

Section 7: Continuous Improvement

Continuous Improvement Process Purpose and Overview

- 7.1 The Continuous Improvement Process is the cornerstone of quality assurance processes. It gives Modules and Courses the opportunity to reflect upon the teaching, learning and operation of a course using data and other sources of information that become available. The process aims to identify successes and good practice, which could be shared throughout the institution, and to identify areas requiring resolution or further development.
- 7.2 The purpose of the Continuous Improvement process is to maintain and enhance the quality of Westminster's taught courses through the consideration of data and the experience of delivering the course, and to:
- (i) review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment strategies of taught courses and consider the planning of any consequent changes to the modules and/or courses;
 - (ii) ensure that any particular academic course issues are reflected upon, along with the steps taken to resolve them;
 - (iii) monitor and evaluate how feedback from students obtained through internal and external surveys e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Student Module Evaluation (SME), have been considered and appropriate action taken as required;
 - (iv) consider any relevant external comments on the wider aspect of the course, including those of External Examiners and, where appropriate, Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and employers;
 - (v) identify any trends in student continuation, completion and good honours rates, particularly with respect to identifying if more could be done to support certain groups of students in meeting the learning outcomes of their courses.
- 7.3 In addition to the Continuous Improvement Process, the university has an expectation of a culture of ongoing continuous improvement. For example, it is expected that all courses facilitate a student feedback process twice a year, using course representatives who are trained and feedback regularly via Student Voice systems and engagement with subject area meetings with external examiners at level 5 and above.

Responsibilities

- 7.4 Each Module Leader is responsible for producing a Module Leader report that considers student outcomes and evaluations and provides an overview of the marking and moderation process for that module. These will form part of the evidence base for Continuous Improvement reports.

- 7.5 Each Course Leader is responsible for producing a Continuous Improvement report that considers an overview of Module Leader reports, External Examiner reports, analysis of course data, overview of staffing and actions to respond to issues identified through the process.

Note: Where the course is concurrently undergoing refresh, the reflection can instead be undertaken as part of this process. This does not apply to Curriculum Check- In (no reflection or data is required), apprenticeship provision or where an annual process is required by the PSRB. Quality and Standards will advise if a report needs to be completed.

- 7.6 Course Leaders and Heads of School for Apprenticeship provision are required to complete a Self Assessment Report. In addition, the Portfolio Planning Committee (PPC) Portfolio Sub-Committee may request a Head of School Continuous Improvement report as an outcome of its review of the matrix of data based on the level of risk identified (refer to 7.15).
- 7.7 A Continuous Improvement report should be produced for closing courses with fully enrolled students.
- 7.8 Each School and College is responsible for ensuring that the Continuous Improvement process is completed for modules and courses. This should be done through the College Teaching Committee.
- 7.9 The Quality and Standards Office will produce a University level report identifying trends and actions for consideration.
- 7.10 Strategy Planning and Performance is responsible for the generation of statistical reports which form part of the evidence base for Continuous Improvement. Specified other parts of the evidence base will be supplied by other Professional Service departments.

Timescales

- 7.11 In order to expedite the resolution of any issues, all Continuous Improvement processes are to be completed when data sets become available. The timescales for the completion of each section of the Continuous Improvement form will be provided to colleagues when the release dates of relevant data sets are known.
- 7.12 Completed Continuous Improvement reports are to be uploaded to the SharePoint site in advance of the published deadlines.
- 7.13 The outcomes of Continuous Improvement processes are normally considered by the Teaching Committee by the March meeting (refer to section 1).

Matrix of data

- 7.14 A matrix of data is available to support Continuous Improvement. The data will be risk rated to reflect its position in relation to externally published threshold standards.
- 7.15 The templates for Continuous Improvement reports will ask Course teams to reflect on their course data and outline actions for enhancement.

- 7.16 The PPC Portfolio Sub-Committee will review the matrix of data for all taught courses at the University and make additional requests of course teams or Schools where needed to improve student experience and outcomes.

