1. Periodic Review

1.1. The periodic review of a Department’s Master’s degrees is normally carried out on a rotational basis, around every six years. Departments may be reviewed out of turn in response to information that would suggest that an earlier review would be desirable or to fit in with accreditation visits, where they exist.

1.2. Whilst the Programmes Committee routine programme review process examines the detail of individual Master’s programmes, periodic reviews are intended to focus on more general overarching themes within the Department such as Departmental strategies and management and will not normally focus on individual programme content unless the outcome of individual programme review suggests otherwise.

1.3. Where a Department’s Master’s programmes are accredited the periodic review will normally take place between six and twelve months after accreditation so that, where possible, the material prepared for accreditation can also be used for periodic review, thus reducing the burden placed on Departments. The Vice-Provost (Education) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Senate and Academic Review) should be invited to attend the final meeting between a Department and its Accrediting Body during an accreditation visit. The final accreditation report should then be submitted to the Registry.

1.4. As part of the preparation for a Department’s periodic review, the Director of the Graduate School and the Assistant Registrar (Senate and Academic Review) will review accreditation reports for Master’s programmes within the Department and will decide whether the accreditation reports indicate that the periodic review should have a particular focus. In addition to this, the Quality Committee reserves the right to ask the review panel to focus on particular themes as part of periodic review, for example feedback to students or the management of group projects. If a review is to have a particular focus, this will be communicated to the Department in advance.

1.5. Periodic reviews of Master’s programmes will normally take place during the spring or summer terms when the routine programme review process is complete and so that the review panel are able to meet with students who have completed at least the majority of their programme or are close to completing a full academic cycle. However, where this is not feasible, Departments are requested to invite, where possible, recent graduates of the Master’s programmes under review to meet the review panel along with current students.

---

1 Master’s degrees will include MSc, MPH, MEd, MRes, MBA and Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas.
Updated Feb 2014; May 2015
2. **The Purpose of Periodic Review**

2.1. The purpose of the periodic review of a Department’s Master’s degrees is to ensure that:

- Each Department’s strategy for the development of its Master’s provision supports the strategy for learning and teaching developed by its Faculty and the College and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration within and between Departments;

- That Master’s programmes have clearly defined aims and intended learning outcomes and are appropriately designed to ensure their achievement;

- That external reference points, for example the National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and national subject benchmarks, have been taken into consideration during programme design. Further information can be found at the following links:

  [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/)

- That the structure, content, academic delivery and assessment procedures for Master’s programmes are well-defined, made explicit to students and achieve academic standards appropriate to the award;

- That through regular and systematic processes of curriculum review and feedback from students, developmental action has been taken to introduce improvements to Master’s programmes building on existing strengths and correcting identified weaknesses;

- That Master’s programmes are exposed to external scrutiny to ensure transparency of processes, confirm standards and ensure programmes remain current and valid;

- That opportunity has been taken to consider future goals for Master’s programmes in the short, medium and long term;

- That, where appropriate, collaborative programmes are being appropriately managed, that collaborative students receive a comparable experience to those students studying programmes delivered directly at the College and that any award made in collaboration with an external institution / organisation is of a comparable academic standard to programmes awarded solely by the College;

- That good practice in teaching, learning and assessment is identified and widely disseminated throughout the College.
3. **The Review Panel**

3.1. The periodic review panel will normally comprise an internal Chairman, from a different Faculty to the Department under review, plus one other internal assessor: typically this will be a Director of Postgraduate Studies (DPS) from a different Department to the one subject to review. There will also be two external assessors (these may be staff from other higher education institutions within the UK, experts from industry or business, staff from appropriate overseas universities or sometimes educationalists). There will also be a student representative on the panel. This would normally be a member of the Graduate Student Union Executive Committee. The internal Chairman should be someone of standing who has knowledge of quality assurance processes as applied to teaching, for example a College Consul.

3.2. The composition of the review panel may vary, depending on whether or not any Master’s programmes within the Department under review are accredited. If all Master’s programmes within the Department are accredited then it is likely that there will be only one external reviewer. However, the final composition of the review panel will be decided by the Director of the Graduate School and the Assistant Registrar (Senate and Academic Review) and communicated to the Department under review.

3.3. The Registry will advise the Head of Department when a periodic review of their Department is due. The Head of Department will be asked to coordinate the production of the periodic review documentation and provide the names and contact details of possible external assessors to approach. The Vice-Provost (Education) will consider all proposals for external reviewers and will make the final decision as to which of the suggested externals should be asked to act as panel members and will approve the internal Chair and the membership of the panel.

3.4. External assessors should not have acted as external examiners on taught programmes at Imperial, or have been members of College staff, or students at the College, within the last five academic years. External assessors should also be from different institutions.

