

Student-Facing Professional Services Review Policy

POLICY DETAILS:

Date of approval	May 2026
Approving body	Academic Council
Supersedes	May 2024
Date of EqIA	In Progress
Date of next review	2026-27
Author	Academic Quality Office
Responsible Executive Group area	Registrar and Secretary
Related policies and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-Evaluation Report pro forma
Benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024)• University of Glasgow Quality Processes• SFC's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework

GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

STUDENT-FACING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REVIEW POLICY

1. Context, Aims and General Approach

1.1 Student-Facing Professional Services (SFPS) Review is one of the main ways in which the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) assures itself of the quality and provision delivered by its student-facing professional services. The following guidelines provide a framework for reviewing student-facing professional services and for a thematic review. Please note that these guidelines apply only to student-facing professional services and to thematic review. The primary mechanism for the periodic review of GSA's academic programmes, outwith the Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting (PMAR) process, is the GSA Periodic Review and Revalidation process.

1.2 The aims of the SFPS review are to:

- Provide staff of the student-facing professional service or thematic area with an opportunity to reflect on its operation, successes and challenges since the previous review, where applicable.
- Assess the quality of the provision and how students are engaged with it to monitor the quality of services.
- Evaluate the extent to which the provision meets the needs of students.
- Reflect on the student-facing professional service's approach to the enhancement of provision, including recent developments and future plans.
- Evaluate and enhance links to other services and the academic schools.
- Identify examples of good practice for commendation and dissemination.
- Identify areas for enhancement, and monitor action taken in response.

1.3 The identified aims align with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) [Guidance on Quality for colleges and Universities](#) which states 'SFC expects colleges and universities to operate systems of annual monitoring across all their provision and periodic review (Institution-Led Quality Review (ILQR)) across all their provision and support services. SFC goes on to state that 'Institution-Led Quality Review is the periodic review of subjects, programmes and professional services contributing to the student experience, conducted by an institution-led review team. Finally, SFC expects that 'all subject areas, programmes, and professional services are systematically and rigorously reviewed on a periodic cycle of not more than six years. It is for institutions to determine the size and composition of the 'grouping' of subject area, programmes and professional services. While SFC don't qualify the exact approach that should be adopted to undertake Institution-led Quality Review, there is an expectation that the approach to the periodic review of professional services, should provide evidence to allow the institution to reflect on the contribution of support services to the 'quality culture' within the institution, the ways in which the services engage with students to monitor and improve the quality of services, and the ways in which the services promote high quality learning and continuous quality enhancement.

1.4 Student-facing professional service areas reviewed in line with this policy are detailed below. Thematic Review areas will be considered cyclically as part of the standard review of this policy and, following consultation with stakeholders, including the GSA Students' Association, may be revised:

- Technical Support Department
- Student Support and Development
- Library Services
- Archives and Collections
- Student Journey (Thematic Review that would focus on the range of transitions into, through, and out of GSA, and involve the following student-facing aspects of the following Professional Services: Academic Registry, Finance Services, IT Services, Recruitment and Communications and Marketing, Career Service and the Compliance Team)

1.5 The Convenor of the Review Panel (see section 3.3) shall liaise with the department(s) under review to identify a Review Lead. The Review Lead will be responsible for the development of the Self-Evaluation Report (see section 4.1) and leading the department(s) through the review process. For the Careers Service, Technical Support Department, Student Support and Development, Library Services and Archives and Collections, the Review Lead shall normally be the Head of the department under review, and for Thematic Review, the Review Lead shall be proposed by the Convenor of the Review Panel. For the purposes of this policy, the person leading the review process will be referred to as the Review Lead throughout.

1.6 GSA demonstrates its commitment to diversity and promoting equality by ensuring that due regard is given to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in the implementation and application of this policy.

2. Frequency and Timing of Reviews

2.1 All student-facing professional services and thematic areas are reviewed on a cycle of no more than 6 years. A fixed-cycle review schedule is managed by the AQO and provided to the Academic Council for approval.

2.2 Reviews are typically held during periods when students are available to meet with the Review Panel. The AQO will consult and liaise with the Review Lead to agree dates for the review event.

2.3 The Student-Facing Professional Services Review supplements and does not replace other GSA review activities, including Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting (PMAR) and internal audit (where applicable).

3. Review Panel

3.1 The Review Panel will normally comprise:

- The Deputy Director Academic or Deputy Director Research & Innovation

(see section 3.3)

- The Academic Registrar
- An external specialist from another HE institution, normally in the UK, with expertise in the area under review
- A representative from the University of Glasgow
- A student representative (this is normally a sabbatical officer from the GSA Students' Association)
- A Head of School or other senior member of academic staff
- The Head of Department from another student-facing professional service area
- Head of Academic Development

3.2 A member of the AQO shall act as Secretary to the Review Panel.

3.3 The Deputy Director and Vice-Principal [Academic] or Deputy Director and Vice-Principal [Research & Innovation] will be the Review Panel Convenor, with neither leading the review event when an area directly reporting to them is under review.

