

Faculty Quality Team (FQT) policy for 2018/19

1. Introduction

1.1 Faculty Quality Teams (FQTs) form part of the Quality Framework with a close connection to the Education Action Plan (EAP) process. FQTs maintain a crucial academic and student scrutiny role to provide assurance on quality and standards, and to highlight examples of good or innovative practice. It is anticipated that FQTs will be replaced by a University Quality Team in 2019/20 but remain an important part of the Quality Framework in 2018/19.

1.2 EAPs are live plans used to track actions and monitor progress in each school.¹ Feedback from external examiners, students and other sources, coupled with strategic input from the University, provides the basis for school actions. A University-level review of each school EAP, involving a meeting chaired by an Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, provides an initial opportunity to evaluate EAP progress and to consider support needed by schools to meet strategic educational priorities. EAPs also form the primary focus for FQT review activities, which follow and complement the University-level school EAP meetings.

2. FQT objectives

2.1 The FQT objectives for 2018/19 are:

- a) To provide assurance on the quality and standards of educational provision at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research levels principally by:
 - Ensuring that issues identified through quality mechanisms are being addressed appropriately by schools and that actions are logged in EAPs;
 - Checking the progress of schools in meeting the actions in their EAPs; and
 - Testing the impact of those actions with current students.
- b) To make a positive contribution to schools' management of their EAPs;
- c) To complement and reinforce the University-level school EAP meetings;
- d) To uncover examples of good or innovative practice through reviewing EAPs;
- e) To produce a report for each school on the result of FQT review activities and to produce an overview report to the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee;
- f) To operate consistently across faculties so that these objectives are met for the whole University;
- g) To provide a test case for development of the University Quality Team.

2.2 School EAPs form a central component of the Quality Framework. FQT review activities will therefore be undertaken at the school level and cover all schools within each faculty. EAPs may operate at faculty or doctoral training entity level for some postgraduate research programmes. In those cases, FQT reviews will match the EAP structure in place. FQT review activities will cover all EAPs within each faculty to provide comprehensive assurance

¹ The term 'school' is used in this policy as EAPs are normally completed at school level. Where an EAP is completed at another organisational level, the FQT will conduct its review at that level. The significant point is that all EAPs will be reviewed by FQT.

and to contribute to related activities within the Quality Framework, including following up on the University-level school EAP meetings.

3. FQT membership

3.1 FQT membership will provide a balance between academic and student members so that multi-faceted review activities combining both perspectives are undertaken. Each FQT will consist of an FQT Chair, four student quality reviews and an appropriate number of academic members. FQT membership will generally consist of 8-10 members overall, but faculties have discretion in setting the number of academic members to meet the needs of the faculty. Faculties with a higher number of schools may wish to have a greater number of academic members. Academic staff with senior school roles, such as School Education Directors or School PGR Directors, will not normally be FQT members as this may compromise their independence. Role descriptions are available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/fqt.html>.

3.2 Student quality reviewers are recruited, trained and remunerated centrally, and the four appointed for each FQT, between them, normally cover all levels of study. More information on fees and the responsibilities of student quality reviewers is set out in the student quality reviewer agreement (available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/fqt.html>). The appointment of student quality reviewers will normally be for the duration of their time at the University following their appointment so that they develop expertise over the course of their participation. It is anticipated that this structure for student quality reviewers will continue when the University Quality Team is implemented.

3.3 The FQT Chair provides direction and guidance for their team. The Chair of the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee provides direction and support for FQT Chairs. The Academic Quality and Policy Office provides guidance.

4. FQT scrutiny role

4.1 FQTs will maintain academic and student scrutiny of quality and standards by:

4.1.1 Conducting a primarily paper-based review, and to include direct engagement with schools, of the following aspects of the Quality Framework:

- EAPs, considering both prioritised and other actions;
- External examiners for taught programmes reports and responses; and
- Any relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) reports.

4.1.2 Considering student views of quality and standards through:

- Direct feedback obtained by student quality reviewers through the student representation system;
- Reviewing school Student Staff Liaison Committee minutes and, if available, other relevant student feedback documentation; and
- Student survey results.

4.1.3 Utilising the student data dashboard produced for each school for their EAP review activities, which includes data on intake, population, progression, attainment and retention.

4.1.4 Following up on the outcomes from the University-level school EAP meetings.

4.1.5 Following up on FQT recommendations made to schools and faculties from 2017/18 and any strategically relevant outstanding recommendations from previous FQT reports. Schools comment on any outstanding FQT recommendations that are not already included in EAPs.

