

# Code of practice for continuous enhancement review: taught programmes

Academic year 2024/25

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## Introduction

1. This *Code of practice for continuous enhancement review: taught programmes* applies to all taught programmes at the University of Surrey and its Associated and Accredited Institutions which lead to the University awards as described in the [Regulations for taught programmes and the Regulations for the foundation year](#).
2. The principles of the Continuous Enhancement Review (CER) process are based on the Sector-Agreed Principles, Evaluating quality and standards of the Quality Assurance Agency [UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024](#).

## Definitions

3. **Continuous Enhancement Review (CER)** – is the continuous, systematic, and risk-based review process that assures and enhances the quality of taught programmes. Continuous enhancement review takes place throughout the academic year, as metrics and feedback become available. CER consists of two elements: a Continuous Enhancement Plan (CEP) and the Annual Programme Enhancement Review (APER).
4. **Continuous Enhancement Plan (CEP)** – is a single rolling action plan for each programme which is regularly maintained by the Programme Leader/ Head of Discipline. The CEPs should clarify if the Foundation Year provision is integrated into the CEP for a relevant degree programme, or if a separate action plan is being maintained by the Foundation Year Programme Leader. NB. In cases where the data range used for the CEP for an individual programme was flagged “at risk” (for example, low/declined rates of student continuation, progression, attainment gaps, etc), the Programme Leader / Head of Discipline is required to liaise with the Associate Head of School, Education (AHE). These risks subsequently will be considered by the Faculty senior education and executive leadership committees and groups, as outlined in Flowchart 1.
5. **Annual Programme Enhancement Review (APER)** – is a short reflective annual report, produced by the AHE for a group of programmes in their School. The annual report should highlight key themes, issues and identified risks, and also areas of good practice for wider dissemination across the University.

## Purpose, aims and scope of the continuous enhancement review process

6. The University considers the continuous enhancement review process to be a key contributor to its quality framework and the management of identified risks, whilst helping to identify and disseminate good practice across all programmes.
7. The continuous enhancement review process aims to support improvement of the quality of the taught programmes offered by the University. Its function is to monitor risks and provide regular checks on ongoing learning, teaching, and assessment provision at an operational level, identifying and tracking actions that will further enhance the quality of provision.
8. Continuous enhancement review is part of the University’s wider risk-based approach to quality assurance. Where risks are identified through other academic governance and monitoring processes, continuous enhancement review provides a mechanism for response.
9. The continuous enhancement review process enables the University to reflect on:
  - The student experience and existing learning opportunities;
  - Achieved academic standards and student outcomes.
10. The effectiveness of the continuous enhancement review process is ensured by following up identified risks and recommendations for appropriate actions in the

Continuous Enhancement Plan (CEP), with the provision of clear roles, responsibilities, and reporting processes for all members of staff involved. As a result, the effective and prompt follow-up of the actions in the CEP will protect the interests of current students and allow any staff and resource development needs that are identified to be addressed. The discussion and follow-up of CEP actions should be documented in the Minutes at each Board of Studies.

11. The continuous enhancement review process covers all taught provision including the foundation year, undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes leading to a University award or stand-alone credit and offered by the University of Surrey and its Accredited Institution.
12. The Associate Head of School, Education is required to produce a separate APER report for undergraduate programmes and postgraduate taught programmes. Foundation year Programme Leads are required to produce a separate APER for foundation year programmes (please see separate reporting template on the QAD central SharePoint site).
13. All permanently or temporarily closed programmes must undertake continuous enhancement review during the process of teaching out, including during the final year of the programme(s). The focus of the continuous enhancement review process should be on the maintenance of the student learning experience and on how any issues and recommendations identified have been addressed and followed-up.
14. In cases of a review process for a joint honours or major/minor programme, the School responsible for the programme should produce the report. Consideration should be given to the student experience of students undertaking programmes with significant input from more than one School.
15. An overview of the continuous enhancement review process is attached in Appendix 1.

