**Annual Programme Monitoring Reports - Guidance Notes for Completion (Appendix B4)**

Updated November 2023

**Introduction**

These guidance notes are designed to provide additional context for annual monitoring, as well as suggested prompts to refer to when completing the Annual Programme Monitoring Report (APMR) form. The full annual monitoring process is described in [Section B](https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/our-professional-services/quality-and-partnerships-directorate/documents/quality-manual/Section-B-Annual-monitoring.pdf) of the Quality Manual.

The APMR form is used for programmes leading to St George’s or University of London awards (including the international MBBS, MBBS (SGUL UNic) programmes and MSc Family Medicine). The form should also be completed for courses in teach-out, if there were active students in the academic year for which the form is being completed. A separate monitoring form exists for apprenticeships.

The form comprises an analysis of the programme in the year preceding its completion. Thus, a form completed in autumn 2023 will be based on the experience of running the programme in 2022-23.

The APMR should reflect the views of the course team and student representatives. As such, it should be endorsed by the Course Committee in a formal meeting or through consultation.

Completed APMRs are submitted to Monitoring Committees. Separate guidance exists to support Committee members in scrutinising APMRs. Course teams writing APMRs may wish to read that guidance to get a sense of how their report will be reviewed by the Monitoring Committee.

**Data**

Sources and types of data

The following data is made available to course directors to support them in writing their Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and is distributed by the Quality and Partnerships Directorate (QPD):

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| **Data** | **Distributed** | **Source** | **Contact** |
| Recruitment and Admissions; Progression and Achievement | tbc | Registry | jlaws@sgul.ac.uk |
| Graduate Outcomes | 20th Nov | Planning | lratnaku@sgul.ac.uk |
| NSS | 20th Nov | Planning | lratnaku@sgul.ac.uk |
| SES | 20th Nov | Student Experience Team | tbc |
| SOLTS | 20th Nov | Student Experience Team | Aymun Faheem experience@sgul.ac.uk |
| Appeals and Complaints data | 20th Nov | SC&C | ienany@sgul.ac.uk |

Not all data sets will be available to all courses. The availability may depend on the number of years that the course has been running, as well as the level of the course:

* Postgraduate courses don’t typically complete SES or take part in the NSS and so will be more reliant on SOLTS, PTES and informal feedback.
* NSS data is not available for new courses which do not yet have any completed students, nor is Graduate Outcomes data, which records the activities of graduates 15 months after completion of their course.

Data accuracy

Recruitment and Admissions; Progression and Achievement data is obtained from SITS. It goes through enrolment and exam boards to ensure accuracy and is heavily scrutinised ahead of submission to the OfS and HESA as part of statutory returns.

While it is unlikely that errors will occur in the data, course teams are encouraged to perform basic data quality checks to confirm the accuracy of the data. For example, course teams should ensure that:

* totals add up
* population sizes match expectations
* there are no missing data fields

If you have not received your data or have questions about the data, please get in touch with the relevant contact person.

PTES (Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey)

The Student Experience team reviews PTES data and produces individual reports for each postgraduate course that was involved in the survey. If you have not received your PTES data or have questions about it, please get in touch with the Student Experience Team (experience@sgul.ac.uk).

**Section 1: Recruitment and Admissions (in reference to data provided by Registry)**

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| **Note on the analysis of data: Course Directors are encouraged to be proportionate in the analysis of the data available to them and focus on key issues and priorities. Analysis will be less detailed if:*** The numbers applying to and enrolling on the programme are so small that conclusions are unlikely to be valid.
* If variations in terms of the profiles of applicants and student groups are negligible.
* If data are partial, inaccurate or otherwise susceptible to bias.
* Variations are already known and adjustment strategies are in place.
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This section might include commentary on:

* Barriers to meeting recruitment targets e.g. was the target realistic, funding issues for potential students, launch of competitor programmes, recruitment practices of competitors, absence of USPs.
* Changes to the marketing strategy, promotional materials; improving the applicant and open day experience, “keeping warm” activities, highlighting the distinctiveness of the course, the clearing strategy.
* Whether international recruitment targets, where they are agreed, were achieved.
* The spread of entry qualifications presented by applicants;
* The equivalence of the qualifications presented by international applicants.
* The proportions of students with protected characteristics where any differences appear to be significant.
* The extent to which the profiles of applicants (in terms of protected characteristics) corresponds with the profile of students admitted to the programme.
* The impact of activities aimed at increasing enrolments from underrepresented groups.
* Strategies to support students from underrepresented groups;
* Trends emerging from comparisons with previous years.