3.4 The AQO shall propose Review Panel members to the Convenor, who is responsible for approving the Review Panel. All other members of the Review Panel have equal status and are expected to take part in all aspects of the review.

3.5 The Review Lead will be asked to suggest an external specialist for the consideration and approval of the Convenor of the Review Panel. Supporting background information must be provided with the nomination, particularly regarding their current experience in the area under review. A statement should also be included indicating whether or not the person has had any previous involvement with the GSA. Previous involvement will not normally exclude a person from acting as an external member (the information is requested mainly for the benefit of the Convenor and the other Panel members). Exceptions to this are: where the suggested person has been a member of staff or a student of GSA in the three years prior to the review.

3.6 The Convenor will be invited to approve the external specialist. External specialists will receive a fee, plus reimbursement of expenses.

3.7 The Review Lead will normally be the Head of Service undergoing the review. In the instance of undertaking a Thematic Review, the Review Lead will be appointed by the Convenor of the Review Panel.

4. Documentation for Review

Self-Evaluation Report

4.1 As part of the review process, the Review Lead shall submit a Self-Evaluation Report (SER), using the template provided by the AQO. The SER provides staff of the student-facing professional service area with an opportunity to reflect on its operation, the student experience, successes and challenges since the most

recent review.

- 4.2 The Review Lead shall lead on the development of the SER, which should be a collaborative evaluation, including input and reflection by staff (from the department(s) under review) and student users of the service.

Supporting Documentation

- 4.3 The following documentation should be provided (where applicable). It is recognised that not all of the documentation below would be applicable for thematic review. Review Leads for thematic review will be advised on the required documentation by the AQO at the start of the review process.
- Details of the department(s) organisation, management, administration, and staff workload,
 - e.g. organisational chart and workload model with FTE and staff responsibilities
 - Departmental Operational Plan(s)
 - Any departmental information provided for students for the current session, for example handbooks, leaflets, user information
 - Data relating to the student use of the service(s)
 - Details of departmental student surveys together with an analysis of the data
 - Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting reports since the last review
 - Internal Audit Review Reports
 - Summary reports of any equality impact assessments undertaken during the review period
 - The minutes of senior departmental meetings for the current and previous two sessions
- 4.4 The department(s) may also provide any other data or information it routinely collects which have been referred to in the SER. All documents cited in the SER must be available to the Review Panel before their visit. Requests for other documentation may be made by the Review Team in advance of, or on the day of the review, or post-review.
- 4.5 In addition to the documentation listed above, the total number of staff in the student-facing professional service area(s) - with data differentiated by full-time, part-time, grade and protected characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) - will be made available to the Review Panel. Office. The AQO will request this information from the Human Resources department. Please note this is not applicable for thematic review.
- 4.6 The SER shall be submitted to the Senior Officer with responsibility for the area under review, for consideration and review.
- 4.7 Following Senior Officer review, the Review Lead shall submit the SER to each of the School Boards of Studies and the Research Degrees Committee for review and comment in advance of submitting the final version of the SER to

AQO.

- 4.8 The final version of the SER and supporting documentation shall be submitted to the AQO at least four weeks in advance of the review date. The AQO is responsible for forwarding all the documentation to the Review Panel.

5. Engaging Students with the Review Process

- 5.1 Engagement with and the participation of students are vital components of the review process. Departments should inform students about the review at an early opportunity. Consideration should then be given to how and when feedback should be obtained to ensure that the student experience is evaluated and captured meaningfully in the completion of the SER.
- 5.2 To reach the wider student body, the department(s) should consider discussing the SER at Staff Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs) and School Boards of Study, or establishing focus groups, and posting a draft of the SER on Canvas or the intranet so that all students have the opportunity to comment.
- 5.3 It is important for the department(s) to feedback to students after the review. As part of this, the Student Summary Report (see section 8.7) should be posted onto Canvas.
- 5.4 The department(s) will be asked to report on the steps taken to provide feedback to students on the outcomes of the review. This should be noted in the department(s) Action Plan (see sections 8.8 – 8.11).

6. Review of Documentation

- 6.1 Each Review Panel member scrutinises the SER and considers the extent to which the SER is reflective, evaluative, and constructively self-critical and discusses the student-facing professional service areas of good practice and areas for enhancement. Review Panel members will also consider how staff and students have contributed to its development.
- 6.2 Review Panel members will provide a short summary of any topics for exploration or areas of concern to the AQO prior to the event.
- 6.3 Using feedback provided by the Review Panel, the Convenor of the Panel shall provide the Review Lead with details of the main areas that the Panel wish to explore during their visit. This is normally provided one week prior to the review event. Where the Panel wishes clarification on minor points, it may make an explicit request for a response prior to the visit.