## **Procedure overview**

### ***Maintain Action Plans***

16. Each programme maintains a Continuous Enhancement Plan (CEP) on an ongoing basis, throughout the academic year. The CEP is updated regularly by the Programme Leader in response to the availability of new data, external examiners' comments or student feedback received. As a minimum, all the CEPs are reviewed twice per year for consideration at each meeting of the relevant Board of Studies. It is the responsibility of the programme team, Chair of the Board of Studies and the Associate Head of School, Education to ensure that this consideration takes place on a regular basis.

### ***Produce Annual Enhancement Report***

17. APERs are produced once a year by the Associate Head of School, Education. APERs should also undergo Faculty level scrutiny. Associate Deans, Education shall meet regularly (twice annually as a minimum) with their Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education, Director of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance and/or Chief Student Officer, as appropriate, to discuss and respond to identified risks within the APER reports and support timely dissemination and implementation of best practice across Faculties. It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean, Education to ensure that these discussions take place and executive level staff are kept informed of the CER process and its outcomes. AHEs will be invited to contribute to these discussions. APER reports are also discussed and approved by Faculty Education Committee (FEC).

### **Submission of Overview of Annual Programme Review Reports to Faculty Education Committee**

18. The Faculty Associate Dean, Education presents a summary of Faculty APERs to the University Education Committee (UEC), including any recommendations, for approval.
19. Reference points for consideration as part of the ongoing development of the CEP and APERs include:
  - Discussions at Boards of Examiners prompted by module marks and degree outcomes data;
  - The continuous enhancement review dashboards provided by Strategic Planning and the Directorate of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance, which includes statistics on student surveys, progression, continuation, degree outcomes and employment outcomes;
  - Annual external examiners' reports and module comments;
  - Outcomes from academic governance structures where risks have been identified.
20. The templates for the individual CEPs, APERs, Faculty overview reports and AI's Annual Review Report are available from a central [Quality Assurance Documentation \(QAD\) SharePoint site](#). Staff members can also access additional resources, including ongoing CEPs and individual APER reports for previous years from the [QAD](#) SharePoint site. Submission and storage of documentation is to be managed through this SharePoint site to facilitate appropriate oversight of the process.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

21. Where programme(s) to be reviewed are delivered through an educational partnership, there should be appropriate representatives of all partners contributing to the continuous enhancement review.
22. Where student or partner representatives are present at the Board of Studies meetings that consider CEPs, the meeting agenda may include a Reserved Business section for any discussions to be attended by staff members only.
23. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Studies to ensure that CEPs have been considered by the Board of Studies and any risks identified trigger the relevant Programme Leader to liaise with the AHE to discuss these risks.
24. The relevant Board of Studies' minutes must reflect the outcome(s) of any discussions related to the CEPs, follow-up action taken, recommendations and examples of good practice, as appropriate.
25. The University defines roles and responsibilities of various members of staff, organisational bodies and committees involved in initiating and managing the continuous enhancement review process, as described in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Continuous enhancement review process: a summary of roles and responsibilities<sup>1</sup>**

Role	Responsibilities
<b>Head of Academic Policy and Governance (APG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support and guidance to relevant academic members of staff involved in the process, including staff in Associated and Accredited Institutions (AI);</li> <li>• To evaluate the outputs of continuous enhancement review process.</li> </ul>
<b>Academic Quality Services (AQS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To advise and assist with the creation of new CEPs</li> <li>• To facilitate uploads of individual CEPs, APERs and Faculty overview reports to the QAD SharePoint site and to be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of this site;</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Planning / Director of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance (APQG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a core dataset to inform continuous enhancement review for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes;</li> <li>• To facilitate in creating dashboards in Power BI to assist AHEs and Programme Leaders.</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Leader/ Head of Discipline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To regularly maintain the Continuous Enhancement Plan for their programme and report any staffing changes to AQS;</li> <li>• To review data made available throughout the academic year, such as that produced by the Strategic Planning , module marks and degree outcomes data;</li> <li>• To consider feedback from students, external examiners and key meetings such as Boards of Examiners;</li> <li>• To produce actions to deal with risks identified and update the Continuous Enhancement Plan (CEP) accordingly;</li> <li>• To present the Continuous Enhancement Plan (CEP) at each Board of Studies Meeting;</li> <li>• To liaise with the AHE if a risk against a key performance indicator or external examiner comments is identified.</li> </ul>
<b>Secretary of Board of Studies / Board of Studies meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs) for all programmes are included on the agenda for every Board of Studies;</li> <li>• Record Continuous Enhancement Plan (CEP) discussions within the minutes.</li> </ul>
<b>Chair of Board of Studies / Board of Studies meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To monitor and discuss the Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs) and assure itself that risks have been appropriately monitored and actioned;</li> <li>• To agree recommendations;</li> <li>• To monitor progress of actions identified within the Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs);</li> <li>• To ensure discussions of APERs and CEPs are recorded appropriately in the minutes.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Responsibilities for the continuous enhancement review process in Associated Institutions are described in paragraphs 44-45 below.

