

Annual Student Experience Review (ASER) 2019-20

Guidance Pack for Departments

This document provides information to assist Departments in the Annual Student Experience Review.

Email contact for issues related to the Annual Student Experience Review: aser@ucl.ac.uk

Full information is available in the Chapter 9 Quality Review Framework of the Academic Manual

[UCL Academic Manual Chapter 9 Quality Review Framework](#)

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Annual Student Experience Review (ASER)

The Annual Student Experience Review (ASER) is a key quality enhancement tool: preparing an annual summary allows a department and its students to reflect on progress, and identify ongoing challenges and how they will be addressed in a continuous cycle of quality improvement.

The ASER process draws together the quality enhancement and monitoring activities that extend throughout the year, which include the following, into an annual 'health check' exercise for both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) provision:-

- External Examiner Reports
- Student Evaluation Questionnaires (SEQ)
- National Student Survey
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) Action Planning,
- SSCC actions

ASER provides an opportunity to reflect on progress against education improvement objectives identified in the previous year and to develop an education enhancement plan for the coming year that is based on a range of evidence and produced in partnership with student representatives.

From 2019-20 academic year we have streamlined the ASER process in response to feedback to ensure a focus on:

- identifying and committing to key areas of quality enhancement that are important to your students
- tracking and evidencing progress against objectives set for the previous year
- committing to an action plan for the forthcoming year that is produced in partnership with your students and is based on your understanding of data from a variety of sources.

The changes include:-

- a single submission for all programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate taught) in the department
- a submission date that is late enough to allow you to involve students in reviewing progress and shaping the forthcoming plan and to ensure the majority of relevant data is available but, importantly, is early enough in the year to allow student reps to work with you on identifying whether sufficient progress has been achieved against last years' plan, to co-develop the plan for the forthcoming year, to allow reps to work with you on ensuring action on objectives during their year in role, and to be able to hand over the ASER aspect of their role to incoming reps
- A Faculty ASER SharePoint to facilitate continually updating to the Development and Enhancement Plan throughout the academic year.

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ASER Cycle 2019-20

Who	Action	When
Academic Services	ASER Digests of data are issued via SharePoint to Faculties with requirements to produce a Development Enhancement Plan in respect of specified areas	31 st October 2019
Faculty	Faculties will assigned access to the Faculty ASER SharePoint to staff and student reps in the Departments	Term 1
Department	Departments must compile a Development and Enhancement Plan using the ASER template in partnership with Student Representatives.	Term 1
Department	Departments must subject their Development and Enhancement Plan for discussion to DTC and DSSCC.	Term 1
Department	Departments must submit their Development and Enhancement Plan for discussion to Faculty Teaching Committee	Term 2
Faculty	Faculties must submit the Development and Enhancement Plans via the Faculty ASER SharePoint	24 th February 2020
Academic Services	Snapshot of Development and Enhancement Plans are taken from the Faculty ASER SharePoint	25 th February 2020
Quality Review Sub-Committee	Quality Review Sub-Committee meets to consider the Development and Enhancement Plans	March 2020
Department	Departments continually update their Development and Enhancement Plan	Term 2 and Term 3
Quality Review Sub-Committee	Quality Review Sub-Committee reports to Education Committee	April
Quality Review Sub-Committee	Quality Review Sub-Committee reports back to Faculty Tutors	Term 3
Faculty Tutor	Faculty Tutors feedback to Departments	Term 3

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The ASER Development and Enhancement Plan

From 2019 the ASER Development and Enhancement Plan is an excel template to facilitate continually update of your plan throughout the ASER cycle.

Your department specific plan will be in your Faculty ASER SharePoint alongside the data set which will include results from the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Taught Survey (PTES) and the ASER Dashboard which offers an overview of the survey data. The data sets will be updated throughout the academic year as it is released. Some data sets will be available through UCL Tableau.

Access to the Faculty ASER SharePoint will be assigned to your Faculty Tutor, who will then assigned access in consultation with you to key staff within your Department and student representatives.

We recommend that you identify an ASER Lead for your Department to work in partnership with the student representatives to develop your improvement objectives and for these to be taken forward for update and approval each term through the Student Staff Consultative Committee(s), Departmental Teaching Committee(s) and the Faculty Teaching Committee(s).

The development and enhancement plan has been split into five sections.

