Annual Programme Evaluation: Update and Overview

Summary

The Annual Programme Evaluation (APE) process is a fundamental part of City’s quality assurance and development work.

This paper outlines a review of the annual timeline and reporting for the APE process in response to feedback from programme teams and School quality staff, as well as the changes in institutional governance arrangements.

2016/17 was the third time we have included a thematic focus in the undergraduate APEs, and for this round this the themes were ‘Assessment Strategy’ and ‘Progression’. The thematic focus for 2017/18 will be “internationalisation in the curriculum” to allow for alignment with the ‘distinctive offer’ strand of the refreshed Education and Student Strategy. Supporting guidance will be produced and minor changes made to the APE form and the workshops will be made to incorporate this year’s theme.

In 2017, Internal Audit carried out a review of compliance with the APE policy and guidance. The outcomes of the audit and recommendations together with the planned actions have been included in the paper.

Recommended actions

Educational Quality Committee is asked to:

1. **Recommend** to Senate that the formal reporting of undergraduate and postgraduate taught APEs remains separate.

2. **Agree** the revised reporting structure and **note** that the guidance will be updated to reflect that Associate Deans (Education) identify good practice in their School APEs for dissemination.

3. **Consider** and **agree** the proposed revised timeline for undergraduate APEs represented in Appendix 1.

4. **Note** the planned actions in response to the Internal Audit recommendations.
Annual Programme Evaluation: Update and Overview

The Annual Programme Evaluation (APE) process, is one of City’s principle methods for assuring the quality and continual development of its programmes. APEs are also used as an increasingly important method for assuring that programmes align to strategic priorities. This paper outlines proposed changes to the way that the APE process will be monitored and utilised moving forward.

1. Existing Practice and Reporting

To assist programme directors and school quality teams in completed APEs, and to share best practice, Student and Academic Services host workshops in August and September. These workshops are also used to raise awareness of key changes to the APE process for the current year.

Under the current policy and guidance, undergraduate programme teams, supported by School administrative staff complete the APEs which are then signed off by Boards of Studies in October and submitted to Student and Academic Services. The APE is intended to be utilised by programme teams throughout the year, in discussion with their Staff Student Liaison Committees, and the embedded action plan developed and monitored.

Student and Academic Services produce a report outlining the quality of the submitted APEs to ensure that the APEs are completed fully, and are compliant with the policy and guidance. To date, the quality report has formally been submitted to Education and Student Committee and then Senate. Separate reports focusing on common themes arising in the APEs, and good practice have also been prepared, along with a review of the thematic element.

The reporting for Postgraduate Taught APEs is the same but these APEs are currently approved by Boards of Studies in January. APEs for Postgraduate Research programmes are reported to Graduate School Committee and Senate.

2. Revised Reporting

In response to the recent changes in committee structures and the introduction of the Educational Quality Committee, the reporting of the APEs process has been reviewed to ensure that the educational and strategic aspects are considered by the appropriate committees.

The APE process is designed to be developmental, facilitating programme teams in collaboration with their students to make changes to their programme, as well as share good practice across Schools and City. It was previously recommended that Associate Deans (Education) work with their Schools to identify good practice within their School APEs and it is proposed that this is embedded into the reporting cycle moving forward.

The following revised reporting structure is proposed:

- the annual quality reports will be reported to Educational Quality Committee
- ADEs will review their School APEs to identify good practice for consideration at the Learning and Teaching Committees and Educational Quality Committee
• strategic matters including an overview of how programmes are delivering against the E&S Strategy and School Plans and identifying the need for potential institutional projects, along with the thematic reports, will be considered by Education and Student Committee, and sent to Educational Quality Committee for noting and further comment.

All reports would then be submitted to Senate.

• **Recommended Action:** **Agree** the revised reporting structure and **note** that the guidance will be updated to reflect that Associate Deans (Education) identify good practice in their School APEs for dissemination.

The PGR APEs will continue to be monitored by Graduate School Committee prior to Senate.

**Senate Reporting**

At the July 2017 meeting of Senate it was proposed that the undergraduate and postgraduate taught APEs be considered within a single report moving forward. However, as outlined below, there is a 3 month gap between the UG and PGT APE submissions due to the timing of the respective assessment and resit boards and availability of data. By combining the reports together this would delay the formal reporting of the UG APEs by 3 months. It is therefore suggested that the formal reporting remains separate.

• **Recommended Action:** Educational Quality Committee to **recommend** to Senate that the formal reporting of undergraduate and postgraduate taught APEs remains separate.