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<p><b>Associate Head of School, Education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To produce an APER report for their School annually;</li> <li>• To consider with the Head of School any risks identified and flagged by Programme Leaders addressing any risks identified;</li> <li>• To disseminate key communications, deadlines and reminders to their Schools;</li> <li>• To identify themes and issues of School-wide concerns;</li> <li>• To provide regular updates to the Associate Dean, Education on identified risks through the Continuous Enhancement Review process;</li> <li>• To support implementation of actions identified within the Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs) and APERs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Head of School</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider with the Associate Head of School, Education any risks identified by Programme Leaders/ Heads of Discipline addressing any risks identified;</li> <li>• To support academic Schools to engage with any actions or recommendations arising from the Continuous Enhancement Review process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Faculty Education Committee (FEC)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that APERs are included on the agenda and any discussions are captured within the minutes;</li> <li>• To consider all APER reports for approval.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pro-Vice Chancellor, Education/ Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans/Chief Student Officer (CSO)/ Director of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support academic Schools to engage with any actions or recommendations arising from the Continuous Enhancement Review process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Associate Dean, Education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs) and APER reports to identify themes and issues of Faculty-wide concern;</li> <li>• To facilitate discussions at the Faculty Education Committee;</li> <li>• To ensure that copies of all relevant APER reports are uploaded to the QAD central SharePoint site, maintained by Directorate of APQG;</li> <li>• To produce an overview report for the Faculty that includes recommendations, identified risks, follow-up actions and examples of best practice for the attention of the University;</li> <li>• To report on any collaborative activity within the Faculty, including: what activity there is, student numbers and whether there are any areas of good practice or concerns and how they are being resolved;</li> <li>• Present their Faculty overview report to UEC for approval.</li> </ul>
<p><b>University Education Committee (UEC)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify risks and recommend where further action needs to be taken;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider and approve proposals for changes to the <i>Code of practice for continuous enhancement review</i>, including CEP, APER, Faculty overview and AI's Annual Review Report templates;</li> <li>• To consider the outcomes of the continuous enhancement review process report, including its appendices (Faculty overview reports, Annual Review Reports from Associated and Accredited Institutions (AIs)) with particular focus on:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ serious issues, risks and concerns</li> <li>○ follow-up recommendations</li> <li>○ any further actions required, where applicable</li> <li>○ examples of good practice for dissemination across the University</li> <li>○ collaborative activity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Surrey Institute of Education (SloE)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To produce CEPs/APERs for the relevant programmes within SloE;</li> <li>• To identify and support the implementation of best practice, as agreed with the Head of Academic Policy and Governance and Associate Deans, Education;</li> <li>• To support the development of CEPs within Schools and Faculties as agreed with Directorate of APQG or Associate Deans, Education.</li> </ul>

### Timescale for the Continuous Enhancement Review (CER) process

26. As noted above, Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs) are updated on a regular basis throughout the academic year and discussed at each Board of Studies meeting (in line with the annual schedule for the relevant Boards).
27. An Annual Programme Enhancement Review (APER) report is produced once a year for a group of programmes within a School. A separate report is required for a different level of study e.g. a foundation year, undergraduate programmes, postgraduate taught programmes.
28. All APERs must be considered and approved by Faculty Education Committee, they can be submitted to any meeting, but it must be approved before the end of the academic year in which the report is being written.
29. Faculty overview reports must be considered by UEC; they can be submitted to any meeting, but these must be approved before the end of the academic year in which the annual report (APER) is being written.

