

## Quality Review Framework Annex 9.4.1:

Updated: June 2022

# Main Steps of a Response to External Examiners' Reports

(Undergraduate, Initial Teacher Education and Postgraduate Taught Programmes)

Contact: [Chandan Shah](#) or [Siobhan Fitzgerald](#), Academic Services, Student and Registry Services

### Guidance

---

**Key:**

APQA	Academic Policy Quality Assurance team
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
ASR	Assessment and Student Records
BoE	Board of Examiners
BA	Board Administrators
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
DC	Deputy Chair
DTC	Departmental Teaching Committee
EdCom	Education Committee
EE	External Examiners
FL	Faculty Leads
FT	Faculty Tutors
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
QRSC	Quality Review Sub-Committee
SSCC	Staff Student Consultative Committees
UCLU	University College London Union
UG	Undergraduate

Step	Action	Date	People/Body	Link	Notes
<b>Step 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BoE take place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: June – July</li> <li>PGT: October / November</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chairs, DC of BoE and BAs</li> <li>ASR</li> <li>AS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> – see Chapters 4, Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes and 9, Quality Review Framework</li> <li><a href="#">UCL Arena Centre</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BAs to direct colleagues to guidance on BoE.</li> <li>Support is available through UCL Arena Centre.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where practicable, an oral report is provided by the EE and an oral acknowledgement is given to the EE at BoE meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: June – July</li> <li>PGT: October / November</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EE</li> <li>Chairs of BoE or DC</li> </ul>		
<b>Step 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EE submits their reports from the BoE through Portico.</li> <li>The Faculty Lead, Chair, Deputy Chair and BAs, who will receive the report through Portico, should start thinking of a full response to the entire report, including, ‘Advisable’, ‘Desirable’ recommendations and comments in the Additional Comments.</li> <li>Please note that all responses are due within</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: Date range: June - August</li> <li>PGT: Date range: October - December</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EE</li> <li>APQA</li> <li>Faculty Lead, Chair, DC and BAs of BoE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> – see External Examining Section in Chapter 9</li> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> – see ASER Section in Chapter 9</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>EE should submit their report within four weeks of the BoE to assist the Department in considering comments in the ASER.</i></li> <li>Note that EE Reports contain graded recommendations as follows:</li> <li><b>Essential: Serious</b> areas of concern which, in your <i>[EE]</i> opinion, place academic standards and/or the student learning experience at <b>immediate</b> risk and requires action before the start of the next academic year.</li> <li><b>Advisable:</b> Areas of concern regarding threshold standards</li> </ul>

Step	Action	Date	People/Body	Link	Notes
	<p>4 weeks of receipt of the EE report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APQA will also receive these reports through Portico.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>				<p>which, while currently being met, in your [EE] opinion, could be significantly improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Desirable:</b> Areas where, in your [EE] opinion, there is potential for enhancement.</li> <li>• Where the responses to recommendations require approval by the VP (or nominee) following scrutiny by APQA, this will be confirmed to the Department.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 4</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APQA will review the report alongside the responses submitted by the Board and will inform the Chair, BAs, and relevant Faculty Colleagues of any enhancements to responses that will require approval by the VP (or nominee).</li> <li>• Please note that Departments have two weeks to submit these responses onto Portico.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UG / ITE: Date range: June - September</li> <li>• PGT: Date range: October - December</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From APQA to Departments (with a copy to the FT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Academic Manual</a> – see External Examining Section in Chapter 9.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes - Template: Summary of Department Responses to EE Recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An academic responsible for the BoE, i.e. the Chair, DC or a nominee, (academic member), should be accountable for drafting the response.</li> <li>• If the Department disagrees with the EE's recommendation, the Department should make a case for this to be considered as part of their formal response.</li> </ul> <p>A template that Departments may use to initially record recommendations and responses can be found in the Annexes area of Chapter 9. The use of this template is optional, and is for use within the Department / Faculty only (it should not be sent to APQA). This template cannot be uploaded onto Portico, however responses can be copied and pasted onto Portico.</p>

Step	Action	Date	People/Body	Link	Notes
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the response provided requires enhancement, APQA will provide guidance to Departments / Faculty Tutors to amend before it is submitted to the VP (or nominee)..</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departments should submit directly on Portico their response to the entire report, emphasising the identified recommendations for approval by the VP (or nominee).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: Date range*: June – September</li> <li>PGT: Date range*: October – December</li> </ul> <p>*4 weeks from date EE report was received on Portico.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> -- see External Examining Section in Chapter 9</li> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes – Overview of External Examining Reporting Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The FT should be involved and consulted when the Department is drafting their response.</li> <li>If time permits, the Departments should involve staff and students when drafting the response.</li> <li>At this stage all recommendations should have been responded to and the full response provided on Portico.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APQA will approve and submit responses to identified recommendations to the VP / nominee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: Date range*: June – September</li> <li>PGT: Date range*: October – December</li> </ul> <p>*4 weeks from date EE report was received on Portico.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APQA to VP / nominee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes – Overview of External Examining Reporting Process</li> </ul>	

Step	Action	Date	People/Body	Link	Notes
<b>Step 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The VP / nominee will give final approval of the responses to identified recommendations and will inform APQA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: Date range: June - September</li> <li>PGT: Date range: October - December</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VP / nominee to APQA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes – Overview of External Examining Reporting Process</li> </ul>	
<b>Step 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APQA will notify the Department of approval of the responses to identified recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG/ITE: Date range: June – September</li> <li>PGT: Date range: October – December</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APQA confirms with the Department</li> <li>FT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes - Template: Summary of Department Responses to EE recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optionally, for internal use within the Department/ Faculty, Departments can record the approved response to identified recommendations on the template, Summary of Department Responses to EE Recommendations located in the Annexes area in Chapter 9 of the Academic Manual.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VP</li> </ul>				
<b>Step 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APQA will close down the report when Departments have responded to all of the recommendations/comments, and any recommendations that required VP (or nominee) approval.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG /ITE: Date range: June - September</li> <li>PGT: Date range: October - December</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From Departments to EE</li> <li>FT</li> <li>APQA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes – Overview of External Examining Reporting Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At this stage all recommendations should have been responded to and the full response provided on Portico.</li> </ul>

Step	Action	Date	People/Body	Link	Notes
<b>Step 10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The themes and issues arising from EE Reports from the BoE should be discussed at relevant Department and Faculty meetings.</li> <li>These should be shared and discussed with students also.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: October – December</li> <li>PGT: February – April</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FT / Departments to FTC, DTC including SSCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes - Template: Summary of Department Responses to EE recommendations</li> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> see ASER Section in Chapter 9</li> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> see Student Representation section in Chapter 9 for DTC; FTC and SSCC</li> </ul>	
<b>Step 11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following on from Steps 9 and 10 above, APQA will include themes in the Institutional Summary for the QRSC meeting to tie in with the ASER process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: October – December UG ASER QRSC meeting: November</li> <li>PGT: February – April PGT ASER QRSC meeting: April</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APQA to Secretary of QRSC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> see ASER Section in Chapter 9</li> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes – Overview of External Examining Reporting Process</li> </ul>	
<b>Step 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The full EE report and Departmental response should be made available to students (via Portico and/or alternative methods).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UG / ITE: September - November</li> <li>PGT: January – March</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APQA</li> <li>Departments</li> <li>UCLU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Academic Manual</a> Chapter 9 Annexes – Overview of External Examining Reporting Process</li> <li><a href="#">UCLU</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UCLU and Departments should brief students on this process.</li> </ul>