Annual Monitoring – Undergraduate Programmes
Guidance Notes for Report Authors
Section 2: Evaluation of Student Achievement and Progression

Authors should reflect on the quantitative data provided, and identify any significant trends/changes in relation to student retention, progression, performance and/or achievement (degree classifications awarded) and, where appropriate, note any proposed actions at Department level (e.g. new learning and teaching initiatives, curriculum modifications etc.).

**Report authors are asked within this section to report principally ‘by exception’**. Where indicators show consistently good performance and no significant trends, changes or issues are to be reported, authors are not expected to provide further narrative commentary.

Where significant issues are identified, where there is significant variation in the data from one year to the next, where there has been a significant drop in score(s), or where there has been insufficient progress on previously identified issues, reasons should be outlined and actions taken/proposed to address the issues should be noted.

Where there has been a significant increase in student performance, or where the data shows consistently good student performance, authors are asked to reflect on any action taken which has contributed to the increase, or where they have identified learning and teaching strategies to secure the consistently good student performance.

**As an indication, authors may consider a variation of + or – 5% in the data from one year to the next as the basis for further report.** This is, however, an indicative figure and authors are encouraged to use their own judgement in determining the significance of any variation in data. For example, there may be smaller variations in data that are nevertheless of concern to the Department, or larger variations for which there are identifiable and justifiable reasons which may therefore not be of concern to the Department or the College.

**Guidance on interpretation of statistical data at Department level:**

(i) **Longitudinal or ‘trend’ analysis** – Departments should consider the direction of the trends (e.g. are progression and completion rates improving or worsening over time?). Positive trends may indicate that existing policies and processes are operating effectively, but negative trends may indicate the need for further action to address any underlying issues.

(ii) **Exception reporting** – any significant exceptions to general trends (e.g. a sudden increase in the number of First or Third class degrees being awarded or non-continuation rates on particular programmes) should be identified and interrogated. Report authors should consider possible reasons for the exception and any steps which might prevent its recurrence (where the exception is negative) or to encourage its continuation (where the exception is positive).

**Programme Performance Statistics**

Authors should consider the following points:
- Trends / changes in programme retention and completion/non-completion rates
- Trends / changes in degree classification outcomes
- Trends / variations in performance by different groups of students (see progression and achievement data by gender, ethnicity, fee status and disability)

For guidance, authors should consider commenting on instances where the retention rate is below 90% for a particular programme and/or where the retention rate is below 90% in any year of the programme.

For degree classification outcomes (undergraduate programmes), authors should comment where the combined percentage of first and upper second class honours degrees awarded is below the minimum target of 70% (as agreed by Senate at its meeting of 21 February 2007).

Authors may also wish to consider a variation of + or – 5% in the percentage of first and upper second class honours degrees awarded as the basis for further report.

The statistical data set includes degree classification data and progression outcome data presented by gender, ethnicity, fee status and disability. Report authors are encouraged to interrogate this data and, where applicable, to identify any significant trends or patterns in student achievement or progression within these groupings. In particular report authors are encouraged to review whether there are any instances where a particular group or groups perform significantly better, or worse, than other group(s). Should authors identify any notable variations in performance these should be commented upon with an explanation as to why this might be the case and, where applicable, actions identified to address any specific issues. It is important to note, however, that students are not required to declare either their ethnicity or disability which may limit the ability of report authors to identify trends or patterns in this data, with many students on programmes appearing as ‘not known’ or ‘prefer not to say’. Nevertheless, report authors are encouraged to consider this data and, where possible, to identify any notable trends or patterns in student performance across different groups.

Any specific issues identified should be accompanied by clear actions which identify who is accountable for each action and the timescale for completion.