4. **Documentation required for Periodic Review**

4.1. The Head of Department should submit the documentation outlined in Table 1 below 3 weeks prior to the review date (*an electronic version and 8 hard copies to be sent to the Registry*).

4.2. Table 1 provides details of the documentation that is required and who should take responsibility for each item. The Registry will provide those items for which they are responsible to the Department no later than 4 weeks prior to the review so that the Department can incorporate these items into their submission.

4.3. It is recommended that departments follow the structure outlined in Table 1 when collating their submission.
Please note that all departmental submissions should be anonymised in terms of student names.
Table 1:

Description of items to be included within the departmental Periodic Review submission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A list of all Master’s programmes under review. Departments with suspended programmes should consult the Assistant Registrar (Senate and Academic Review) as to whether or not they should be included within the submission.</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A brief introduction to the Department including a strategic statement outlining the future direction of Master’s teaching in the Department. Two brief statements are desirable: a) one covering the short/medium term (5 years’ time); b) one projecting the long term direction (10 years’ time). Please also include the Faculty’s strategic mission and provide a statement which details how the Department’s strategy is linked to this.</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A description of the management of the Department. A description of the roles and responsibilities of teaching and administrative staff, including those with pastoral care responsibility. Please comment on how students are made aware of the roles and responsibilities of these key staff.</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Details of the membership of Master’s Staff-Student committees and information on the frequency of such meetings. Minutes from the meetings which have taken place over the last 12 months should be provided [if not submitted with programme review 2013-14].</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Please provide copies of the minutes of any other departmental committees responsible for the management of Master’s programmes. The minutes of meetings held over the last 12 months should be included.</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6) Resilience of Master's Programmes and Financial Viability

Departments are also asked to specifically address the following questions:

1. Are any of the Master’s programmes reliant on a small number of staff (academic or administrative), and would any be at risk if any of the staff departed or fell ill during the programme?
2. What procedures are in place for succession planning and for ensuring on-going stability of the Department’s programmes?

Please comment on the financial viability of your Master’s programmes. Please also confirm that funding is available for consumables of projects and practicals.

7) For each Master’s programmes included in the review, please provide:

1. A short description of the programme and any future developments for the course. This should reflect the College’s mission statement and may contextualise each Master’s course in terms of national / international needs, preparing students for employment or further study.
2. The names of the programme director/co-director and other key programme management staff.
3. The current programme specification.
4. The most recently completed Programme Review Form, including relevant supplementary documentation if in respect of 2013-14. The URL link to the latest Programme Handbook should be provided (the Department should provide hard copies on the day of the review).
5. A description of student workload across the academic year.
6. A summary of the methods of teaching and assessment used and a statement on how the different methods of teaching & assessment are relevant to achieving the aims of the programme.
7. Details of all staff teaching on the programme (for the current session), please indicate whether internal or external staff and give an indicative number of hours or percentage time teaching.
8) An overall departmental analysis of

1. Details of Application Data for the previous 3 years to include:
   - No. of applications
   - No. of offers made
   - No. of students who accept offers
   - No. of students who enrol.
   The data presented should include a comparison between Home / EU and Overseas students.

2. Special Case Data for the previous 3 years.

3. Percentages of students awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction for the previous 3 years. Those students admitted under special circumstances should be highlighted within the data presented.

4. Professional Skills Development (Graduate School Programme) – an analysis of the professional skills courses attended by students in the previous 3 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department will provide data, Department should provide analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9) A summary of the routine programme reviews (previously known as course evaluations) which have taken place over the last 6 years. You will be provided with a Chart (Appendix 1), partially completed by the Registry, which shows the outcome of each review. You should complete the Chart, highlighting good practice identified during programme reviews and any issues for concern. There will also be space to provide information on appropriate actions taken to address concerns of the MCQ and / or the programme reviewer during the previous programme review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registry / Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10) An overall evaluation of

- the appropriateness of the learning outcomes for the Department’s programmes in relation to the overall aims of the provision, making clear their relation to subject benchmark statements and to the programme’s positioning in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);
- the appropriateness of assessment methods in supporting the achievement of the learning outcomes; discriminating between different categories of performance; how assessment and curricula determine the academic level of the awards;
- the effectiveness of the teaching and learning in providing good learning opportunities to support the achievement of the learning outcomes and academic standards;
- the effectiveness of procedures for maintaining and enhancing the quality of provision and academic standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
11) If applicable, a description of the management of any collaborative programmes with external institutions/organisations in the UK or overseas that are not considered to be placement activity (e.g. formal joint or collaborative degree programmes) [if not included in programme review 2013-14].

Copies of the minutes of meetings of the Joint Management Committee(s) and any site visit reports from the last five years should also be included.