4.2 EAPs are live documents with changing priorities and actions within the year. Some of the evidence sources used by FQT, such as the direct feedback from the student representation system, will also relate to live circumstances. Some of the forms of evidence considered by FQT will however be static and relate to the previous year. Issues identified in these forms of static evidence may have been resolved through the EAP process before the FQT review activities take place. FQT's role is to evaluate whether there are gaps in actions or progress in school EAPs based on the live and static evidence reviewed and, where issues have already been resolved, to use EAPs as an audit trail to confirm completion.

5. Good or innovative practice

5.1 FQTs will highlight examples of good or innovative practice as part of their review activities (**Annex A** sets out definitions). Schools may have addressed their EAP actions by adopting good or innovative practice, or student feedback may highlight examples, which FQTs should investigate in their dialogue with schools. The primary focus for enhancement at the University is through the Bristol Institute of Learning and Teaching, and FQT will contribute by unearthing good or innovative practice through its review activities.

6. FQT review activities

6.1 The principle reasons for the FQT review is to provide assurance on the quality and standards of educational provision and to make a positive contribution to schools' management of their EAPs. **Annex B** presents a summary of the FQT process and timeline with deadlines, including how FQT relates to the EAP process and the academic year.

6.2 FQT Chairs contact School Education Directors and School PGR Directors at the beginning of the FQT cycle to introduce them to the FQT process.² The communication explains the FQT review and its timings, and refers to the link with the University-level EAP school meetings. Schools are invited to highlight any points they wish to make to inform the FQT review of their EAP. The outcomes of the University-level EAP school meetings are also made available to FQTs to inform their review activities.

6.3 FQTs will hold a planning meeting/s to set out the work to be undertaken and the plan of action. Subgroups of FQT members, containing a balance of academic and student members, conduct reviews of EAPs in their faculty, and student quality reviewers engage with student representatives to gather direct feedback. Generally, student quality reviewers lead on student evidence and academic FQT members lead on the other evidence sources, before coming together for a combined review of the EAP. FQT Chairs co-ordinate across the subgroups and normally lead all subgroups not reviewing the FQT Chair's home school.

² School Education Directors and School PGR Directors normally have responsibility for EAPs.

The FQT Chair however takes the lead where there are significant concerns and where FQT visits are required (see 7.2.2).³ FQT Chairs will ensure that their subgroups follow up on the outcomes from the University-level school EAP meetings.

6.4 Academic FQT members will not review their own school. Student quality reviewers may be involved in the review of their own school if the FQT Chair deems this appropriate. There are only four student FQT members and so it may be necessary to allow some flexibility in coverage. In addition, student quality reviewers within each FQT may wish to pool their initial review work, including engaging with student representatives, so that new reviewers have on-the-ground guidance from those with more experience.

6.5 The analysis of the evidence leads towards an interrogation of the EAP in terms of:

- Whether there are any actions arising from the evidence, including from direct student feedback, that seem not to be included in the EAP;
- Whether it appears that progress has stalled in any significant areas, including in relation to the outcomes from the University-level school EAP meetings;
- Whether there are any areas where more support at faculty or University level may be required; and
- Whether good or innovative practice has been utilised in addressing EAP actions.

6.6 Once the evidence, including the direct student feedback, has been analysed, each subgroup will hold a review meeting to consider the initial findings and to consider what points require discussion with the school.

7. Engagement with schools

7.1 The FQT Chair or an academic FQT staff member contacts School Education Directors and School PGR Directors with queries arising from the initial review activities, normally by email in the first instance and by phone. The FQT Chair may decide that a face-to-face engagement is appropriate, following initial communications.

7.2 There are two levels of potential face-to-face engagement between FQTs and schools:

7.2.1 An FQT school meeting between the FQT Chair, an individual FQT staff member or an FQT subgroup and an individual or small number of staff from the school to explore queries in more detail. Meetings will typically be for no more than an hour and will focus on a limited set of questions. A fee is paid to any student quality reviewers involved in these meetings (see the student quality reviewer agreement).

7.2.2 An FQT school visit between an FQT subgroup led by the FQT Chair and a wider group of school staff and, if considered necessary, a sample of students will be held on a triage basis where there are significant and wide-ranging points for discussion as a result of the paper-based review and the initial dialogue with the school. Visits will typically be for between two to four hours in duration, depending on the matters to be discussed. A fee is paid to any student quality reviewers involved in visits (see the student quality reviewer agreement).

³ If an FQT Chair is concerned about their ability to take forward significant concerns within their own school, they should seek advice from the Chair of the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee who may wish to nominate an FQT Chair from another faculty to lead the investigation.