7. Panel Visit

- 7.1 Reviews will last up to two days to allow Review Panels time for reflection between meetings with the service's staff and student service users.
- 7.2 The normal pattern of the visit is:

- Private meeting of the Review Panel to agree topics for exploration during the event
- A meeting with the Review Lead (who may be accompanied by one or two members of senior staff who have delegated responsibility)
- A meeting with student service users
- A meeting with staff from the area(s) under review. For thematic review, this may be nominated representatives from each of the professional services departments who contributed to the development of the SER.
- A private meeting of the Review Panel to consider and agree on recommendations and commendations
- A meeting with the Review Lead to discuss matters that have arisen during the course of the review and to highlight main areas likely to be included in the report. Issues highlighted in this meeting may be shared with colleagues immediately after the Panel visit

7.3 Normally, the meeting with students will be held before the meeting with staff in order to allow the students' views shared with the panel to be discussed with staff.

7.4 The Review Lead shall liaise with the GSA Students' Association to invite students to meet with the Review Panel. Steps will be taken to ensure that the students who attend the meeting include representatives of as many different sections of the student body as possible (including undergraduate and postgraduate students at a variety of levels, international students, students in representative and non-representative roles and mature students).

7.5 The Review Panel may undertake a tour of the department(s) accommodation and facilities. This will be decided following consultation with the Review Lead, Convenor of the Review Panel and the AQO.

7.6 The AQO is responsible for the organisation and management of the review visit and for liaising between the Review Lead and Convenor over the timetable for the event.

8. Review Report and Follow-up

8.1 The Review Panel will identify the key strengths and achievements of the department(s) along with conclusions and recommendations for enhancement.

8.2 The Review Report normally follows the structure of the SER. It provides a commentary on the extent to which the Review Panel has been able to verify the department(s) evaluative statements.

8.3 The Convenor of the Panel is responsible for the production of the Review Report, supported by the AQO and in consultation with the Convenor Review Panel members.

8.4 The final draft report will normally be made available to the Review Lead for the correction of factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings within six weeks of the

Review visit. The department(s) will have two weeks to provide comments on factual accuracy. Note: The draft will be sent to the Review Lead to be discussed with colleagues but should not be widely circulated at this stage. Any suggested changes to the draft report will be subject to the approval of the Review Panel's Convenor.

- 8.5 The report is submitted to the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) Planning Subgroup for approval, and the Education and Research Committees, Research and the Academic Council for noting. The Report is then forwarded to the department(s) for action. The SLG Planning Subgroup, the Academic Council and the Board of Governors will be advised, as necessary, of recommendations that have more serious service or resource implications.
- 8.6 Should it prove necessary, the Review Panel may produce a confidential annex to the main report which is for internal use only by GSA Senior Officers. This annex is produced only if there is information that the Review Panel considers sensitive and inappropriate for inclusion in the main report e.g. information relating to individuals or interpersonal relations, etc. It is anticipated that the need for a confidential annex will be exceptional. When a Confidential Annex is required, the AQO will notify the Education Committee, Research Committee, Academic Council, and SLG Planning Subgroup as part of its reporting on the outcomes of the review.
- 8.7 The AQO shall produce a Student-Facing Professional Services Review - Student Summary Report in addition to the full Review Report. The Student Summary Report is primarily for a student audience and should be posted on the Intranet or Canvas by the Review Lead.
- 8.8 The department(s) shall, normally within one month after the meetings of the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) Planning Subgroup and the Academic Council consider the Review Report, produce a brief Action Plan detailing how any recommendations have been, or will be, met. This Action Plan should be submitted to the AQO.
- 8.9 An updated Action Plan addressing the recommendations of the Review is submitted to each Education Committee, Research Committee and Academic Council meeting of the subsequent academic session, and the SLG Planning Subgroup which corresponds with the timing of the Academic Council meetings.
- 8.10 The SLG Planning Subgroup and the Academic Council will review the updated Action Plan to ensure that all the recommendations have been adequately addressed and reported, including evidence of dissemination of the information to students.
- 8.11 A Final Action Plan, which should address and close each of the recommendations of the review will be submitted to the Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup for final approval and Education Committee, Research Committee and Academic Council for note, approximately one year from the date that the Committee received the Panel's original report.

8.12 In addition to reporting to the SLG Planning Subgroup and the Academic Council, department(s) should comment in the next set of Annual Programme Reports on the impact of the Periodic Review on provision.

9. Thematic Reporting of GSA's ILQR Processes

9.1 The Academic Council will be responsible for maintaining an overview of a thematic oversight of the outcomes of its Institutional-Led Review Processes (Periodic Review and Programme Revalidation and Student-Facing Professional Services Review). The AQO office will provide the Academic Council with regular updates on the outcomes of individual Periodic Reviews and SFPS Review events and also provide an annual thematic report to the Council which considers key themes, conditions and recommendations, areas of good practice, and areas for further enhancements. Progress should be reported to the University of Glasgow's Academic Standards Committee via a copy of the relevant extract of the Academic Council minute.

10. External Access to Reports

10.1 Student-Facing Professional Service Review reports, recommendation responses and overview reports are made available to the QAA for annual engagement meetings and external review. An annual report is also made to the Scottish Funding Council on the progress with the schedule for and the outcomes of Periodic Reviews.

11. Summary of the Review Process

Please see the flowchart in appendix 1.

Associated Documentation: Student-Facing Professional Services Self-Evaluation Report Pro forma

Appendix 1: Student-Facing Professional Services Review Flowchart

