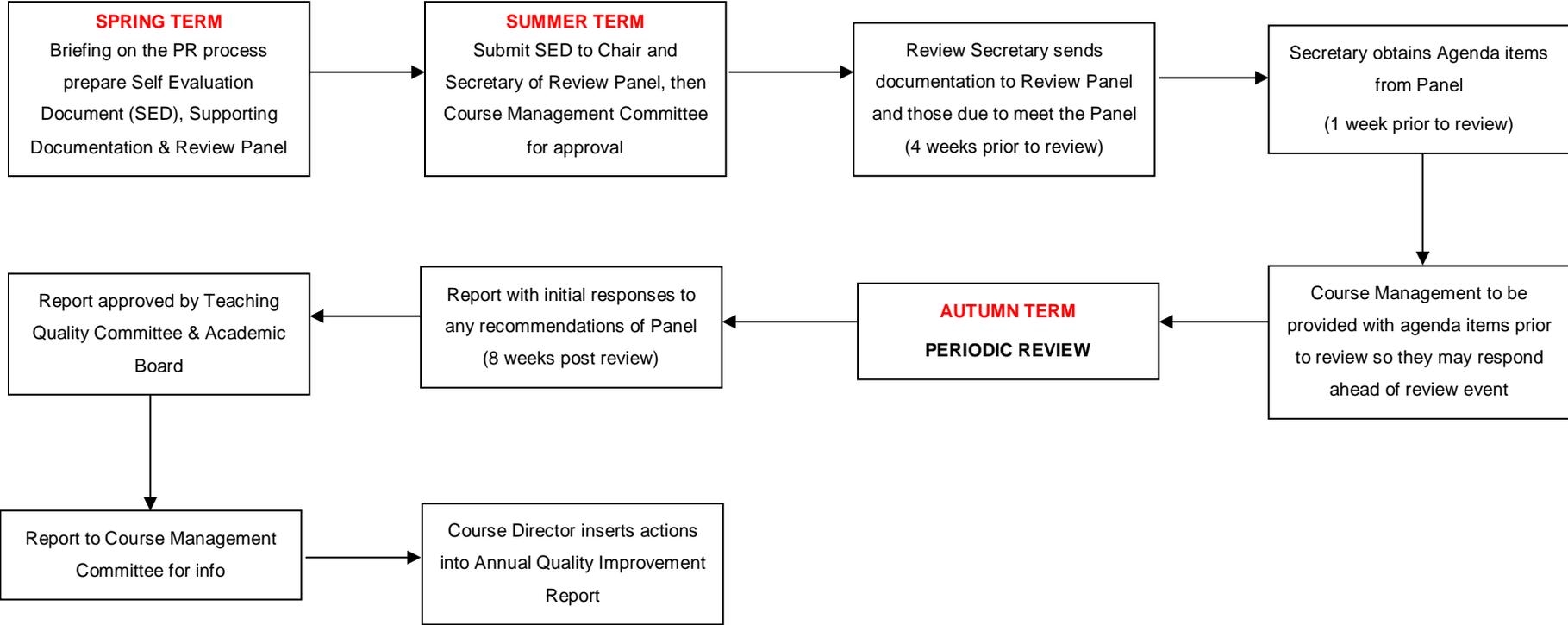
- 2 external members, suggested by the Course Management of the course to be reviewed;
- CVs should be provided for proposed external members, and they should be approved following scrutiny by the Chair and Deputy Chair of TQC and the Academic Quality Manager;
- One of the external members should normally be an academic, and the other from the relevant industry/profession;
- External members should both be specialists in the subject area under review, or a cognate area, and one should be experienced in delivery of courses at the level being reviewed;
- External members should not have served as an External Examiner for the course under review during the previous six years, however they may have or be serving as External Examiner on another course at the College;
- An External member may be a graduate of the course being reviewed, provided that they graduated more than five years prior to the academic year in which the review is due to be held;
- They should not be retired members of RVC staff;
- External panel members will be paid a fee for their attendance and input into the report;
- For particularly complex courses, there may be more than two external panel members.

