

EDUCATION COMMITTEE (formerly EPSC)

**QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT
CALENDAR
FOR
ACADEMIC
ADMINISTRATORS
IN
DEPARTMENTS AND FACULTIES**

HUMANITIES DIVISION

Note: the Calendar is divided into MT, HT, TT and the summer vacation

Last revised September 2008

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Humanities Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Calendar 2008-9

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Summary of activities and responsible bodies/individuals

The faculty board secretary should ensure that the following activities take place, by briefing chairs of faculty board/committees or personally undertaking the work, as appropriate.

MICHAELMAS TERM

Activity	Responsible body/individual(s)
Identify academic objectives for the year	Faculty board
Complete Quality Assurance Template	Faculty board chair/faculty board secretary
Review undergraduate admissions. <i>Note: 1 December is the census date for student statistics. Review might need to wait until HT unless information is made available before this date.</i>	Director of Undergraduate Studies and/or appropriate committee
Review graduate admissions. <i>Note: 1 December is the census date for student statistics, but information from OSS will be made available in mid-October.</i>	Director of Graduate Studies and/or appropriate committee (usually faculty's Graduate Studies Committee)
Research Degrees - - annual review of submission and completion rates; any trends or developments arising out of DPhil examining and reports; effectiveness of procedures for transfer and confirmation of status.	Director of Graduate Studies (with help from graduate studies assistant) – to report to faculty and divisional graduate studies committees
Graduate Students – annual review of return rates of termly supervision reports, and issues identified in these reports.	Director of Graduate Studies (with help from graduate studies assistant) – to report to faculty and divisional graduate studies committees
Review outcome of course experience questionnaires/National Student Survey (NSS).	Director of Undergraduate Studies and/or appropriate committee for undergraduates; Director of Graduate Studies and/or appropriate committee for graduates
Consider reports from internal and external examiners.	Appropriate committee (e.g. Standing Committee for course); then to faculty board; then to the Humanities Division's Academic Committee, with a summary of issues raised by examiners and faculty's responses
Consider class percentage figures, including gender breakdown.	
Consider of issues relating to development in learning and teaching and in academic practice	

HILARY TERM

Changes in examination regulations	Proposed and approved by appropriate committees and faculty board; drafted by faculty board secretary (or a member of the administrative staff); submitted to the Division. See detailed guidance notes.
Annual updating of faculty strategic plan and/or operating system	As requested by Division. Responsibility of faculty board chair/faculty board.
Annual review and updating of statements of provision for graduate students (PGR and PGT embedding templates)	DGSs
Review and update postgraduate prospectus entry	DGSs

TRINITY TERM

Teaching Awards Scheme	Faculty Board
Transferable skills training for doctoral students	Faculty GSCs/DGSs

LONG VACATION

Review and update programme specifications	
Review and update course handbooks	
Review and update faculty websites	

INTRODUCTION

1. Academic Policy Support and Divisional officers have been working on a coordinated annual calendar of the quality assurance and quality enhancement activities which underpin the University's academic infrastructure.

2. The resulting calendar describes those areas which the Education Committee (formerly EPSC) sees as critical points of quality assurance and enhancement. These are activities by which a responsible body can assure itself (drawing on QAA terminology) that:

- a) its academic standards are secure;
- b) suitable learning opportunities are available;
- c) 'deliberate steps' are being taken to enhance students' opportunities for learning.

The intention behind the calendar is that these should largely be based on regularly available data and reports.

3. The Education Committee and divisional frameworks form a key element in the University's proposed quality enhancement strategy. The Education Committee is committed to quality enhancement not becoming an additional layer of bureaucracy. This depends on it being an integral part of the regular cycles of monitoring and review. In this way deliberate steps leading to improvement and enhancement can be seen as a further part of the regular quality assurance procedures.