### Further guidance

#### ***Evidence-based approach***

30. The continuous enhancement review process is action-focused and is based on various sources of evidence. Programme teams must use a range of qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the success of their programme, including the [Power Business Intelligence \(Power BI\) tool](#), feedback from external examiners, students, and staff.
31. The continuous enhancement review data provided by Strategic Planning and the Directorate of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance will be updated



throughout the year as new data become available to the University. This facilitates timely consideration within Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs). The data includes methods of flagging areas where potential risks have been identified. These should be the primary focus for discussion and planning appropriate actions.

32. In addition, the following evidence should be used for informing the CEP and the APER (the list is not exhaustive):
- (i) module outcomes data and outcomes from discussions held during Boards of Examiners;
  - (ii) external examiners' annual reports on the previous academic year along with Board of Studies/programme team responses to external examiners. In cases where the external examiners' reports have not been received, reference should be made to any comments made by external examiners either in writing or during the Board of Examiners' meeting (as recorded in minutes);
  - (iii) student feedback on individual modules and programmes, gathered via internal mechanisms, for example, MEQs, Staff/Student Liaison Committee meetings, focus groups, discussions at Board of Studies meetings;
  - (iv) student feedback gathered via external mechanisms, such as quantitative and qualitative data from National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and any other external surveys, as applicable;
  - (v) staff feedback, gathered via internal surveys and questionnaires, or via School and Faculty meetings, where possible;
  - (vi) relevant programme specifications (approved via the University standard validation procedure);
  - (vii) employability outcomes data;
  - (viii) league table data, in relation to key competitors;
  - (ix) any other information relevant to the programme(s) for that year, including Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation where applicable;
  - (x) Information on active collaborations.

***Structure and format of the School/Institute Annual Programme Enhancement Review (APER) report***

33. The APER reporting templates are available for downloading from the [QAD SharePoint site](#) and should be used as appropriate.
34. The APER report should include a list of programme(s) reviewed. The Programme title(s) should be unabbreviated and make it clear how the Foundation pathways and provision are included. The main sections of the APER report include the following areas:
- Overview of actions taken during the previous year (as recorded in the Continuous Enhancement Plan);
  - Brief commentary on evidence and data trends including risks identified;
  - Summary of actions to be taken forward over the next year;
  - Identification of good practice;
  - Areas for consideration at School, Faculty or University levels related to learning and teaching;

- Collaborative activity – what activity there is, student numbers and if there are any areas of good practice / concern and how this is being resolved.

### ***Faculty overview of Annual Programme Enhancement Review (APER) reports***

35. Faculty overview reports should be prepared using the standard template, which is available to download from the [QAD SharePoint site](#). The report template includes the following sections:
- Summary of progress on Faculty-level actions from the previous Faculty overview of APER reports;
  - Summary of themes from the APERs within the Faculty;
  - Identification of ongoing risks e.g. concerning progression, awards and feedback;
  - Summary of key quality enhancement activities / practice in the Faculty;
  - Review of any Collaborative Provision issues within the Faculty;
  - Areas for consideration at University level in relation to learning and teaching;
  - Faculty-level action plan to support overall education strategy and / or general areas of need.
36. A summary of strategic learning and teaching issues and risks for the University's attention may include significant issues regarding the learning facilities such as Library and IT resources, central teaching spaces, laboratory spaces or timetabling.
37. A list of current programmes and associated individual Schools' Continuous Enhancement Review (CER) reports should be included in the Faculty overview (as an appendix).

### **Outcomes of the continuous enhancement review process**

#### ***Identifying and disseminating best practice***

38. One of the important outcomes of the continuous enhancement review process is identification and dissemination of best practice. Therefore, programme teams should also focus on evaluating and highlighting areas of good practice in all areas related to the provision of student learning opportunities.

#### ***Follow-up actions***

39. The Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEP) should include any actions discussed and approved during the Board of Studies meeting and the timeframe within which these actions should be completed. The actions taken because of the continuous enhancement review process should be considered throughout the year, with the CEP updated regarding progress ahead of each Board of Studies meeting.