12) If applicable, details of joint programmes offered with other Departments within the College and management arrangements showing how joint programme students are integrated into each Department [if not included in programme review 2013-14].

13) If applicable, a description of the management of student placements including research projects undertaken at external organisations [if not included in programme review 2013-14].

14) Comments on the availability of resources including those at partner organisations, if applicable (staff, staff teaching load, space, equipment and library and computing provision); an evaluation of the effectiveness of resources in supporting the learning of students and the effectiveness of their linkage to learning outcomes. Where the Department under review has facilities at other sites, details of these should be provided here.

15) Where blended learning and/or e-learning form part of the Department's provision, details of how this material is produced and monitored. A sample of e-learning material should be made available for review.

The review panel should be given access to e-learning materials on the review day.

16) Information on how the Department ensures/encourages innovative teaching in the curriculum.

17) Information on how the Department ensures compliance with the Master's Level Precepts (effective from October 2013) [Link to the Master's Level Precepts]

18) External examiner reports and responses for all Master's programmes under review for the last 3 years.

19) Student opinion. Please liaise with your Departmental Student Representative to provide a report outlining the current views of the student body and encompassing comments on the resources for teaching (including IT provision) and assessment arrangements.
20) The most recent PG SOLE and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results and the results of any other internal surveys carried out in the Department (from the last 12 months).

An evaluation of the numerical data from the most recent survey results above. For PTES please include the Departmental action plan, and an update on actions taken.

21) Information on any activities organised for Master’s students, for example, seminar series, journal clubs, poster competitions etc.

22) A summary of destination data of graduates for the previous three years. [Link](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/careers/resources/destinations)

Please provide:

1) A summary of how many students go to industry and how many to academia
2) Information about how the Department prepares its students for careers in either industry or academia.
3) Comments on how the Department ensures that its students receive Careers advice and support.
4) Information about Professional Skills training offered by the Department

23) Information on any student prizes and plans to introduce new prizes.

24) Academic staff activities, development and appraisal; staff feedback on the programme; the award of prizes to recognise teaching excellence. Please provide evidence of how teachers are assessed for all staff including external lecturers. This could include details from peer review or from student surveys. What actions would you take in the event of unsatisfactory teaching being identified?

25) Each year departments are also invited to respond to time-limited themed questions as part of their submissions for periodic review. For reviews carried out in 2014-15 departments are invited to highlight examples of good practice in the following areas:

- Student experience: e.g. supporting students’ transition to postgraduate study; information provided by the Department for new postgraduate students; whether there are any specific forms of assessment and feedback used to aid mature students who are returning to learning;
- Monitoring retention and progression: e.g. what lessons have been drawn from the Department’s analysis of data and how has this influenced the Department’s support of students;
- Student involvement in quality enhancement and welfare;
- Links with industry/future employers

26) Where applicable, the outcome of the previous periodic review, including the assessors’ reports, Departmental response to the reports, Senate Report and follow up action taken as a result of the previous periodic review.
Where applicable, a copy of the latest accreditation report(s) for Master’s programmes in the Department and details of action taken by the Department in response to accreditation reports received since the last periodic review.

The Department may also wish to submit a statement about other items they wish to discuss with the review panel, in particular the impact of shared facilities and College support services on the quality of the educational provision.

5. Periodic Review Procedure

5.1. The material is sent to the assessors appointed for the review who are free to request additional information or clarification.

5.2. Arrangements are made for the assessors to visit the Department, normally over one day, for separate discussions with its staff and student representatives (this will include staff and student representatives from collaborative partnerships, where applicable) and the opportunity is provided for the assessors to see appropriate departmental facilities. It should be expected that a cross section of students will be asked to attend. A template agenda for the review can be found at Appendix 2.

6. The Periodic Review Panel Reports

6.1. In some cases, it may be appropriate to ask individual members of the review panel to focus on a particular cluster of programmes within the Department, but this will be confirmed to the review panel, by the internal Chairman, on the day of the review.

6.2. Each member of the periodic review panel will be asked to submit an individual report, based on their impressions gained from the documentation and discussions during the visit, with any recommendations thought appropriate, normally within one month of their visit to the Department. The internal Chair will submit a summary report, based on the reports of the other assessors and any other comments they may wish to make. The review panel are invited to formulate their reports in the light of the following comments and questions:

- Are the educational objectives of the programmes appropriate and are they achieved?
- Are the learning outcomes appropriate to the educational objectives and are they achieved?
- Do the curricula allow the learning outcomes to be achieved? What are the strengths and weaknesses?
• Are the assessment methods appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes? Comments of the range of assessment and the balance. What are the strengths and weaknesses?