4. The Education Committee has also endorsed the critical importance of the consistent availability and accessibility of data for the annual quality assurance cycle, and a clear demonstration of its use in annual monitoring and development mechanisms. Data availability is now much improved and the Education Committee looks to all responsible bodies to be aware of the key statistics relating to the programmes for which they are responsible.

5. All faculties and departments will not make the same arrangements, or in the same committee structure, or at precisely the same points in the year. It is hoped that by addressing this guidance to academic administrators it will be possible to identify which is the best forum, timing and approach to adopt in each faculty or department.

6. It should also be possible to check whether the existing structure is providing an opportunity for the areas to be covered appropriately, and to refine the mechanisms in order to do so. Where further background information or guidance is available, then an appropriate web reference is provided.

Further information:

Karen Brill, Humanities Division (karen.brill@humanities.ox.ac.uk)

Jane Sullivan, Humanities Division (jane.sullivan@humanities.ox.ac.uk)

Richard Hughes, Academic Policy Support (richard.hughes@admin.ox.ac.uk)

MICHAELMAS TERM

1 Identification of academic objectives for the year

Confirm year's specific academic activities in the light of any review outcomes, faculty/departmental plans, divisional five-year plans, the University's Corporate Plan

Relevant documents:

- (i) Faculty five-year plans, annual operating statements, minutes of relevant committees.
- (ii) Humanities Division five-year plan, 2006/7 to 2010/11, available on the Humanities website at http://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/oxford_only/divisional_board/.
- (iii) The University Strategic Plan for 2008/9 to 2012/13, available at:
http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/prs/strategic_plan/
- (iv) EPSC/Divisional reports of faculty reviews: relevant for faculties/units which were recently reviewed, e.g. Oriental Studies and Linguistics.

2 Quality Assurance Templates

Annual return to Division relating to confirmation of key elements of quality assurance and identification of areas of quality enhancement

Each faculty is required to complete and submit a Quality Assurance Template, normally by the end of MT. The Templates should be submitted to Richard Hughes (richard.hughes@admin.ox.ac.uk) for consideration by EPSC, and copied to Jane Sullivan (jane.sullivan@humanities.ox.ac.uk) for submission to the Division's Academic Committee.

Relevant documents:

- (i) Quality Assurance Handbook and Template:
<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/epsc/handbook/>

3 Undergraduate Admissions

Consideration of any subject-wide developments from the results of candidates offered places for the academic year ahead.

To be considered by the relevant faculty Standing Committee, Sub-faculty Committee and/or Faculty Board.

4 Graduate Admissions (including AHRC and Clarendon Fund awards)

Consider number and quality of applications, withdrawals and take-up of places; availability of awards and other funding; procedures for the forthcoming admissions round; review graduate admissions criteria.

- (i) Faculties and Division: review graduate admissions in MT; comparing actual intake to targets. (The admissions data for 2008/9 will be circulated around mid-October.)
- (ii) Faculties: review targets for graduate students numbers for following year. Updates are normally requested by PRAC (via the Division) in December/January.
- (iii) AHRC and Clarendon awards: applications, offers and acceptances for the current academic year reviewed by Divisional Office. Guidelines for DGSs for forthcoming competitions finalised and circulated by Division.

5 Research Degrees

Annual review of submission and completion rates; any trends or developments arising out of DPhil examining and reports; effectiveness of procedures for transfer and confirmation of status.

Statistics on submission and completion rates to be provided by Humanities Division in MT, and to be reviewed by DGSs and faculties, and reported to the Divisional Graduate Studies Committee.

Faculty Graduate Studies Committees should identify any trends or developments arising from DPhil examining and reports, and report to the Divisional GSC in MT. The reports should identify issues concerning transfer and confirmation of status.

6 Graduate Students (Taught and Research): annual review of return-rates for termly supervision report forms.

In 2007-8 Graduate Studies Assistants chased up outstanding supervision reports around Week 2/3 each term, and they were asked to draw up a list of reports still outstanding in Week 6 for DGSs to discuss with the relevant supervisors. With the move to the online supervision reporting system (Graduate Supervision System – GSS) from MT08, procedures will change: the system will automatically send reminders to supervisors, and reports indicating which supervision reports are overdue, can be produced at any time from the system. DGSs are expected to review all reports for their faculty each term, and to address and issues arising.