### Secretary

The Academic Quality Manager (or their nominee) shall serve as Secretary to the Panel. Additional guidelines are available for periodic review panel secretaries to assist them with their duties.

To assist staff who are about to undergo Periodic Review, the Secretary should invite the Course Directors to be observers in the preceding year.

**Process**



1. The Academic Quality Manager appoints review panel secretaries for each course due to undergo Periodic Review.
2. The review panel secretary liaises with the relevant Course Management and Chair of Teaching Quality Committee to organise a Panel, programme (see example below) and date for the Periodic Review.
3. The review panel secretary should invite the following people to attend the periodic review:

<b>Course Management Team:</b>
Course Director(s) (& Year Leaders)
To assist staff who are about to undergo Periodic Review, we should invite Course Directors to be observers in the preceding year
Programme Support Co-ordinator
Chair of Exam Board
Chair of Course Management Committee
Collaborative Partners (if applicable)
Head of Academic Department
Academic Registrar
Director of Learning and Wellbeing
Head of Exams
Academic Quality Manager
Vice Principal Learning, Teaching and Assessment
Vice Principal Students
Associate Deans
<b>Teaching Team:</b>
Module/Strand Leaders (core) elective module leaders if necessary
Collaborative Teaching Staff (if applicable/appropriate)
<b>Students/Graduates:</b>
Approximately 8 students to include those enrolled/graduated since last periodic review)

4. Where a course is accredited by a PSRB (e.g. RCVS) the Secretary will agree with them how the Periodic Review and re-accreditation will be linked. Similarly, for collaborative courses, the Periodic Review should be linked to the review of the collaborative agreement.
5. The Academic Quality Manager will hold a briefing meeting to advise the Course Management and Internal Panel Members of the review process. The following persons should be invited to attend the briefing in the Spring term prior to the academic year in which the review takes place:
  - Course Director(s)
  - Course Director(s) of courses to be reviewed in the proceeding cycle. (To assist staff who are about to undergo Periodic Review, we should invite Course Directors to be observers in the preceding year).
  - Programme Support Co-ordinator
  - Chair of Exam Board
  - Chair of Course Management Committee
  - Chair of the Review Panel

- Internal Member of the Review Panel
  - Student Member of the Review Panel
  - Head of Department (department with responsibility for course to be reviewed)
  - Vice Principal Learning, Teaching and Assessment
  - Vice Principal Students
  - Associate Deans for Undergraduate/Postgraduate Learning and Teaching
  - Associate Dean for Student Experience
  - Senior representative from Collaborative Partner(s) (if applicable)
  - Secretary
6. The Course Management write a Self-Evaluation Document (SED) (see attached template), the drafting of which is not a job solely for the Course Director. The supporting documentation is agreed by the Chair of the Review Panel; additional documentation might be requested. The SED is approved by the Chair and Secretary of the Periodic Review Panel, and by the relevant Course Management Committee.
  7. The Periodic Review Panel receives the SED and supporting documentation at least four weeks prior to the review (see list of documentation). The documents are provided electronically via a password protected USB flash drive. The content of the password protected USB flash drive is confidential and is only to be viewed by the individuals directly involved in the Periodic Review. The individuals due to meet the Periodic Review Panel are also sent or have access to the SED and supporting documentation.
  8. The task of reading the SED and supporting materials in detail should be divided between the panel members upon instruction from the panel Chair, with an expectation that agenda items to be discussed at the review visit be submitted a week ahead. The Course Management are to be informed of the agenda items prior to the review visit.
  9. A review visit normally lasting one day, including some or all of the following:
    - i) meetings with staff, students and, graduates and employers;
    - ii) scrutiny of additional documentation, e.g. student work, graduate personal statements etc.;
    - iii) scrutiny of learning resources;
    - iv) private meetings of the Panel (discussion at which is confidential).
  10. The review secretary produces a draft report (including any requirements and/or recommendations of the review panel with deadlines for responses). The secretary should highlight any areas of good practice and share them with the Teaching Quality Committee and Course Management Committees as appropriate. The draft report should be approved by the Panel Chair within four weeks, by the full panel within a further two weeks, and be checked for factual accuracy by the Course Director within a further two weeks - total eight weeks;
  11. The secretary seeks initial responses to any requirements/recommendations from the course team.
  12. The report with initial responses from the Course Management is submitted by the Secretary to the Teaching Quality Committee and Academic Board for approval. The report should then be submitted to the relevant Course Management Committee for information. The SED and report with initial responses to any requirements/recommendations is published on the intranet.