#### ***Feedback on the continuous enhancement review process***

40. The outcomes of the continuous enhancement review must be fed back to members of staff, students and all those involved in the process. The Faculty overviews are considered by the University Education Committee and, following this consideration at institutional level, the Associate Deans, Education should report on the outcomes to students and members of staff either through Faculty Education Committee, Board of Studies or Staff/Student Liaison Committee meetings as an annual standing item.

***Publishing the Annual Programme Enhancement Review (APER) reports and Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs)***

41. Continuous enhancement review (CER) documentation, including CEPs and APER reports are published on the QAD [SharePoint](#) site and available to members of staff to be downloaded at any time (University username and password required).

**Collaborative provision: Annual Review Report (ARR) for Associated and Accredited Institutions**

42. Associated Institutions offering programmes leading to awards of the University of Surrey are expected to submit an annual review report to the University by the beginning of January each year. The report is designed to confirm that the Institution has in place appropriate procedures for ensuring the high quality of academic standards and enhancement processes, which are subject to continuous evaluation and review. The report should be self-critical, based on facts arising from the operation of programmes leading to awards of the University of Surrey, and have been subject to an approval process within the Institution. The report should be approved and signed by the Principal or their nominee (a member of senior management team).
43. An electronic copy of the report with appendices should be submitted to the Directorate of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance, University of Surrey via e-mail: [qualitysupport@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:qualitysupport@surrey.ac.uk) by no later than 10th January each year.
44. The Associated Institutions Annual Review Reports should include the following attachments:
- a list of Surrey validated programmes with attached annual programme reports;
  - Educational Oversight: a process analysis (where applicable).
45. The Associated Institutions Annual Reports should be prepared using the standard template. This will be available on the University website and on request from AQS. The report includes the following sections:
- (i) organogram(s) of quality assurance committees and key personnel to provide an overview of the Institution's quality assurance framework with, if appropriate, a commentary on significant changes;
  - (ii) a review of progress regarding the action plan, devised to address issues arising from the previous year's annual review report to the University from reports, reports from external examiners and reports from external accrediting bodies;
  - (iii) an analysis of data on student recruitment, progression, and achievement by each programme, complemented with a commentary on trends over the past three years in recruitment, retention and awards. A detailed set of statistical information for the relevant year should be attached to the report in a table format;
  - (iv) a summary of comments and recommendations from external examiners' reports;
  - (v) student satisfaction and feedback, including NSS score results (where applicable) and any other quantitative and qualitative data related to student satisfaction and student engagement;
  - (vi) active student placement arrangements linked to validated Surrey programmes;

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- (vii) a brief summary of the number and outcome of cases presented through the appeals, complaints and grievance procedure of the Associated Institution;
- (viii) a summary of issues arising from quality assurance and enhancement processes, in the form of an action plan, to be addressed by the institution and/or at programme(s) level or for the attention of the University;
- (ix) a list of newly validated programmes and existing provision with their next periodic review date;
- (x) educational Oversight procedures.

**Appendix 1 - Continuous Enhancement Review Process workflow**

Data provided by Planning/ PowerBI:	
Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs)	Programme CER Dashboard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistics on student surveys, incl MEQ/ NSS/PTES, etc</li> <li>Continuation data</li> <li>Degree outcomes</li> <li>Graduate employment</li> <li>APP targets and planning</li> </ul>

Data provided by Directorate of Academic Performance, Quality and Governance, SloE, etc:	
Continuous Enhancement Plans (CEPs)	Programme Action Plans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awarding gap and Inclusive Education</li> <li>External examiners comments</li> <li>Student Voice feedback</li> <li>Surrey Enhancement programmes where risks were identified</li> <li>Strategic workstreams (CDR, SSJ, LA, etc)</li> <li>Collaborative provision</li> </ul>

CEP – Continuous Enhancement Plan (to be completed continuously throughout the year)  
 APER – Annual Programme Enhancement Review report (to be completed at the end of the reporting academic year)  
 ADE – Associate Dean, Education  
 AHE – Associate Head of School, Education  
 EE – external examiner  
 UEC – University Education Committee  
 SloE – Surrey Institute of Education  
 CPD – Continuous Professional Development

