

GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING A DEPARTMENT EDUCATION PLAN

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Introduction

This document serves as a guide for colleagues in departments in developing their department education plan (DEP). These plans should be developed based on the outcomes and satisfaction data that is provided through the DEP data portal, free text comments from internal and external surveys, Student Partnership Committee (SPC) minutes and other forms of student feedback, and in consultation with the Faculty Education Team (FET), supporting by the HEDS Faculty Partnership Team (HFPT).

The purpose of the DEP, as approved by Education Committee (EdCom) in 2022-23, is to outline specific priorities, actions, milestones, resource considerations, and evaluation strategies to enhance education and student experience in local areas and to satisfy quality assurance requirements. Colleagues should focus on 1 or 2 priorities across their taught programmes. These priorities should be well-defined, fully achievable within the year or with milestones which are achievable within the year and supported by comprehensive data. Please refer to the paper approved by EdCom for more on the context and motivation for Department and Faculty Education Plans.

The Head of Department (HoD) is required to complete the Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating and sign off on the DEP before submission. Plans should be submitted by the Director of Education and Student Experience (DESE) or equivalent to the FET via the DEP portal before the start of the academic year (please check with your Faculty for their exact deadline).

Each department or equivalent must submit ONE plan which includes all their programmes (UG and PGT) (although the plan may focus on addressing particular issues with a particular programme or programmes). DESEs and HoDs will need to work with all programme leads to ensure that these plans are consistent across the different programmes in a department and are feasible.

Plans should also be shared and discussed through appropriate departmental governance (e.g. Teaching Committee and SPC). The HFPT should also be consulted in drawing up the DEPs. Once the DEP is submitted to the Faculty Education Team, they are responsible for submitting them with comments to the Dean. This will also include the recommendations for DEPs to be included in the Faculty Education Plans (FEP) - these are to be identified using a risk-based approach based on size of the education provision and the DEP data. The Dean is required to complete a RAG rating for the FEP, before submitting the FEP to the Office of the Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience). Termly updates as discussed below will follow a similar process.

The DEP data portal where all relevant quantitative data is available is linked [here](#), and the DEP submission portal is [here \(DEP submission portal user guide\)](#). Please note that the submission portal allows you to submit the form up to four separate times, if your answers to questions 6-11 are different across different sets of programmes (e.g. UG and PGT). These questions are listed below. These will nevertheless be aggregated into ONE DEP per department and the DEP will need to be fully resourced with any necessary prioritising across programmes specified in the DEP to ensure feasibility. Only the Dean, FET, the Faculty Director of Operations, HFPT, the HoD, the departmental Director of Education or equivalent, and the departmental Teaching and Learning manager or equivalent have access to these portals.

List of Questions to be answered by Departments on DEP Form

(For each set of programmes or for the whole taught provision of the department, Q1-5 are identifying questions)

6. Priority item/ area (please explain the issue)

List a maximum of 1-2 specific priorities per programme

7. Why is this an issue?

Please explain with reference to the relevant data e.g. NSS scores and free text comments, BAME awarding gap dashboard and focus groups, etc

8. Your action plan to address the issue

Please explain with reference to your explanation of why this is an issue and how your action addresses it

9. Your timeline for these actions in the current academic year with specific milestones and dates

10. What does success look like?

For each item and the corresponding action/s, please explain what you hope the outcome of your actions will be

11. What risks/ challenges to your timeline do you anticipate and what plans have you put in place to address these?

12. HoD's RAG rating

Green

Amber

Red

13. Please note any specific areas related to your actions where we (the Faculty/UCL) can support you in achieving your milestones and completing your actions

Putting together your Department Education Plan

1. Analysing Outcomes and Satisfaction Data

- DESEs or equivalent should first review the data provided in the DEP data portal alongside qualitative data (free text comments from the NSS, PGS/ PTES and APS, SPC minutes and other forms of student feedback). They should do this in conjunction with programme leads who are best placed to understand the nuances in the data produced by their programmes
- Once this data review is complete and key patterns, strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement have been identified, DESEs should discuss their analysis with their Faculty Education Team, in conjunction with your HEDS Faculty Partners.

2. Identifying Priorities

- Consider the bigger picture: Reflect on key concerns which affect many of your students and that staff would like to see resolved. Align the identified priorities with the broader institutional objectives and focus on areas of work that the department can affect directly. These priorities could be a part of ongoing and longer term work such as programme redesign.
- Select 1-2 priorities: Based on the data analysis, choose 1-2 priorities that require immediate attention and align with the broader [UCL strategic plan](#). Prioritise those that have the potential to make the most significant impact, which might be identified through the poorest performing areas or the areas which affect the most students. Programme leads should take the lead in this area, in consultation with the Director of Education who is expected to oversee how priorities of different programmes can align given the timeframe and the required resources.