In MT DGSs must report to the Divisional GSC on return-rates for supervision report forms for the previous year, and identify any areas of concern.

7 Course Experience Questionnaires/National Student Survey (NSS)

Report on results of the previous academic year's course experience questionnaires – and the NSS results - identification of any areas of concern for further work and development

Results from the Oxford Student Course Experience Questionnaires (OSCEQ) are published in MT on the EPSC website at: <http://ceq.oucs.ox.ac.uk/>

Results from the NSS are published (usually in September) at: <http://www.unistats.co.uk/>

NSS data specific to Oxford can be accessed from:

<http://www.webreport.se/nss/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fnss%2fDefault.aspx>

Please contact the Divisional Office to obtain the username and password required.

EPSC gives initial consideration to the results of these surveys. The Division will then consult faculties about issues raised, and put together a Division-wide response for consideration by EPSC, indicating how these issues will be addressed. Faculty-level consultation should include JCCs.

8 Identification of new course proposals for introduction in future years

Undergraduate courses: preliminary steps for new courses to be introduced in MT three full academic years ahead of the first year of entry of students on the new course; final steps for courses to be introduced in MT two full academic years ahead of first entry onto the new course.

(Example: Preliminary steps academic year 2003-4, regulations published by July/October 2005, UCAS code assigned, new course details with UCAS code published in January 2006 undergraduate prospectus, interviews MT 2006, first students register MT 2007).

Postgraduate taught courses: preliminary steps for new courses to be introduced two full academic years ahead of the first year of entry of students on the new course; final steps for courses to be introduced in MT one full academic year ahead of first entry onto the new course.

(Example: Preliminary steps AY 2004-5, details work and approval AY 2005-6 and regulations published by July 2006, new course details published in Autumn 2006 graduate prospectus, candidates apply in gathered fields AY 2006-7, first students register MT 2007).

EPSC guidance on the introduction of new courses is available at: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/epsc/guidance/introcrs.pdf>

More specific advice should be sought from Jane Sullivan (jane.sullivan@humanities.ox.ac.uk) for undergraduate courses and Karen Brill (karen.brill@humanities.ox.ac.uk) for graduate courses in the Humanities Divisional office, as early as possible in considering proposals for new courses, or major changes to existing courses.

9 Consideration of reports from examiners and external examiners

Consideration of examiners' reports is intended to provide comment on any significant concerns for the relevant division and through the division to EPSC, and to ensure feedback to external examiners on a reasonable timescale.

Consideration of reports should focus on:

- any changes which the examination process might have suggested in relation to the existing content of the course and/or existing methods of assessment;
- any need to review specific options;

- the overall standard of performance in the examination, including any trends in results (especially in relation to gender) or in relation to particular areas of the curriculum;
- any possible changes in examination conventions, procedures or regulations suggested by the examiners' experience of the examination process.

EPSC guidance in relation to the consideration of reports from the examiners as a whole and external examiners in particular are set out in section 7 of the Notes of Guidance on Examinations and Assessment at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/epsc/guidance/examass.pdf>

Procedures for Humanities faculties:

- (i) Each faculty must clearly identify whose responsibility it is to correspond with external examiners (e.g. chair of Standing Committee, DGS). Those identified should write to the external examiners when their reports are received to acknowledge receipt and to explain how issues raised will be addressed (see below).
- (ii) Normally external examiners are required to submit their reports before the start of MT. Internal and external examiners' reports should be considered by the relevant faculty bodies, e.g. Standing Committees for undergraduate reports and Graduate Studies Committees for graduate reports, and Faculty Boards, during MT.
- (iii) The examiners' reports should be sent to the Division (Jane Sullivan for undergraduate reports, and Karen Brill for graduate reports) as soon as they have been considered by faculty bodies, and no later than the end of MT, for consideration by the Division's Academic Committee and Graduate Studies Committee, as appropriate. The reports should be accompanied by a summary of the issues raised in the examiners' reports and the proposed responses by the faculty – the latter may be in the form of extracts from relevant minutes.
- (iv) The undergraduate and graduate reports and faculty comments will be considered by the Academic Committee and Humanities Graduate Studies Committee respectively. The minutes of these committee meetings will include recommendations for the Humanities Divisional Board regarding issues and concerns raised in the examiners' reports. The Divisional Board's recommendations will be reported to faculty boards, which will be expected to report back to the Academic Committee for its Week 6 meeting in TT on how issues raised have been addressed.
- (v) Faculty members responsible for communicating with external examiners' should write to them and inform them of the outcome of faculty and divisional consideration of the reports (even where this simply records, for example, that the board disagrees that the syllabus is too narrow, and does not propose to make changes). **A copy of this communication should be sent to the Division for its Week 6 meeting in TT.**
- (vi) Note: the examiner's reports are also seen by the Proctors and by the Academic Policy Support team on behalf of the Education Committee, who may refer reports or specific matters to the Education Committee.

Report to Division according to the following timetable:

All examiners' reports should be received by the University no later than the start of Michaelmas Term. The reports should reach the Division as soon as possible and no later than the Christmas break.

10 Class percentage figures (including gender breakdown)

Identification of any trends in relation to class percentages, outcomes by gender and any areas for further work

Class percentage figures are published annually in the Gazette.

Trends should be reported to the Division as part of examination reports in the same timetable as at 9 above.

11 Consideration of issues relating to development in learning and teaching and in academic practice

CETL – annual report and spending proposals for the following year prepared by the Divisional CETL Co-ordinator to Academic Committee in Week 0 of MT. Faculties should submit a summary of actual expenditure for the current year and forecasts for the following year in TT (to Debbie McVitty (debbie.mcvitty@humanities.ox.ac.uk), the Division's Training Co-ordinator).

TQEF – annual report and spending proposals for the following year prepared by Divisional Academic Adviser to Academic Committee in Week 0 of MT

The annual reports from the Oxford Learning Institute and the CETL are normally published in HT and are available via the OLI website at: <http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/>.

12 1 December - annual census date for student statistics (ug, pgt, pgr).

Subsequent publication of agreed sets of statistics by Student Information Systems (SIS), and circulation to Divisions. Subsequent faculty/departmental and Divisional consideration thereof in Hilary Term.

The Divisional Office will circulate data to faculties for consideration and report back to Division in Hilary Term.

HILARY TERM

13 Changes in regulations required for the following academic year

Confirmation of required changes in regulations for divisional and (for major changes only) Education Committee approval

Faculties are encouraged to send examination regulation changes to the Division as early as possible to ensure that they will be included in the following year's *Examination Regulations*. Usually the deadline for sending changes to the Gazette in time for inclusion in the *Examination Regulations* is early to mid-April, but this may vary depending on the exact dates of Easter (which affect the publication dates of the Gazette). Minor changes must reach the Division at least one week before the relevant publication deadline for the Gazette, and more major changes must reach the Division at least two weeks before the Gazette deadline.

All changes to existing courses must be made in time for publication in the last Gazette before the summer break.

Procedures:

- (i) Contact Muriel Parsons (muriel.parsons@humanities.ox.ac.uk) for a reference number (e.g. HDB/405/G), which should be used in the top right hand corner of the change to identify it.
- (ii) Changes must be drafted according to the Divisional guidance notes, which describe the correct drafting conventions.
- (iii) Proposed changes must be approved by the relevant faculty bodies (e.g. Standing Committee and then Faculty Board). Other faculties must be consulted in the case of joint degrees.
- (iv) Draft changes must be emailed to Muriel (Muriel.parsons@humanities.ox.ac.uk). Undergraduate changes must be copied to Jane (jane.Sullivan@humanities.ox.ac.uk) and graduate changes to Karen (Karen.brill@humanities.ox.ac.uk).
- (v) Jane/Karen will consult the Education Committee, if necessary, and may need to get in touch with faculties again if further clarification is required or if there are issues that need to be addressed. Jane/Karen will obtain divisional approval (usually by chair's action), and in the case of major changes, Education Committee approval (usually provided by Judith Muskett or Richard Hughes, who will consult Elizabeth Fallaize, if necessary).
- (vi) When the changes have been approved, Muriel will email a notice to the Gazette (copy to relevant faculty board secretary).

14 Annual updating of departmental/Divisional plans

Identification of developments in academic objectives/quality assurance/quality enhancement/student number planning in relation to departmental/Divisional five-year plans.

15 Undergraduate Admissions

Annual consideration of undergraduate admissions statistics; identification of trends in numbers, source and quality of applications; confirmation of meeting Common Framework requirements

Annual undergraduate admissions statistics are published in HT. For 2007 see <http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/adstats.pdf>

Report to Academic Committee.

16 Annual review of statements of provision for postgraduate students and supervision code of practice.

Note: statement of provision = embedding template

Faculties must review their statements of provision for graduate students, and either submit revised versions to the Divisional Graduate Studies Committee, or inform the committee that they have reviewed the statements, but that no revision were necessary.

Note: The aim is that these reviews will take place in HT in future years. In 2007-8, faculties are asked to:

(i) produce templates for PGT courses, and submit them to the Division by Friday, 11 April 2008;

(ii) review PGR templates in HT/early TT, and submit revised templates or confirmation that the review has taken place to Karen Brill by 21 May 2008, for consideration by the Divisional Graduate Studies Committee in Week 7 of TT.

The Humanities Graduate Studies Committee must review the Division's code of practice on supervision in HT.

TRINITY TERM

17 Teaching Awards Scheme

Faculty/department/divisional arrangements for identifying award holders

General information from the relevant pages of the Oxford Learning Institute website
<http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/index.php>

For information about the Humanities scheme, contact Jane Sullivan (jane.sullivan@humanities.ox.ac.uk).

18 Transferable Skills Training

Review departmental/faculty provision of transferable skills training and preparation for academic practice (CETL) for research students and postdoctoral researchers, and programme for coming year.

Humanities Training Co-ordinator must gather information from faculties and prepare a report for the Humanities Graduate Studies Committee.

The Divisional CETL Co-ordinator must report to the Humanities Graduate Studies Committee on CETL activities.

LONG VACATION

19 Departments/faculties review and update programme specifications, and submit updated documents to Divisions

All programme specifications (print and electronic versions) must be updated during the summer; copies of updated versions must be sent to the Division.

Important:

As part of the preparation for the Institutional Audit in HT 2009, faculties are asked to review all their programme specifications, and (i) to send copies to the Division and (ii) place the specifications on faculty websites **by the end of TT 2008 (Friday, 13 June 2008)**.

20 Departments, and Division where applicable, review and update course handbooks and website material for students.

All course handbooks must be reviewed and updated annually, including cross-checking information with the *Examination Regulations*, where necessary. A circular was sent to faculty board chairs and secretaries in December 2007 requesting that faculties inform the Division once handbooks have been updated (Jane Sullivan – jane.sullivan@humanities.ox.ac.uk - for undergraduate handbooks, and Karen Brill – karen.brill@humanities.ox.ac.uk - for graduate handbooks). The Division will review a sample of handbooks each year.

From 2008 the Division and Graduate Office will provide standard sections of information for **graduate handbooks**. These will be finalised in TT and will be sent to faculties by the end of TT. All graduate handbooks must include the relevant statement of provision (embedding template) and PGR handbooks must, in addition, include the Brief Guide to Supervision drawn up by the Humanities Graduate Studies Committee. This information must also be made available on faculty websites.