Student Engagement with Continuous Improvement

- 7.17 The University values student input into our quality assurance processes as a key contribution to work to enhance the student experience, course delivery, student focus and the general well-being of the University community.
- 7.18 Student Feedback is incorporated into the Continuous Improvement process through:
- (i) Consideration of course NSS or PTES survey results;
 - (ii) Consideration of student module evaluations; Appropriate student feedback from surveys for collaborative partners.
- 7.19 Colleges are encouraged to consider completed Continuous Improvement reports at School and College level committees that include student representation.

Continuous Improvement Process

- 7.20 **Modules**
The Module Leader report will be produced after the module has run and will form part of the evidence base for the appropriate Continuous Improvement report.
- 7.21 The Module Leader report will provide an overview of the operation of the module, a reflection on module completion and achievement metrics against the available data sets and a consideration of student module evaluations. The report will also outline any changes planned to the module.
- 7.22 The Module Leader report will outline the approaches taken to marking, moderation and external examiner scrutiny for the module.
- 7.23 For modules delivered for Study Abroad/Exchange or credit bearing Short Course purposes, a Module Leader report should be produced.
- 7.24 Module leader reports may be made available to external agencies such as the Office for Independent Adjudication.
- 7.25 **Courses**
The Continuous Improvement report will consider an evidence base comprising:
- (i) Module Leader reports;
 - (ii) External Examiner reports;
 - (iii) Data set.
- 7.26 The Continuous Improvement report will include sections related to student experience, employability and outcomes linking the relevant data sets. Where data is not available, courses are expected to make full use of Student Module Evaluation reports and external examiner reports.

- 7.27 Cognate groups of courses may be covered by the same Continuous Improvement report. Groupings of courses will be confirmed by Quality and Standards in consultation with the College and grouped on the basis of significant sharing of modules across the provision.
- 7.28 Continuous Improvement reports will be provided to the PPC Portfolio Sub-Committee as part of the evidence base for portfolio review.
- 7.29 **Risk-Based Approach**
The University will take a risk-based approach to its Continuous Improvement processes. As the focus of these processes are to respond to data as it becomes available the PPC Portfolio Sub-Committee will meet to review the matrix of data and make any additional requests of courses or Schools. The Sub-Committee will be chaired by the PPC Chair and attended by the Associate Heads of College with representatives from the UWSU, Quality and Standards and Strategy, Planning and Performance.
- 7.30 The review of data will consider its position against externally set threshold standards. If a course falls below those threshold standards it may be asked to respond in a wide variety of ways. For example, additional reflective questions within the Continuous Improvement report, production of an action plan for monitoring by the College Teaching Committee, undertake a workshop, appoint an industry facing external examiner to contribute to the employability strategy, conversation with the Head of School for monitoring by the PPC Portfolio Sub-Committee or the College Teaching Committee. The list of actions is not considered exhaustive. In determining the action to be taken the PPC Portfolio Sub-Committee will consider the distance of the management information from the threshold standard and the number of management information indicators that are below the threshold standard. It will also take account of performance compared with previous years.
- 7.31 For high risk courses the PPC Portfolio Sub-Committee may require a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Refresh event. Such events allow a group of peers, including external advisors to consider the curriculum and data. Please refer to section 3.
- 7.32 Quality and Standards will inform courses that have been identified for additional action by the PPC Portfolio Sub-Committee.
- 7.33 **Collaborative Provision**
Provision delivered at partners through a validation or franchise is subject to annual monitoring and will complete a template relevant to their provision. It is recognised that data sets, such as the NSS and Graduate Outcomes, differ for collaborative provision.
- 7.34 **University**
The Quality and Standards Office will provide a report to the Teaching Committee and Academic Council on the outcomes of the Continuous Improvement process including any issues requiring attention at University level. The Continuous Improvement process is summarised in the Annual Quality Report to the Court of Governor's to ensure that the Office for Students On-going Conditions of Registration have been met.