Institutional Context

SGUL’s [Access and Participation Plan](https://www.sgul.ac.uk/study/documents/St.GeorgeUniversityofLondon-APP.pdf) commits the institution to identifying and removing barriers to access and participation. With regard to POLAR (Participation of Local Areas), SGUL has an explicit APP target to lower the gap between POLAR quintile 5 and 1 and 2 from 25% (in 2017/18) to 23% by (2022/23). Students in quintile 5 are underrepresented in HE.

**Section 2: Cohort Analysis (in reference to data provided by Registry)**

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| **Note on analysis of data: Course Directors are encouraged to be proportionate in the analysis of the data available to them and focus on key issues and priorities. Analysis will be less detailed if:*** Student numbers are so small that it is not possible to draw reliable conclusions from the available data.
* The proportion of students progressing from one year of the course to the next at first attempt is high.
* Completion rates for all students are high.
* Variations in progression and achievement for different groups are not statistically significant.
* Data are partial, inaccurate or otherwise susceptible to bias.
* Variations are already known and adjustment strategies are in place.
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Progression

OfS Condition B3 requires that St George’s “deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers, and/or enable further study”. The OfS assesses institutions on continuation, completion and progression to professional or managerial employment, or further study by comparing to a minimum numerical threshold.

SGUL does not have access to the data needed to determine continuation (as defined by HESA) and therefore uses progression as a proxy for continuation. SGUL must ensure equal progression across different demographic groups and, within this context, the institution is aiming for 100% continuation (with a narrative for each non-continuing student where this is not achieved).

This section might include commentary on:

* Referral and deferral rates across all years of the programme
* Performance of students in different types of assessment (e.g. knowledge-based assessments and skills assessments)
* Proportions of students who achieve an award within the registration period for the programme
* Trends emerging from comparisons with previous years and actions to mitigate against grade inflation.
* Any variations in the good honours degrees awarded to students with protected characteristics.

Degree outcomes

OfS Condition B4, which relates to assessment and awards, requires providers in England to ensure that “relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously”. The OfS definition of credible includes the following:

“credible” means that, in the reasonable opinion of the OfS, relevant awards reflect students’ knowledge and skills, and for this purpose the OfS may take into account factors which include, but are not limited to: i. the number of relevant awards granted, and the classifications attached to them, and the way in which this number and/or the classifications change over time and compare with other providers.

The OfS takes regulatory action when, in its opinion, increases at the provider level are not credible. The APMR template asks that course teams provide an explanation if there has been an increase in the number of students achieving a first or upper-second class honours degree. This might include:

* Impact of Covid-19 related changes, for example changes made to assessment
* Impact of changes to the curriculum
* Impact of enhanced arrangements for student support and learning development
* Changes to the Scheme of Assessment resulting, e.g., from external examiner feedback
* Enhancements to assessment resulting from internal reviews of practice (e.g. revised rubrics or moderation processes).

**Section 3: Employment and further study**

This section might include commentary on:

* Allocation of responsibilities within the Course Team for employability;
* Liaison with the Careers Service
* Curricular and extra-curricular activities to enhance the employability of graduates
* Feedback from students on the careers information and guidance available to them.
* The extent to which Graduate Outcomes survey data reveal variation in the extent to which graduating students from different groups enter employment or pursue further study opportunities (noting earlier caveats about data analysis and reliability).

For postgraduate programmes, employment and employability varies in significance and the data is less reliable. For pre-registration programmes, employment rates are an indicator of the success of the programme in meeting its intentions and a commentary on employment rates is expected.

If first destinations data is collected by the programme teams and this data does not tally with the Graduate Outcomes results, a comment on the variances and any reasons for them may be included.

