



REVIEW OF STUDENT-FACING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

AU-LTC-20-4034-A

Policy Summary

This Policy, approved by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee, sets out a process for the University's reviews of Student-facing Professional Services. For the purpose of this Policy, the term 'Student-facing Professional Services' encompasses all central and College-based University Services or Departments that have ownership or responsibility for the provision of a service or resource that is accessed directly by students.

Version Control

Ref No	Version	Responsible Officer	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date
AU-LTC-20-4034-A	1	Director of Academic Quality	ULTC	June 2021	Sept 2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is an expectation of our on-going registration with the Office for Students (OfS)¹ that we meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code, in particular that *‘From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education’*.
- 1.2 Given the role Student-facing Professional Services play in supporting the student experience, the evaluation of this area of provision forms an important element of the University’s quality assurance processes, and is part of the University’s commitment to a cycle of continuous enhancement.
- 1.3 The policy applies to the University Departments/Service areas listed in **Appendix One**.
- 1.4 The purpose of the review is to:
- ensure that the services are providing students with the quality of support they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education
 - identify any issues that need to be resolved and supporting services in resolving these
 - be proactive and forward looking and highlight where enhancements are possible
 - enable good practice to be identified, shared and celebrated.

¹ Office for Students Securing student success: Regulatory framework for higher education in England February 2018, OfS 2018.01

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Heads of Service

(e.g. Director of Operations, Head/Director of Service or Department)

- 2.1.1 Heads of Service are responsible for the evaluation of their area(s) in consultation with the team leaders and any other members of staff who play a key role in the delivery of the service. They are responsible for ensuring that the review takes place and that the actions identified at review are effectively completed.
- 2.1.2 Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that students and other stakeholders have meaningful input into the review.
- 2.1.3 Heads of Service are required to provide an action plan based on the service's core objectives and/or KPIs and should align to relevant University strategy.
- 2.1.4 The action plan should also indicate the methods by which student feedback on the service provided has been obtained. This feedback should be clearly integrated into the actions proposed.

2.2 University Learning and Teaching Committee

- 2.2.1 University Learning and Teaching Committee will receive and consider action plans from all student-facing professional services.
- 2.2.2 University Learning and Teaching Committee will be responsible for ensuring that reports have been produced with meaningful involvement of students and other key stakeholders.
- 2.2.3 University Learning and Teaching Committee will be responsible for identifying themes, areas of potential risk and aspects of good practice that are common to Student-facing Professional Services.
- 2.2.4 University Learning and Teaching Committee will be responsible for providing constructive feedback to Heads of Service

3. Data Requirements

- 3.1 It is anticipated that the data required to generate the action plan will be data that is already held as part of the on-going management of the Department or Service.
- 3.2 Heads of Service should ascertain the relevant data they need to undertake the review and generate their action plans.

- 3.3 The data used must include student feedback relevant to the particular Student-facing Professional Service. Heads of Service can determine the most appropriate way for obtaining this for their service.

4. Process

- 4.1 Heads of Service will generate their action plans for the first University Learning and Teaching Committee meeting of the academic year
- 4.2 A template action plan is provided in **Appendix Two**, however it is acknowledged that service areas may have appropriate action plans in place for other purposes. In this instance these action plans can be used as an alternative, provided they address the same areas listed in Appendix Two. Directors of Operations across the Colleges may wish to share aspects of action plans where there are cross-College actions identified.
- 4.3 Heads of Service are encouraged to undertake regular reviews of progress against actions throughout the academic year.
- 4.4 At the final meeting of University Learning and Teaching Committee each academic year, an updated action plan will be received and considered.
- 4.5 Heads of Service should update the action plan to assign a progress status as below:



Complete



In progress and on track to complete within identified timeline



Not started or in progress but unlikely to complete within identified timeline

- 4.6 Where actions are not started or unlikely to complete within identified timescale a **short** commentary should be provided to provide context for this. These actions should then be carried forward into the action plan for the following academic year. The expectation is that the majority of actions should have normally been completed within the academic year.

5. Periodic Review

- 5.1 Panel reviews will not be a standard part of the review cycle, but may be required in exceptional cases.
- 5.2 A panel review may be necessary if there is a significant change in the resource available to the service, the scope and volume of work undertaken by the service or a major change to the way in which the service is delivered. This can be requested by the Head of Service or University Learning and Teaching Committee.

- 5.3 Panel reviews will be requested at the discretion of University Learning and Teaching Committee if (for example) a service area sees an unexplained drop in student satisfaction, or does not adequately meet the actions set out in the action plan over consecutive years.
- 5.4 The scope and membership of a review panel will be determined on a case-by-case basis to ensure it is appropriate to the issue(s) for discussion. The Chair of a review panel will be a senior manager from another area. All review panels must include at least one student representative.

APPENDIX ONE: UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS/SERVICE WITHIN SCOPE

This proposal applies to any Professional Service team or Department who have ownership and responsibility for providing a service or resource that is accessed directly by students.

These are identified as:

- Admissions, Student Recruitment and Outreach
- Aston Online
- Campus Safety
- Careers + Placements
- CELCA (excluding taught programme provision)
- College based Student Support Services
- Marketing and Communications (student facing)
- Digital Services (student facing)
- Estates and Capital Development (student facing)
- Finance Services (student facing)
- International Student Services
- Learning Development Centre
- Library Services
- Student and Academic Services




APPENDIX TWO: Action Plan Template




Review of Student-Facing Professional Services

Service / Department included in Review:	Academic Year of Review:	Head of Service / Department	Date of initial review:	Date of update:

Summary of student input into the review and development of the action plan:

Any additional comments, or areas to highlight to University Learning and Teaching Committee:

Progress Status
 Complete
 In progress and on track to complete within identified timeline
 Not started or in progress but unlikely to complete within identified timeline

Ref.	Objective (e.g. KPI) / Area identified for development	Agreed action	Timescale	Responsibility	(To be completed as part of progress update)	
					Actions Taken / Further Action Required	Progress Status
1	<i>e.g. A response to a student query received by email is sent within 48 hours of receipt</i>	<i>e.g. Complete audit of current response time</i>	<i>October 2021</i>	<i>Head of Service</i>	<i>e.g. Audit completed Changes to ownership of shared inboxes made to allow wider access Work to enable the ability to track responses and flag delays in progress</i>	
		<i>e.g. Communicate expectations to staff</i>	<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Team Leader</i>	<i>e.g. Complete - Communication in Team and Departmental meetings</i>	
		<i>e.g. Communicate expectation to students</i>	<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Team Leader</i>	<i>e.g. Complete - Communication from Programme Directors</i>	
2						
3						
<i>(Please add additional rows as necessary)</i>						