**3. Annual Theme**

This is the third year we have used a thematic element within undergraduate APEs to explore a particular area in more depth; the 2016-17 round elements were ‘Assessment Strategy’ to help inform the LEaD assessment review, and ‘Progression’ to align with City’s Vision and Strategy KPIs. There are no thematic elements in PGT or PGR APEs.

The thematic focus for 2017/18 has previously been agreed as “internationalisation in the curriculum”. This was selected to continue alignment with City’s *Vision and Strategy*, and *Education and Student Strategy*. Previous APEs have included thematic elements aligned to the ‘distinctive offer’ stream of the *Education and Student Strategy*, (research and practice informed education and, last year, employability in the curriculum). Therefore, internationalisation is the remaining strand of that work. Similarly, the Internationalisation at Home Subcommittee have agreed that an audit should be conducted of the current international content of programmes. Conducting this through the APE process is the most logical and resource efficient way to do this. An alternative theme of “competitor analysis” was also discussed, but not selected on this occasion. Supporting guidance will be produced and minor changes made to the APE form and the workshops will be made to cover this change.

**4. Timeline**

**Undergraduate**
Under the current undergraduate APE guidance, programme committees are expected to sign-off their APEs in September for Boards of Studies approval in October and submission to Student and Academic Services. Programme directors and quality teams have reported that this does not give sufficient time for appropriate reflection and development of the undergraduate APE, as well as School level scrutiny.

The School of Arts and Social Sciences developed a programme management flow timeline to enable a more developmental and reflective process which they trialled this year. The process began with the distribution and discussion of module statistics after assessment boards, feeding into an APE that was drafted, consulted on and collaboratively written by the programme team at the SSLC and Programme Committee. The APEs then not only reflected on the year before but look to the future, by outlining (in a supplementary document) all of the proposals for programme amendments. The APEs were then internally peer reviewed, each with a critical reader before being submitted to Student and Academic Services – a similar peer review has now been adopted by most Schools and is working very effectively. The final stage was for the programme director to submit any PARC amendments, which should be informed by this APE process.

SASS piloted timeline:

- June – programme team reviews module statistics at assessment board
- Sep - programme team reviews resit module statistics at resit board
- Sep – APE data produced by School administrative team and sent to programme director
- Early Oct – Programme director drafts APE document
- Oct, Week 4/5 – SSLC takes place and draft APE is discussed
- Oct/Nov, Week 5/6 – Programme committee takes place and programme team discuss programme narrative, what isn’t working and what needs to be changed. This feeds into final version of APE and is the basis for PARC submissions
- Nov 15 – School APE deadline. Each APE sent to critical reader for comment
- Nov 22 – School APE workshop where critical readers make comments and discuss. Programme directors make necessary amendments
- Nov 29 – APEs sent to Student and Academic Services

Based on feedback from programme directors at the APE workshops, as well as the successful pilot in SASS, it is proposed that the guidance is updated for 2017/18 to reflect revised deadlines for undergraduate APEs. The proposed dates have been illustrated in Appendix 1.

**Recommended Action:** Consider and Agree the proposed revised timeline for undergraduate APEs represented in Appendix 1.
Under the current PGT APE guidance programme committees are expected to sign-off their APEs for Boards of Studies approval in January/February and submission to Student and Academic Services. This current timeline does not give programme teams time to include re-sit board outcomes, as the boards primarily meet up to the end of February, within the data analysis.

The School of Arts and Social Sciences is currently trialling a revised timeline:

- Dec-Jan – Programme Directors draft APEs on templates where the School Professional Staff have pre-populated the available data
- Feb – Assessment boards held, APEs are completed and approved by Programme Committees
- End of Feb – Programme Directors submit APEs to School Quality Team for circulation to critical readers.
- March Week 1 – APE Review Meetings take place
- March Week 2 – Boards of Studies approves reviewed APEs
- March Week 3 – Approved APEs are submitted to Student and Academic Services

The trialled process will be reviewed with the view of proposing that the revised timeline is adopted across City. This has been illustrated in Appendix 1.

Postgraduate Research

The PGR APE form has been significantly revised in response to feedback from Senate and the Graduate School Committee. The revised APE form will be presented to the March 2018 meeting of Senate for approval.

5. Internal Audit

During 2016/17 the APE and periodic review processes underwent a joint internal audit review. Internal audit reported that “A Substantial level of assurance can be given to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Annual Programme Evaluation and Periodic Review systems of internal control at the time of our audit and limited to the scope. Substantial assurance is defined as, “While there is a basically sound system, there are weaknesses which put some of the system objectives at risk, and/or there is evidence that the level of non-compliance with some of the controls may put some of the system objectives at risk”.