- A review of the progress against last year's ASER development and enhancement plan
- A plan for the forthcoming year
- A review of the academic partnership activity
- Commentary
- A short checklist of key stages

We have also included notes on the suggested enhancement themes we are suggest are used to consider and categorise improvement objectives.

Section One – A review of the progress against last year's ASER Development and Enhancement Plan

This section encourages authors to reflect on progress against targets set in the previous year.

For 2019 it is divided into Undergraduate and Postgraduate priorities. In future years there may be a more blurring of objectives: some of which will extend across all programmes or student groups. We have included drop downs in this section to enable quick identification of the themes and level of the programmes for each improvement objective. In the status area you can identify which data sets have provided the department with evidence of the impact of the improvement objective.

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Where possible provide evidence of progress that can be fed back to students so that they can see action taken on their priorities.

For 2019/20 the key targets in this section will be pre-populated from your previous ASER development and enhancement plan. Going forward the agreed plan for each year should be added to this section once it has been approved at Faculty level to allow an "action tracker" approach to be used to update the plan on a regular basis (for example after SSCCs or when new data sets become available).

This section can be used to handover to future student representatives the progress your Department has made and the lessons learnt in previous ASER cycles.

Section Two – Plan for the Forthcoming Year

Building on progress described in section one, this section asks departments to identify the key areas for improvement for the coming year and how progress will be achieved and measured.

For 2019-20 please consider one or more objectives in the enhancement theme domains of Assessment & Feedback and Academic Support as these are priority areas across UCL.

The plan requires departments to:

- identify how this objective was prioritised (which data source or which meeting);
- which programme or programmes it applies to;
- what steps will be taken to address this objective; and how progress will be measured. Please use an "action tracker" approach to update progress on the plan on a regular basis (for example after SSCCs or when new data sets become available).

We have included drop downs in this section to enable quick identification of the themes and level of the programmes for each improvement objective

Section Three – Academic Partnership Activity

To be completed by departments that deliver programmes with partner institutions or organisations and/or apprenticeship programmes.

This section is to comment on the responsibilities devolved to the partner and how well these are been executed including:-

- Has there been any change in the responsibilities of each party over the last year?
- Are there any issues arising from the Memorandum of Agreement which is in place?
- Have there been any changes to the partner organisation (legal, financial, organisational, leadership, facilities, etc.)? If so, what is the impact on the programme?
- Have any issues regarding the partner/partnership been raised by students on the programme?

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Section Four – Commentary

This section allows authors of the ASER to provide a brief narrative to

- provide context;
- explain why certain objectives are important in their department;
- identify any issues that affect their students regarding learning that is delivered outside of their department;
- identify UCL-wide issues that affect their students that are beyond the control of the department and that need to be addressed by colleagues from the OVPESA;
- encourages student authors to describe how students are involved in the process of quality improvement in their department.

Each narrative is a maximum of 500 words and for student authors we have provide space for a separate narrative for undergraduate and postgraduate.

Section Five – Submission Checklist

A short checklist of key quality assurance steps required for the production of the ASER development and enhancement plan and for annual UCL QA requirements. The comments area is available to provide a short explanation if required. We have include drop downs for the completed and date columns.

Details of the student and staff authors involved in the ASER process should be identified in this section along with other key staff.

The student evaluation questionnaire summaries should be uploaded to the Faculty ASER SharePoint as a separate document by the 24th February 2020 deadline.

Notes – Enhancement Themes

This section provides additional information on the potential enhancement themes we suggest are used to consider and categorise improvement objectives.

These enhancement themes have been identified to best align with themes in national surveys (NSS or PTES), priorities for UCL or reporting requirements for the Internal Quality Review (IQR) process and subject- level Teaching Excellence and Outcomes Framework (TEF).

For 2019-20 please consider one or more objectives in the enhancement theme domains of Assessment & Feedback and Academic Support as these are priority areas across UCL.

