

Periodic Review Update

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Status: Update

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Executive summary

Periodic review is an external process which provides an opportunity for in depth scrutiny and quality enhancement of all aspects of a School's educational provision. This includes addressing whether UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether City's academic standards are being maintained.

This paper provides the following information on Periodic Review as follows:

- **Section A - Overview of Review Activity** in academic year 2018-19
- **Section B - Particular strengths**
- **Section C - Future Enhancements**
- **Section D – Process**
- **Section E – Recommendations** (available in full [here](#)).
- **Section F - Planned Review Activity** in academic year 2019-20

Periodic Review Reports:

Accessible via <https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/quality-manual/8-programme-evaluation-and-review/periodic-review-report-and-the-reflective-review-library> Interim schedule of Periodic Review Events for academic year 2019-20.

This report was considered and approved by Educational Quality Committee at its meeting in September 2019. A full version of the report is available [here](#).

Action(s) required from the Committee:

Senate is asked to:

- consider the overview report for academic year 2018-19;
- note the interim schedule of Periodic Review Events for academic year 2019-20;
- note the recommendations for City arising from Periodic Reviews to be taken forward by Education Quality Committee (available in full [here](#)).

The table below outlines which committees/groups have already seen the report and the resulting outcome/action from discussions.

Committee date	Committee title	Outcome/action	Action date	Paper version number
18 September 2019	Educational Quality Committee (EQC)	EQC approved and will monitor the action plans.	Summer 2020	1

The [Periodic Review Policy](#) gives full details of the aims of the Periodic Review. However, in summary, each department/discipline will take part in the process on a 5 year cyclical basis. The Periodic Review forms part of City, University of London's framework for the management of the quality and standards of provision. In addition, it aims to gain an understanding of developments, provisions, and changes undergone by the programme(s) under review. It involves the Programme Teams, current students and Alumni, and the School Senior Management Team, with the aim of gaining greater understating of the provision available, and the strategic direction of the Department/discipline.

Annual Programme Evaluation happens every year and Periodic Review reflects on the past 5 years to ensure the strength and relevance of the programme for the next 5 years. Schools are requested to adhere strictly to the 5 year timeline, so that the institution can be assured of the future quality of its programmes. Schools are asked to consult with Deputy President via the Student and Academic Services Quality and Academic Development (QUAD) team to agree any extension to the 5 year timeline with an appropriate rationale for consideration such as updates to PSRB requirements etc.

The 2018/19 Periodic Review outcomes highlighted a number of key themes, alongside some programme-specific themes.

Section A - Overview of Review Activity 2018-19

The 2018-19 Periodic Review cycle was very busy with 13 periodic review events. This cycle is representative of the increasing Periodic Review activity since last year, reflecting the continuing growth of the Institution and its provision. Whilst this was a significant volume of Review activity, four planned Reviews did not take place due to the unavailability of either Senior Staff or External Advisors, and are planned to take place prior to December 2019.

There was an exceptional level of support for these events from Student and Academic Services colleagues, School Quality Teams and Programme Administration teams.

Planning for next year is underway and there are currently Review Events ongoing.

The Reports for 2018-19 will be made available via the [Periodic Review Library](#). The reports speak to a successful year of Reviews, with many of the Panels commenting on the dedication of programme and support staff, the commitment to academic excellence and offering examples of best practice in every area.