3. Defining Well-Defined and Achievable Actions

- Establish clear objectives: For each priority, define specific and measurable objectives or “what success looks like”. Objectives should be realistic, achievable within the year, and directly linked to addressing the identified priorities. Longer-term plans will need to be broken down into specific goals which can be achieved within the year.
- Identify actionable steps: Break down each objective into actionable steps. Clearly define what needs to be done and by when, who will be responsible, and the available resources required to accomplish each action.
- Ensure achievability: Assess the feasibility of each action within the given timeframe and available resources. Be realistic and consider potential constraints to avoid setting unrealistic expectations. Consider where you may need the support of the

Faculty to achieve your objectives and speak with your Faculty Education Team early in the process.

4. Setting Milestones

- **Determine milestones:** Establish key milestones throughout the year to monitor progress and ensure accountability. Break down actions into manageable chunks and set specific deadlines for each milestone. You will need to update your DEP once each term (including at the end of Term 1) so that your Faculty Education Team has sight of your progress and can report to the Dean, and to University Management Committee (UMC) where appropriate
- **Communicate milestones:** Share the milestones with relevant stakeholders, including academics, administrators and students. Ensure everyone is aware of the timeline and their responsibilities.

5. Resource Considerations

- **Assess resource requirements:** Evaluate the resources needed to execute the planned actions successfully. This includes personnel, budget, facilities, technology, and any additional support.
- **Secure necessary resources:** HoDs will need to ensure that the required resources are available in a timely fashion as part of the department's education and student experience expenditure. Where Faculty support and advice is needed for this step, please discuss with your Faculty Education Team as soon as possible.

6. Evaluation

- **Establish evaluation criteria:** The obvious way to assess the effectiveness of the actions in your DEP is to look at the data. The student outcome and satisfaction data used to develop the plan will be updated each year and can provide a good measure of how well your actions have worked.
- **Review your progress towards your milestones regularly:** Schedule periodic reviews throughout the year to assess the progress made on each action. Use the evaluation plan as a guide to monitor effectiveness and make any necessary adjustments. In many cases, actions will take time to have an impact and for that impact to show up in the data. In these cases, it is particularly useful to speak with the stakeholders regularly to gather early evidence of impact.
- **You are required to submit updates to the DEP (through the portal) once a term, and where appropriate, liaise with the Faculty Education Team more frequently so that they can support your progress. The end of Term 1 update must also include a reflection on any new data (e.g. on outcomes) available since the DEP was submitted and whether this changes any of the priorities or actions in the DEP. The end of Term**

3 update must also include an evaluation of impact, based on any new data (e.g. on internal programme surveys) of actions included in the DEP.

The Faculty Education Team and the DEP

This section lays out the role of the FET in this DEP process.

As discussed in the preceding guidance, departmental DESEs or equivalent are required to consult with their FET, alongside the HFPT as they are reviewing their data and drawing up their DEP. Once this process has been completed and the DEP submitted via the portal linked in previous pages, FETs will review and approve the plan or send it back to the department for clarification, as appropriate. For departments identified through a risk-based approach, the DEP will be escalated to the Faculty Education Plan (FEP) which is reviewed and RAG rated by the Dean, and reported to UMC. FEP departments may also have a slightly different updating and reporting process, which will be confirmed by the FET.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the DEP and FEP?

The Department and Faculty Education Plans are the key elements in UCL's new risk-based approach to Quality Assurance (QA). Each department is required to submit a DEP each year, based on its student data, and update their Faculty Education Team (FET) on their progress vis-à-vis this plan, once each term. The DEP data includes outcomes and student satisfaction data and can be accessed by those listed below through the link provided to them. The DEP submission portal is similarly accessed through the appropriate link provided to those listed below.

There is [an overview page](#) on the Teaching and Learning portal, with links to relevant contacts in Arena. There is also a [90-second microCPD video](#) overview by Professor Liz Jones (Vice-Dean Education, Engineering).

2. What is the relationship between the DEP and the ASER?

The DEP replaces the ASER as UCL's main QA procedure, as agreed in the Education Committee meeting of Nov 15, 2022.

3. Should departments submit one plan per programme?

No, the department as a whole, led by the department's Director of Education and Student Experience (DESE, or equivalent), should submit only ONE plan. They can however have different areas of focus/ actions for different groups of programmes (e.g. UG and PGT – the submission portal allows 4 such groups). It is crucial that the DESE has oversight of the DEP, including any such elements, so that they can ensure that the plan itself is feasible given the department's resources.

Research degrees are not covered by the DEP/FEP process. However, if your department has a degree not linked to a Centre for Doctoral Training or a Doctoral Training Partnership, then you should include those students in the DEP.

4. What is the deadline for submitting the D/FEP?

ALL departments are required to have submitted a complete DEP to their FET before the start of the academic year, i.e., the third week of September. The FET may provide a more exact deadline if they wish. The FEP is due to the Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience – OVPESE) before Term 1 starts.

5. How many times a year does the DEP need to be updated?

Departments will need to provide an update through the DEP submission portal once each term, starting at the end of Term 1. Again, Faculties can provide a more exact deadline if they wish.

6. Who has access to the DEP data and submission portals?

Deans, Faculty Directors of Operations (DoOs), FETs, HoDs, departmental DESEs and the departmental Teaching and Learning Manager all have access to these portals. If

the details of the individuals in these roles needs updating, DoOs will need to collect this information and submit to OVPESE once a term.