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Suggested Enhancement Theme	Examples of objectives that may be categorised in this enhancement theme
Teaching & Curriculum	Any objective related to the content or delivery of the programme(s). Improving research based teaching. Changes to delivery methods. Substantial changes to content.
Assessment & Feedback	Changes to assessment approaches. Mapping of assessment types and load. Marking criteria. Formative assessment Changes to assessment burden. Timeliness of feedback Consistency of feedback Opportunities for feedforward (to improve the use students can make of feedback)
Academic Support	Modifying office hours/ access to academic staff. Advice and support on module choice. Personal tutoring.
Organisation and Management	Changes to timetabling Timeliness of information. Approach to support from teaching administrators. Communication
Learning Resources	Moodle related objectives Improving programme specific resources. Introduction of new software or hardware. Facilities for learners
Learning Community	Opportunities for students to work collaboratively. Developing a sense of programme or department community. Opportunities to learn outside of the curriculum or to work with other students outside their own programme.
Student Voice	Improving how students are involved in shaping their learning experience, How feedback is acted on Partnership working with learners

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Suggested Enhancement Theme	Examples of objectives that may be categorised in this enhancement theme
Continuation & Outcomes	Objectives focused on the attainment of the whole student group or particular groups of students.
Careers & Employability	Careers guidance Career development skills, Working with alumni
Inclusivity	Diversifying the curriculum Inclusivity objectives for underrepresented or marginalised groups of students addressing the BME attainment gap. Actions taken in response to the departmental Inclusive Curriculum health check.
Other	Any other objective that is prioritised by your staff and students aimed at improving the learning experience

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Glossary of Key UCL Terms/Acronyms

Acronym	Detail of Phrase
AB	Academic Board
AC	Academic Council
ACom	Academic Committee
AHRC	Arts & Humanities Research Council
AM	Academic Manual
AMP	Academic Module Project
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report (replaced by ASER from 2015/16)
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
ARQAsC	Academic Regulations & Quality Assurance sub-Committee
AS	Academic Services
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
AYR	Academic Year
BME	Black & Minority Ethnic
BoE	Board of Examiners
BSc	Bachelor of Science
C2RS	Changes to Registration Status (Portico functionality)
CAS	Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (to enable overseas applicants to apply for a Tier 4 visa)
CDT	Centre for Doctoral Training
CMA	Competitions and Markets Authority
CMIS	Central Management Information System
CMISGo	New Online resource for room booking
DC	Departmental Contact (IQR)
DEOLO	Departmental Equal Opportunities Liaison Officer
DfE	Department of Education
DLHE	Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education
DM	Departmental Manager
DSA	Disabled Student Representative
DT	Departmental Tutor
DTC	Departmental Teaching Committee
EdComm	Education Committee
EE	External Examiner
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELO	Examinations Liaison Officer
FBoE	Faculty Board of Examiners
FE	Further Education
FEHQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
FM	Faculty Manager
FOI	Freedom of Information

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Acronym	Detail of Phrase
FT	Faculty Tutor
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GPA	Grade Point Average
H	Home (feepayer status)
HE	Higher Education
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Record
Hear East	UCL Campus on Olympic Park, Stratford
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council of England
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
IQR	Internal Quality Review
ISD	Information Services Division
JACS	Joint Academic Coding System
KIS	Key Information Set
MAG	Management Advisory Group
Moodle	Virtual Learning Platform
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
MRes	Master of research
MSc	Master of Science
NSS	National Student Survey
NUS	National Union of Students
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OfFA	Office for Fair Access
OfS	Office for Students
OIA	Office of the Independent Adjudicator
OS	Overseas (feepayer status)
OVPESA	Office of the Vice-Provost: Education & Student Affairs
PDF	Portable Document Format
PG	Postgraduate
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
PGTA	Postgraduate Teaching Assistant
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PI	Principal Investigator
PL	Programme Leader
PMAP	Programme & Module Approvals Panel
PO	Purchase Order

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Acronym	Detail of Phrase
Portico	UCL's interactive records system
PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAM	Quality Assurance Manager
QME	Quality Management Enhancements
QRF	Quality Review Framework
QRsC	Quality & Review sub-Committee
RAG	Research Advisory Group
RCUK	Research Councils UK
RDC	UCL Research Degrees Committee
REC	Research Ethics Committee
REF	Research Ethics Committee
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RICS	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
SCN	Student Candidate Number
SEQ	Student Evaluation Questionnaire
SES	Self-Evaluative Statement
SFE	Student Funding England
SITS	Student Information System (software underlying Portico)
SLE	Student Load Exercise
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRS	Student and Registry Services
SSCC	Staff & Student Consultative Committee
StEC	UCL Student Experience Committee
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
TOPS	Transforming our Professional Services
Turnitin	Plagiarism detection software
UCAS	University & College Admissions Service
UG	Undergraduate
UKVI	UK Visas & Immigration
UPI	Unique Personal Identifier
V-D	Vice-Dean
V-P	Vice-Provost
VP:E	Vice-Provost: Education & Student Affairs
WP	Widening Participation

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