This report covers the following programmes/programme clusters:

School	Programme(s) covered
Cass	MSc Charity Programmes
SASS	PhD/DMA Music (carried over from 17-18)
SASS	UG/PG Economics
SASS	MPhil/PhD Department of Sociology (carried over from 17-18)
SASS	MPhil/PhD Journalism (carried over from 17-18)
SHS	Postgraduate Certificate / Diploma / MSc in: Computed Tomography Medical Magnetic Resonance
SHS	Masters in Public Health (MPH)
SHS	MSc Clinical Optometry
SHS	MSc Advanced Practice Programmes (All Programmes)
SHS	MSc Health Services Research
SMCSE	MSc Advanced Mechanical Engineering
SMCSE	MPhil/PhD Research Degrees Computer Science
SMCSE	MPhil/PhD Research Degrees Engineering
SMCSE	MSc Information Science & MA Library Science

Note: the following reports are pending finalisation at the time of writing:

School	Programme(s) covered
SMCSE	MPhil/PhD Research Degrees Engineering
SASS	PhD/DMA Music
SHS	MSc Clinical Optometry

Section B - Particular strengths

B.1 Particular strengths in 2018/19 were identified as follows:

B.1.1 Academic Standards and Student Achievement

- Academic expertise and research reputation, combined with quality of facilities, as a motivation for students to apply to City

B.1.2 Student Support and Resources

- The commitment and dedication of the students and staff to create a supportive learning environment at City
- The quality of supervision and responsiveness of staff to research students
- The new Graduate Teaching Assistant contract has been generally well received, where opportunities to teach are offered openly/fairly.

Section C – Future Enhancements

C.1 Future Enhancements in 2018/19 were identified as follows:

The Periodic Review panels included the following enhancements to be addressed:

C.1.1 Student Support and Resources

- **Student Voice:** There is a perception that students on programmes where there is a strong sense of community and support from teaching staff that the students do not need to access the Students' Union. However all students may benefit from impartial and confidential advice and support on a range of issues at some point on their journey. There is a need to strengthen the student representation process by working closely with City Students' Union to ensure that Student Representatives are supported to undertake their role (with training, support on creative approaches to gather insight to understand the views of their peers). This is important not just on larger programmes but also on smaller programmes so that students feel free to contribute their views to shape the student experience. City Students' Union and City, University of London have reviewed the student representation system in 2018/19, the review and subsequent recommendations are due to be presented to Senate in October 2019.

C.1.2 Academic Standards and Student Achievement

- **Learning & Teaching:** Students need to be able to work in international contexts when they graduate not just in the UK but also overseas. This is an area identified for development where work has started on collecting case studies, and developing an international toolkit.

C.1.3 Educational Offer/Effectiveness of Programmes

- **Assessment and feedback:** Staff within programme teams appear to have differing approaches to marking. Defining and developing clear marking criteria is important to ensure that markers apply a consistent approach. Marking and moderation workshops where staff have an opportunity to discuss assessment and the application of marking criteria to work will continue to ensure fair and consistent assessment marking and feedback practices for all students.

This may be part of a larger picture where there is a need to continue to nurture best pedagogical practices on marking and assessment with support from Associate Deans Education and LEaD. Staff need to ensure learners are supported to evaluate and reflect on their progress with an understanding of how and what they will learn. Staff need to continue to ensure clearer information on assessment through use of constructive alignment. 'Constructive alignment' is about ensuring that the assessment activity links to the learning outcomes and support assessment of these.

- **Planning:** Discussion took place around future plans. School are to continue to reflect on School portfolios via the School planning rounds. The Strategy and Planning Unit (SPU) continue to work on a tool that will help any staff member to identify competitor courses, and can offer. Staff in Schools are advised to continue to link in with their Departmental Heads to consider academic sustainability, business intelligence, contribution rates, and market demand for any new programmes.

C.1.4 Student Community, Alumni and Graduate Engagement and Feedback

- **Alumni Relations:** There are various practices in alumni relations. Staff need to continue to strengthen alumni relations with support from the Development and Alumni Relations Team (DART). The DART are currently in the process of developing their strategy and working with the Schools and professional services to define those processes. Schools and Professional services are asked to get in touch with the DART for any type of engagement. The DART look after the alumni central database and its maintenance. For this purpose it is important for staff to inform DART if alumni do not wish to be contacted, to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). DART are working to develop lifelong relationships. DART will benefit by knowing when alumni have any interactions with Schools and Professional Services across the University to reward those contributions appropriately.