Good practice in the APE process was identified as:

- **Guidance** – Comprehensive and accessible guidance is available on the City website. In addition Student & Academic Services staff have provided support to Programme Directors through workshops on the APE process.
- **Strategic Priorities** – The APE form is designed to address themes of strategic importance to the School and Institution
- **Form Development** – Feedback from Associate Deans and Programme Directors noted that the APE form has been improved in recent years to have a clearer structure and reduce duplication.

Page 5 of 16
Evidence Sources – Completed APEs reflect evidence from a wide range of sources as per the guidance.

Commentary – Commentary within the reviewed APEs directly addressed and explained data from the management information section of the document.

Action Plans – The APE document includes a formal plan with owners and timescales for each proposed action.

Student & Academic Services monitoring – Student & Academic Services monitor the completion of APEs for all City programmes. Staff review each APE and carry out a sample based check to evaluate completeness and quality.

Institution Reporting – Staff from Student & Academic Services review completed APEs and prepare a report for the Education & Student Committee and for Senate highlighting common themes.

Key issues identified by Internal Audit were:

- **Purpose, Value and Feedback** – The audit found that the APE is frequently perceived as a bureaucratic task offering limited value for Programme Directors and at times duplicating reporting required elsewhere. However the audit also noted genuine interest in initiatives to gain more from the process, especially through wider sharing of good practice. Programme Directors were also particularly keen to have greater insight and feedback on action taken in response to APE content at School and Institution level. It was noted that initiatives are being implemented to address these concerns, including critical review events within Schools to consider APEs from each programme and share good practice, and workshops provided by Student & Academic Services to support Programme Directors in the APE process. In view of the initiatives already underway no new recommendation is raised in this report.

- **Programme Committee sign-off** – Programme Committee involvement in reviewing and agreeing APEs varies across the Institution. Minutes indicate that some Committees considered the APE content whilst others simply noted the process. Two Programme Committees had recorded Committee sign-off of the APE for consideration by Board of Studies. In one School Programme Team discussions of APEs had not been recorded.

- **Board of Studies Approval** – The audit was unable to confirm Board approval for one of the twelve 2015/16 APEs reviewed.

- **Student Involvement** – The audit found inconsistencies in institutional policy and guidance concerning student involvement in APEs and the role of SSLCs. Actual practice was found to be varied with some SSLCs not considering the APE at all. Practice was influenced by differing perceptions of the purpose of the APE, differing views on sharing APE content with students and low student participation in some areas.

- **Programme Committee Monitoring** – Programme Committee minutes revealed varied and in some cases very limited involvement of Programme Committees in subsequent monitoring and updating of the APE following Board of Studies approval.

- **Update to Final Board of Studies** – Two Boards of Studies did not receive a further update on APEs for their Schools after initial approval.

- **External Examiner feedback** – Two completed APEs from a sample of twelve contained no reference to External Examiner feedback for the programme and no explanation for the omission.
Based on these key issues a number of recommendations have been made which can be found in Appendix 2.

- **Recommended Actions:** Note the planned actions in response to the Internal Audit recommendations.

6. **Next Steps**

Work is currently being done to update the APE form template and guidance to reflect the new thematic element, as well as to align the APE policy and guidance to the ongoing policy work regarding Programme Approval, Periodic Review, Programme Amendments, and Programme Suspension/Termination. In particular, it is proposed that the APE will be used to monitor action plans leading on from Periodic Reviews, removing the requirement for a separate year on report. The revised template will be published in late June 2018.

Workshops for Programme Directors and School Professional Staff will be run in August and September to support programme directors with preparation for the APE process and share best practice. Based on the feedback from last year the workshops will be separated so that there will be distinct workshops for undergraduate and postgraduate programme directors.

Dr Alexander Rhys  
Development Co-ordinator (Quality/TEF)  
Alexander.Rhys@city.ac.uk
Appendix 1: Proposed revised APE timelines