• Are the students adequately supported in achieving the learning outcomes? What are the strengths and weaknesses?

• Are the procedures for maintaining and enhancing the quality of provision and the academic standards effective? What are the strengths and weaknesses? Comments on the resilience of Master's programmes within the Department.

• Please comment on the overall student experience including, where relevant, the experience of students on collaborative programmes or involved in placement activity.

• Please comment on the management of collaborative programmes within the department, if applicable.

• Are the students given adequate high quality and timely feedback on their work and progress?

• Please comment on the extent to which the programme prepares students for work within industry / relevant professions / further study.

• Please highlight examples of good practice, with regard to innovative teaching strategies, research-led teaching and any other aspect of the Departmental procedures which might be considered worthy of dissemination throughout the College.

• If applicable, please comment on the Department’s use of e-learning materials and how these are monitored by the Department. Comments on other innovative teaching methods used by the Department

• Please comment on compliance with the Master’s Level Precepts, including collaborative precepts where appropriate;

• Please highlight any examples of good practice in the support provided by the central College support services and any areas of concern.

• Comments on student engagement.

• Additional comments / observations.

6.3. The reviewers’ reports are made available to the Head of Department for consideration within the Department and copies of the reports are also given to the Provost. The Head of Department will be asked to make a written response to the reports.

6.4. The department’s action plan will be shared with the panel members for further comment, and the internal Chair will be asked to confirm that each of
the Panel’s recommendations has been satisfactorily addressed, or indicate where there are any issues still outstanding.

6.5. The periodic review panel reports and departmental action plan/response will be submitted to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. Departmental representatives will not normally be required to attend. The Chair of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee will present the findings on behalf of the panel.

6.6. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee will submit a report on its review to the Senate. Copies of the periodic review reports will also be submitted to the Joint Management Committee(s) for collaborative degree programmes (where applicable).

6.7. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee will determine an appropriate timetable for follow up to the review; this would normally be 12 months following consideration of the review reports by Senate.

Approved by Senate
May 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document title:</th>
<th>Procedures for the Review of Departmental Master’s Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>May 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Approved:       | Senate: May 2012
|                 | Revised: February 2014
|                 | Revised: May 2015                                           |
| Effective from: | May 2012                                                      |
| Originator:     | Registry Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team                 |
| Contact for queries: | Assistant Registrar (Senate and Review)                      |
| Cross References: | [http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance/approvalandreview/postgraduateresearchprogrammeapprovalandreviewprocesses](http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance/approvalandreview/postgraduateresearchprogrammeapprovalandreviewprocesses) |
| Notes and latest changes: | Formatting changes made on 14 March 2016 |
## Appendix 1: Programme Review Summary Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Programme</th>
<th>Date of Review (Academic Session)</th>
<th>Review Outcome (&quot;poor&quot;, &quot;satisfactory&quot;, or &quot;good&quot;).</th>
<th>Good Practice Identified by Review</th>
<th>Items for Concern Identified by Reviewer / MQC</th>
<th>Follow-up Action Taken by the Department to Address Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Template Agenda for Periodic Review

Review of the following programmes: (LIST)

DATE

9.00am Welcome, Briefing and coffee
Review Panel
Vice-Provost (Education)
Member of the Registry Quality Assurance (Senate & Academic Review) team

9.15am Private Meeting
Review Panel Members only

10.00am Introduction to the Department
Review Panel
Head of Department
Director of Postgraduate Studies Postgraduate Tutor

11.00am Private Meeting
Review Panel

11.15am Meeting with selected staff
The Review Panel should meet with a selection of staff from the department including the majority of programme organisers in the department. The review panel should see new members of staff as well as more senior staff. The department may also wish to invite the following staff to attend the review:

- A member of the Programme Management Committee
- A member of the Joint Management Committee (for collaborative courses)
- In cases of collaborative programmes, a representative from the partner institution
- Departmental Careers Advisor
- Departmental Administrator
- Member of staff responsible for taught programme laboratories

12.15pm Private Meeting
Review Panel

12.30pm Lunch
A sandwich lunch would normally be held in the department for the Review Panel and the students invited to attend the review

The Review Panel should meet with a selection of students. The departmental student representative should be invited to attend as well as a mixture of home and overseas students and full-time / part-time students. It may also be desirable for the Review Panel to meet a small number of students from the previous cohort and those from collaborative partners where these are part of the Department’s provision.

14.15 Tour of Facilities
The department to organise a brief tour of their own facilities.

15.00 Private Meeting
Review Panel members only

15.45 Closing session
Review Panel
Vice-Provost (Education)
Chairman of the relevant Faculty Education Committee or Programmes Committee (or alternate if conflict of interest)
Member of the Registry Quality Assurance
Head of Department
Director of PG Studies