C.1.5 Student Support and Resources

- **Consistent information provided to students:** Signposting opportunities will help students make the most out of their time at City (e.g. access to research funding, career opportunities, access to student support etc.);
- There is differentiation in the way that students receives programme information. Programmes are expected to follow the required City handbook template (to include personal tutor arrangements, assessment and marking information, student support and resources, and consistent module teaching hours) available via the Quality Manual. Research students need clearer access to opportunities and funding available to them throughout the academic year.
- **Studentships:** Studentships are important way to underline a commitment to grow City's research activity in line with the university's Vision and Strategy. They also play an important role in promoting the School's portfolio to attract more self-funding applicants. Research PPRs identified the need for the Graduate School to explore more studentships.

Section D – Process

Staff changes took place within School quality teams. QUAD will update and share 'who does what' in relation to PPR preparation so that staff feel supported, and are clearer in their roles and responsibilities.

Section E – Recommendations

Action Planning and ongoing monitoring to be undertaken by Educational Quality Committee – more details are available [here](#)

Source	Risk management recommendations to be progressed	Responsibility	Timeframe
Educational Quality Committee (Risk management recommendations from September 2018)	E.1 Streamline programme administration and publication, in consultation with stakeholders	QUAD and School Quality Teams	January 2020
	E.2 Improve staff engagement with periodic review events and clearly articulate University expectations for staff to Deans and Senior Management structures to cascade to staff	QUAD, School Quality Teams, and Associate Deans for Education (ADEs)	Summer 2020
	E.3 Develop a University framework and guidance/best-practice document for programmes where a high percentage of delivery is via Visiting Lecturers to support consistency	LEaD with HR	Summer 2020
Recommendations Arising from September 2019 for University Consideration (new)	F.1 Explore additional university funding for Studentships	Assistant Registrar (Research)	January 2020
	F.2 Strengthen Alumni Relations	Development and Alumni Relations Team (DART)	Summer 2020
	F.3 Focus on Learning and Teaching: Constructive Alignment and Internationalisation	LEaD	Summer 2020
	F.4 Clarify Roles and Responsibilities in relation to Periodic Review Process	Quality & Standards Officer, S&AS	January 2020
	F.5 Strengthen Student Representation	Deputy Head of Student Experience and Engagement and City Students' Union	Summer 2020

Section F Planned Review Events for 2019-20

The Reviews in table below represent those already scheduled for 2019-20, and those carried forward from 2018-19. *Please note that these dates are still under discussion and are subject to change.*

School	Programmes covered	Prelim Mtg Date	Dev Event Date	PR Day Date
Cass	PG Finance Programmes			
Cass	BSc Banking and International Finance			
Cass	MSc Management			
Cass	MSc Global Supply Chain Management		11-Jun-19	11 Nov-19
Cass	MSc Marketing Strategy and Innovation		04-Jun-19	9 Oct-19
Law	Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC)		10-Sep-19	13-Jan-20
Law	Research Programmes			
SASS	UG/PG Journalism Cluster			
SASS	UG/PG Music Cluster			
SASS	Psychology Cluster			
SASS	UG/ PG Politics and International Politics Programmes		16-Sep-19	
SASS	Economics Research		26-Nov-19	
SHS	BSc/PG Dip Midwifery			20-May-20
SHS	Research Programmes (DPsych, MSc Health Psychology/ Psychology and Health)			Pending
SHS	MSc Speech, Language and Communication Needs in Schools			7 May-20
SHS	BSc Nursing Studies			09-Jun-20
SHS	MSc Health Policy			28-May-20
SHS	MRes Clinical Research			4 June-20
SMCSE	MSc Renewable Energy and Power Systems Management			
SMCSE	MPhil/PhD Research Degrees Mathematics			
SMCSE	Computing Programmes			

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