Section 4: Student Satisfaction

This section might include commentary on:

* National Student Survey (NSS) summary (undergraduate only)
* Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) (postgraduate only)
* Student Experience Survey (SES)
* SOLTS survey results
* Course committees and Staff Student Consultative Committees/Student Staff Liaison Groups
* One-off or ad hoc meetings on specific topics
* Immediate feedback from individual students, student reps of the SGSU

The National Student Survey

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| **Note on analysis of data: Course Directors are encouraged to be proportionate in the analysis of the data available to them and focus on key issues and priorities.*** Analysis will be less detailed if response rates are so small that it is not possible to draw reliable conclusions from the available data.
* Course Directors may wish to comment on areas where their programme has performed significantly higher or lower compared to the institution as a whole or against their own past performance.
* Enhancements may be planned to improve the experience of all students and are not targeted at any particular group.
* NSS results may also help to identify Good Practice (Section 7).
* There is no need for a commentary on all data.
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**Section 8: Quality Management Processes and Course Governance**

The Student Conduct and Compliance Team provides QPD with data on the number of appeals and complaints received. This data is split by course, but detail of the cases is not included.

If course teams require further information about complaints and appeals, they should contact the Student Conduct and Compliance Team in the first instance.

**Section 9: Other comments (optional)**

This Section can be used to provide additional comments about the programme that may not have been covered in the other sections of the report and could include commentary on:

* Departure of academic staff with important operational roles eg admissions tutor; year leads; module leads; placement coordinator, chief examiner; project coordinator, personal tutor lead.
* Allocation of additional support staff resource.
* Availability of staff to supervise students on placement
* Adequacy of and access to learning resources (teaching accommodation including specialist accommodation, hardware, software, library resources, specialist equipment)
* The fabric of the campus as a whole and its component parts
* For flexible and online learning, the reliability and fitness for purpose of systems
* Curriculum changes to ensure that the programme is relevant and up-to-date
* Curriculum changes to ensure that the programme is inclusive for all students
* Introduction of new modules or discontinuation or suspension of existing modules.
* Developments introduced in light of educational and discipline specific research.
* The views of external examiners on course content and teaching and learning
* Use of new or innovative delivery methods and the rationale for their introduction
* The impact of Canvas and other technologies on course delivery.
* Any other aspect of the programme.

Section 10: Action Plan

An action plan template is provided (Appendix B3).

Action planning is intended to be a live document and updated from time to time. Course teams should compile a focused action plan that is:

1. realistic, achievable and likely to have an impact (see guidance on SMART action planning).
2. It should address any concerns that have been raised within the APMR, for example through student feedback or in the analysis of variations in data.

This section also invites course teams to identify any issues impacting on the quality of the programme that they would like to escalate to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) for discussion and action. All issues raised through this section will be reported to QAEC by the Monitoring Committee Chair through the Monitoring Committee Summary Report.

SMART Action Planning

A SMART action plan incorporates 5 characteristics of a goal: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based:

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| **Specific** | Clearly defined and unambiguous, stating the precise action to be taken and by whom. |
| **Measurable** | How it will be clear whether the action has been achieved and had the intended impact? |
| **Achievable**  | With the time and resources available to the programme team, is it realistic to expect that the action can be completed successfully and the objective achieved?  |
| **Relevant** | Is the planned action relevant to the issue that has been identified from the available data and evidence? Does it address the issue and is likely to result in the planned improvement? |
| **Time-specific** | Every action should have a clear start date and expected date for completion. Key milestones should also be identified |

In response to low response rates to SOLTS, an action could be set to:

“improve student response rates for SOLTS feedback”

However, the action does not set a measurable target, nor is it time specific. An alternative action to address the same issue, could be to:

"Promote and encourage student engagement with SOLTS to achieve a 10% increase in student response rates by the end of the current academic year."

This action is:

* **Specific**: The action focuses on promoting and encouraging student engagement with the existing digital feedback system.
* **Measurable**: The goal is to achieve a 10% increase in student response rates.
* **Achievable**: By promoting and encouraging student engagement, it is reasonable to aim for a 10% increase.
* **Relevant**: Improving student response rates for feedback is still relevant to enhancing the learning experience.
* **Time-bound**: The timeframe is defined as "by the end of the current academic year."

Course teams may wish to test and refine their actions using AI. The above example was developed by providing the original action to [ChatGPT](https://chat.openai.com/auth/login) and requesting an improved version that was SMART.