### Undergraduate APE proposed timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services publish APE template and guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Teams review module statistics at assessment boards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services host workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Teams review resit module statistics at resit boards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Teams working with their School administrative staff draft APE document</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSLC reviews APE draft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Committees meet and discussion leads to further development of APE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School internal APE deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools review APEs and Boards of Studies Approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services deadline for APE submission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme teams continue to use APEs as a working document with their SSLCs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services report on quality/completion of submitted APEs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services report on good practice/themes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report written on thematic element of APES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services publish APE template and guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services host workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Teams working with their School administrative staff draft APE document</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Teams review programme/module statistics after resit boards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Committees meet and discussion leads to further development of APE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School internal APE deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools review APEs and Boards of Studies Approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services deadline for APE submission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services report on quality/completion of submitted APEs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and Academic Services report on good practice/themes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report written on thematic element of APES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2 – Annual Programme Evaluations Internal Audit Actions with proposed actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Management Response</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Annual Programme Evaluation: Programme Committee sign-off</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The APE guidance indicates that APEs should be a standing item on Programme Committee agendas with a sign-off step before the APE is considered by Board of Studies. The audit found that in practice, Programme Committee involvement in reviewing and agreeing APEs varies across the Institution. Programme Committee minutes were requested in respect of twelve City programmes and the audit made the following observations: • Committees for five of the selected programmes considered the APE before submission to Board of Studies. Two Committees recorded a formal sign off of the APE. • Two Committees discussed the APE process but not the APE content or whether it was ready for Board of Studies. • One Committee noted that the APE would be considered by a dedicated Board of Studies sub-committee. • Committees for three programmes had met to discuss APEs before the School Board of Studies but no minutes had been taken. Academic Services staff within the School are</td>
<td>The APE guidance already clearly states accountabilities of key committees for sign off of APEs. This has regularly been raised through E&amp;S Committee and Senate. New quality assurance reporting requirements will support consistent completion of the full APE process. We will ensure that the key points raised through the audit are included in workshops for programme directors including a specific item on gathering and incorporating student feedback.</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Chairs/Sectaries of the relevant committees in Schools</td>
<td>Guidance to be added to workshops for programme directors and school quality staff on APEs taking place this year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
currently working to formalise Committee meetings and minute taking to address this.

- Minutes for one Programme Committee were not available by the end of the audit.

Inconsistencies in Programme Committee involvement in the APE process make it difficult to demonstrate consensus and ownership of the evaluation and action plan. There are risks that the documents only reflect the views of the Programme Director and overlook the observations, concerns or ideas of other members of the Programme team.

| 2 | **Annual Programme Evaluation: Board of Studies Approval** | 2 | Boards of Studies’ formal duties include assuring academic quality and standards of provision and approving Annual Programme Evaluations for reporting to Senate. This is reflected in Board Terms of Reference and guidance on the APE process. The audit identified that the 2015-16 APE for one programme out of 12 reviewed had not been formally approved by the School Board of Studies. Enquiries indicate the APE was considered by a Board sub-committee but there is no record of the Board receiving or accepting the sub-committee’s recommendations. Without evidence of Board approval there is a risk that Boards cannot demonstrate adequate scrutiny and oversight of APEs in accordance with their duties. The APE guidance already clearly states accountabilities of key committees for sign off of APEs. This has regularly been raised through E&S Committee and Senate. New quality assurance reporting requirements will support consistent completion of the full APE process. We will ensure that the key points raised through the audit are included in workshops for programme directors including a | June 2018 | Chairs/Sectaries of the relevant committees in Schools | Guidance to be given to Schools to formally record approval of APEs, or formally delegate responsibility to a review group. |
specific item on gathering and incorporating student feedback.

3  Annual Programme Evaluation: Student Involvement

Management should review the purpose of the APE with regards to the student experience and clarify expectations for student involvement in the APE lifecycle.

2  The UK Quality Code for Higher Education identifies student involvement in programme monitoring and review as an indicator of good practice.

The audit identified inconsistencies in institutional guidance on student involvement in the APE process. The APE Policy suggests that “Programme teams may share sections of a draft APE with students” whilst supporting guidance states that both the SSLC and Programme Committee should “receive a full copy of the APE as early as possible in the APE lifecycle”. With regards to subsequent progress reporting the policy states that “Students will be provided with updates on those actions designed to enhance student satisfaction and/or actions taken in response to student feedback. This would normally occur at Staff-Student Liaison Committees.” On the same subject the guidance states that the SSLC and Programme Committees “will focus on the progress of the action plan and development required resulting from feedback and new data including matters arising during the year.”

Actual practice was found to vary with the following observations from the agenda template for SSLCs: the template has a clear requirement for an item to consider students’ views on proposed actions for the forthcoming year in the APE, and to consider progress with actions in the APE related to addressing student satisfaction. Student and Academic Services will review and clarify the requirements for student involvement in the APE process, and work with Schools to support consistent implementation.