7.3 On some occasions, it may be appropriate to discuss queries with Faculty Education Directors, which may involve a meeting (on a similar basis to section 7.2.1).

7.4 When the school has responded appropriately to FQT queries, the FQT subgroup produces a report on the results of their paper-based review and dialogue with the school.

8. FQT review outputs

8.1 An FQT school report for each school is produced to set out the results of FQT review activities, including any recommendations for improvement (the commentary template available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/fqt.html>). The relevant subgroup drafts the report, which is shared with the school for a factual check, and then formally submitted to the school by the FQT Chair. Schools should include any recommendations for action at school level in their EAP.

8.2 An FQT overview report, which is developed from a combination of the FQT school reports, is produced by the FQT Chair for presentation to the Faculty Board and to the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee (the overview report template available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/groups/fqt.html>).

8.3 Where there are urgent University-level recommendations that arise from FQT review activities, FQT Chairs may raise them directly with the Chair of the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee and the relevant Faculty Education Director outside of the standard reporting route so that the recommendations are considered in a timely manner.

8.4 The University Academic Quality and Standards Committee (through the University Quality Team) will be responsible for monitoring the outcomes and recommendations from FQT reports in 2019/20.

8.5 Outcomes and recommendations from FQT overview reports are reported to the University Education Committee and contribute to the annual quality assurance report to the Board of Trustees.

Annex A: Definition of good and innovative practice

FQTs will uncover examples of good or innovative practice through their review activities.

Good practice

Good practice covers established methods or activities that achieve educational and/or student experience objectives efficiently and effectively. These activities have shown to work well and have been adopted as the standard approach within a programme, school or faculty. Good practice should be highlighted where it is particularly effective in meeting objectives, where it has been enhanced by improvements, or where it may be applicable in other contexts. Good practice that is a standard activity in one area of the University may offer an opportunity for improvement in another. Highlighted good practice should include a rationale for its inclusion in the FQT overview report and will be shared with the Bristol Institute of Learning and Teaching.

Innovative practice

Innovative practice covers novel methods or activities that transform how educational and/or student experience objectives are met within a particular context. These methods or activities may still be developing but should have already shown a significant positive change. Over time, they may become good practice and a standard approach in the area but currently they represent a new way of working within a programme, school or faculty. Innovation may be developed in partnership with students and/or with contributors beyond the discipline or the sector. Innovative practice is likely to offer other parts of the University the potential for significant improvement. It is also important to highlight where innovative practice has not been successful as this will assist in developing a lessons-learned approach and may still be of benefit to others in avoiding similar obstacles. Consideration of the ethics of pedagogic innovation and the responsibility not to disadvantage students in new developments should be included in any appraisal of innovation. Highlighted innovative practice should include a rationale for its inclusion in the FQT overview report and will be shared with the Bristol Institute of Learning and Teaching.

Annex B: FQT process and timeline 2018/19

2018/19	University dates	EAP process	FQT process
		(EAPs should be updated through the year as necessary)	
September 2018	Welcome week (24 – 28 Sept)	Stage 2 meeting (UG) by 30 Sept Update EAP with priority areas by 30 Sept	
October	Teaching Block 1 (1 Oct – 21 Dec)		
November		University-level School EAP meetings	FQT Chairs contact schools to explain FQT process in Nov .
December			New SQRs appointed by end of Nov SQR training in early Dec SQRs begin to engage with student representatives in Dec
January 2019	Jan assessment period (14 – 15 Jan)	Update EAP by 31 Jan	
February	Teaching Block 2, first part (28 Jan – 5 Apr)	Stage 2 meeting (PGT) by 28 Feb Research stage meeting by 28 Feb	FQTs hold planning meetings and allocate work to subgroups by beginning of Feb Analysis of evidence by subgroups in Feb and March
March		Update EAP by 31 March	FQT review meetings and engagement with schools in March and early April . Work managed so that SQRs have completed the majority of their review activities before Easter .
April	Easter vacation (8 – 26 Apr)		Any final FQT engagement with schools completed by mid-May at the latest . SQRs should be involved but with consideration of their availability during this period.
May	Teaching Block 2 continues (29 Apr – 10 May) Summer revision week (13 – 17 May) Summer assessment period (20 May – 7 June)		School FQT reports drafted, shared with schools for a factual check, and formally submitted to schools by the end of May at the latest . SQRs should be involved but with consideration of their availability during this period.
June			FQT Chairs produce overview reports based on the commentaries and submitted to AQPO by 31 July 2018 .
July			