Education Monitoring and Review – Overview

Education Monitoring and Review (EMR) is a quality assurance process which aims to monitor and review the University's courses. It replaces the previous six-yearly Learning and Teaching Review (LTR) process, and the Annual Programme Review (APR) process. It applies to any Department, Faculty or Institution offering award-bearing courses, including all Triposes, all Masters' and doctoral courses, all courses listed as "non-member awards" in Statutes and Ordinances, and the Language Centre CULP awards.

The purpose of EMR is to provide evidence-based, regular review of courses for quality monitoring and enhancement.

Principles and rationale

Education Monitoring and Review will enable the University to evidence the high quality of its education and to demonstrate continual enhancement of academic standards. It will also enable the University to systematically share good practice between and across cognate disciplines via Schools, and to take action to support areas of weakness.

Education Monitoring and Review has been designed to:

- be light-touch, risk-based and data-driven, flexible and adaptable to the requirements of different disciplines;
- help in identifying and solving thematic issues within (and potentially across) faculties and departments across the University;
- be supportive and provide practical help and advice to Departments where it becomes clear that this is needed;
- reduce the departmental workload (comparative to previous processes), while still providing a robust framework for monitoring and review;
- align with School planning processes, to enable greater integration of curriculum developments with School priorities.

The process was developed by the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee (ASEC), in collaboration with all six Schools and the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE). A pilot took place in the Lent Term 2022.

At its meeting of 30 June 2022, the General Board's Education Committee approved EMR to run across the institution.

Process

Education Monitoring and Review consists of three stages: *Standard Monitoring (Stage 1), Enhanced Monitoring (Stage 2)* and *Referral to General Board (Stage 3).*

The University expects that the majority of courses will meet the requirements of *Standard Monitoring* and that Stage 1 review will suffice to assure the General Board that the delivery of educational programmes is continuing at the level of excellence required of and by this University.

Standard Monitoring is outlined in full below. It consists of the submission of a Departmental reflective summary and action plan for each level of study offered: *undergraduate, postgraduate taught,* and *postgraduate research*. The content of the submission is underpinned by institutional datasets.

These reflective summaries are then reviewed by the School and the Education Quality and Policy Office (EQPO), and a School-level summary written by EQPO for submission to the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee (ASEC).

The process will be managed by EQPO, in collaboration with Schools and ICE.

Timing

Each School and ICE will choose one of two models for the exercise, along with a preferred timeline for submissions to be made and reviewed.

- *Standard* model: in this model, submissions will be made every two years, reviewing all provision (undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research) jointly. Schools wishing to implement the Standard model annually may do so, but this is not required.
- *Offset* model: in this model, submissions may be alternated so that all undergraduate provision is reviewed in one year and all postgraduate provision is reviewed the following year.

Each course will therefore undergo review at minimum every two years. New courses must undergo a form of EMR at the conclusion of the first cohort, irrespective of any agreed timelines based on the models above.

Stage 1: Standard Monitoring

Process

Departments will use an institutional data set primarily held in Tableau dashboards to inform a reflective summary, which is submitted on a standard template form. The templates seek targeted reflection on trends relating to admissions, student experience, assessment, student outcomes, and student feedback. Reflective summaries will also include an action plan, which should identify any actions identified or already underway to enhance educational practice.

Reflective summaries are intended to be brief, though no formal limit will be imposed.

Normally, one reflective summary will be made collectively for all courses offered in each level of study: *undergraduate, postgraduate taught,* and *postgraduate research*. Alternatives will be provided for courses or Departments with unique structures, for example, courses run across multiple Departments or Schools.

Following submission of the reflective summary, the EQPO Liaison Officer will meet School or ICE representatives, including at least one academic member of staff, to review the submissions from all Departments. Schools or ICE may invite ASEC to nominate an academic from another discipline or organisation to attend these meetings and may, at their discretion, also invite representatives from those Departments undergoing review.

Outcomes

A short report will be submitted to ASEC from each School and ICE, either affirming that no further action is required or, unusually, recommending that *Enhanced Monitoring* be initiated. ASEC shall formally agree the outcome of Standard Monitoring and any actions undertaken by Departments that fall short of Enhanced Monitoring.

Reports will be drafted by the EQPO Liaison Officer, in collaboration with School or ICE representatives. This will form part of the University's assurance of compliance with external regulatory requirements. The reports will also identify transferable good practice, and highlight

enhancement activity within Departments, as part of the University's mission to deliver the highest possible standard in education.