June 2018  Dr Alex Rhys (Development Coordinator TEF/Quality)

Guidance will be clarified regarding student involvement in APEs. Communication will be sent to schools on any changes, and the workshop updated.
Committee minutes for eleven programmes:

- One SSLC had APE as a standing item on the agenda. Students had discussed relevant content from the draft APE but there had been no subsequent updates on progress or revisions.
- Three SSLCs included APE on some agendas. One SSLC had agreed content and had then received progress updates. One had simply noted that the APE would be considered by a Board of Studies sub-committee.
- Agendas for seven SSLCs contained no reference to APE. Programme Committees for two of the programmes concerned had considered the draft APE with students in attendance. Feedback from Programme Directors described the following influences on student involvement in the APE process:
  - Differing perceptions about the purpose and value of APE - APEs are viewed in some areas as a simple consolidation of analysis and actions that would happen anyway. SSLCs in these areas agree actions and receive progress updates but with no specific reference to the APE.
  - Differing views about which elements of the APE should be shared with students - Some Programme Directors were happy to share the full document whilst others were cautious about content which
might point to particular individuals or negatively impact reputation (if shared beyond the Institution).
- Low attendance by student representatives at some committees.

Inconsistencies in guidance and practice create risks of perceived inequity in how students are engaged in programme development. An APE which has not been considered by students may not accurately reflect their views. Not communicating progress with the APE action plan may undermine the value of the APE process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th><strong>Annual Programme Evaluation: Programme Committee Monitoring</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student and Academic Services should clarify and reaffirm the role of Programme Committees in the APE lifecycle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Annual Programme Evaluation Policy states that "Progress in achieving the actions within an APE will be monitored through a standing item at Programme Committee meetings." This is also reflected in the standard Terms of Reference for Programme Committees. APEs are expected to be "living documents" which are updated throughout the year.

The audit requested minutes for the Programme Committees for twelve programmes. Minutes were received for nine Committees. Minutes showed that five of the nine Committees included the APE as a standing item on the agenda. Two of these Committees considered updates to the APE and progress with action plans. Four other Committees made little or no reference to the APE. Three

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the School Boards of Studies to ensure appropriate consideration of the APEs by its sub-committees in line with their terms of reference and the APE Policy. Student and Academic Services will reiterate the requirements for Programme Committee involvement in the APE process and work with Schools to support consistent implementation of this requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June 2018</th>
<th>Dr Alex Rhys (Development Coordinator TEF/Quality) Chairs/Sectaries of the relevant committees in Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Guidance to be clarified with school quality teams and added to APE workshops for programme directors.
Committees did not record discussions relating to APEs as per 4.2.

Without ongoing monitoring by Programme Committees there are risks that APE documents become out of date and cease to fully reflect the development of the programme. There are also risks that agreed actions are not carried out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Annual Programme Evaluation: Update to Final Board of Studies</th>
<th></th>
<th>June 2018</th>
<th>Chairs/Sectaries of the relevant committees in Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Annual Programme Evaluation: Update to Final Board of Studies</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chairs of Boards of Studies with the Secretaries ensure that Boards of Studies receive a final update as per the policy and guidance.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Annual Programme Evaluation Policy states that APEs should be updated throughout the year to reflect on-going feedback, developments and new data and that Boards of Studies consider the APE reports twice a year to assure quality and support enhancement. The guidance indicates that there should be an update on the APEs to the Board by its final meeting. The audit reviewed Boards of Studies minutes and found that the Boards for two Schools had not received an update on APEs by the end of the 2015/16 academic year. There is a risk of insufficient oversight of the APE process at School level to ensure that new developments are recognised and agreed actions completed.</td>
<td>Senate agreed revisions to the APE Policy in October 2017 clarifying the requirements for APEs to be updated during the year and reports provided to Boards of Studies. Student and Academic Services will work with Schools to support implementation of the requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Annual Programme Evaluation: External Examiner feedback</th>
<th></th>
<th>June 2018</th>
<th>Chairs/Sectaries of the relevant committees in Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Annual Programme Evaluation: External Examiner feedback</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Guidance on drafting the APE states that evaluations should be based on evidence and identifies External Examiner feedback as one key source of evidence. The audit reviewed twelve completed APEs for 2015/16 and Ultimately, the responsibility for APE content rests with the relevant individuals and with the committees that sign off the APEs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APEs should reference the key sources of evidence listed in the guidance or explain the reason for any omission. Found that two contained no reference to External Examiner feedback for the programme. Each of the other APEs included material from all of the suggested sources or explained its absence, for example the non-availability of survey data where response rates were below the threshold for publication. There is a risk that by omitting particular sources of evidence without explanation, the APE is seen as only partly reflecting different perspectives on the programme. This may limit the assurance gained from the evaluation that all relevant evidence has been considered and any significant concerns addressed.

Student and Academic Services will work with Schools to support implementation of the requirements. Coordinator TEF/Quality) importance of external examiner feedback in APEs.