13. The Course Director should incorporate responses to any requirements and/or recommendations into the Annual Quality Improvement Report action plan for quality monitoring purposes.

## Documentation

The central documentation informing the Periodic Review will be a Self-Evaluation Document (SED), containing a description of how the course has changed in the last six years; a critique written under the headings of the terms of reference (above) and proposals for future development.

CONFIDENTIAL Supporting documents:

- Programme for Periodic Review
- Expense and Fee Claim Forms for External and Student Panel Members
- Reading list / comments table for Panel Members
- Guidance for Periodic Review of Courses
- Course Prospectus (current)
- Course Timetable (current)
- \*Programme Specification (current)
- \*\*Assessment and Award Regulations (current)
- General Regulations for Study and Award
- Course Handbook(s) (current)
- External Examiners' Reports for the previous six years, with the College's responses to these
- Examples of Examination Question Papers
- Examples of student work (including examiner annotations)
- Any reports from accrediting or other external bodies
- Annual Quality Improvement Reports (AQIR) including appendices for the previous six years
- Student evaluation survey reports for the previous six years if not already included in AQIR appendices e.g. Module/Strand surveys, including external surveys where relevant e.g. National Student Survey, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, Barometer etc.
- Minutes of Course Management Committee for the previous six years
- The report and requirements/recommendations of the previous Periodic Review
- RVC LTA Enhancement Strategy
- RVC Strategic Plan
- QAA Degree Characteristics (e.g. for Masters, Professional Doctorates etc.)
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) (National Occupational Standards for VNs)
- QAA FHEQ
- Collaborative Agreement (excluding Financial details)

All documentation is confidential and is only to be viewed by the Panel and RVC staff directly involved in the Periodic Review.

*\*All members of the Panel should consider the Programme Specification.*

*\*\*At least one Internal and one External member of the Panel should consider the Assessment and Award Regulations alongside the General Regulations for Study and Award.*

Prior to the visit the Review Panel will have access to the Virtual Learning Environment - RVC Learn. Members of the Review Panel may request additional evidence if they wish.

### Example programme for Periodic Review held face-to-face over one day

09.00 – 09.15	Panel	Panel arrival
09.15 – 10.15	Panel	Private Panel meeting for agenda setting
10.15 – 10.30	Short break	
10.30 – 12.00	Panel & Management Team	Scene setting meeting, introduction & overview of course
12.00 – 12.15	Short break	
12.15– 13.15	Panel & Teaching Team	Further exploration of the course
13.15 – 14.15	Panel, Students, Graduates & Employers	Working lunch
14.15 – 15.15	Panel & Course Director	Tour of Facilities
15.15 – 16.15	Panel	Panel meeting to discuss conclusions, make recommendations
16.15 – 16.30	Short break	
16.30 – 17.00	Panel & Management Team	Panel to Feedback conclusions, any requirements/recommendations to the Management Team

### Review of the Periodic Review process

Feedback is gathered from review panel members and course management teams after each review to assess the effectiveness of the process. The Periodic Review procedure is reviewed on a continual basis and more formally at least every six years.

Updated by:	Cheryl Jackson, Academic Quality Manager
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