Reports will outline any recommendations from the Schools or ICE for courses or Departments to be reviewed under *Stage 2: Enhanced Monitoring*. ASEC will consider these recommendations and:

a) If Enhanced Monitoring is judged to be necessary, the procedure for Level 2 will begin (see below, *Stage 2: Enhanced Monitoring*).

b) If Enhanced Monitoring is judged not to be necessary, ASEC will decide whether any other measures or mitigations might be advisable to address the concerns, and whether any matters should be referred to General Board's Education Committee, its subcommittees, the relevant Council of the School, or the ICE Strategic Committee. They will then communicate with the relevant School/ICE and Department about any further steps which will require Departments to track progress on their Departmental action plan.

Stage 2: Enhanced Monitoring

Enhanced Monitoring may be initiated in the following ways, normally within six months of ASEC receiving the relevant Standard Monitoring Report from the relevant School or ICE:

a) By a decision of ASEC following its assessment of areas of concern raised during Standard Monitoring;

b) By a decision of ASEC following the raising of serious concerns by the Senior Tutors' Education Committee and discussion with the Department or Faculty concerned;

c) At the request of the relevant Faculty Board or Council of the School, or of the Strategic Committee of ICE, subject to the approval of ASEC (which may also raise with the relevant body, at any time, concerns brought to its attention by other subcommittees of GBEC);

d) On the instructions of the General Board's Education Committee, or of the General Board, or of the Council.

Process

When Enhanced Monitoring has been initiated, ASEC will establish an Enhanced Monitoring Group to undertake the review. The focus of the Group will be to assist the Department in resolving an issue causing concern.

Departments will be asked to reflect on any key areas of concern identified during Standard Monitoring (if applicable); where Enhanced Monitoring has been initiated outside of Standard Monitoring, ASEC will identify the required content.

A meeting will be held between the Enhanced Monitoring Group, members of the Department under review, and optional additional members. EQPO shall provide expert advice and regulatory guidance. Meetings shall be hosted flexibly and may take the form of a video-conference to allow experts to contribute from outside the UK.

Enhanced Monitoring Group

The Enhanced Monitoring Group will have the following core membership:
  i.   An academic nominated by ASEC from outside the department to act as Chair.
  ii.   An external academic expert.
  iii. A relevant member of a College such as a Director of Studies or Postgraduate Tutor, as appropriate.
  iv.   Up to three student representatives, representing UG, PGT, and PGR as appropriate.
  v.   An academic and a senior administrator representing the School (or equivalent).
  vi.   For MSt courses, ICE will be invited to send an academic representative.

By agreement between the Department, School/ICE and EQPO, additional representatives may be invited from the following areas with relevant helpful expertise, dependent on the nature of the issue:

      i. The Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning (CCTL);
      ii. Technology Enabled Learning Service;
      iii. University Libraries and Museums;
      iv. Cognate disciplines;
      v. Professional, statutory, regulatory and accrediting bodies;
      vi. Careers Service, industry or major employers;
      vii. Others who are recommended by a Department, School/ICE or EQPO and agreed by all to add value to the discussions.

Members of the Department to meet the Enhanced Monitoring Group shall normally include:

      i. the Chair/Head of Department, or equivalent;
      ii. Directors of Teaching, or equivalent.

The course or departmental administrator may be in attendance, at the discretion of the Department.

Outcomes

An action plan will be produced by the Department in response to discussions at the meeting. The Enhanced Monitoring Group will then provide ASEC with a brief summary report, recommendations, and the action plan, and will advise on any matters which they have agreed need to be reported to relevant other bodies within the University.

Stage 3: Referral to the General Board

If Enhanced Monitoring brings to light significant and systemic issues, ASEC shall advise the General Board to consider initiating a Full General Board Review, or other appropriate next steps to assure academic quality and a high quality student experience.

Support and Guidance

EQPO will be providing briefing sessions during Michaelmas 2022 and Lent 2023, and can provide further support in line with School-specific submission timelines.

Institutional datasets will be held in Tableau. Training and briefing on the use of Tableau for EMR will be provided; however, full information about Tableau, including training and guidance, is available on the University's Information Hub: https://www.information-hub.admin.cam.ac.uk/tableau/tableau-server-training.

The EQPO team will support Departments through the EMR process. You can speak to your Liaison Officer at any time for support, or contact the team at emr@admin.cam.ac.uk with any questions or issues you have.