



# Global College Malta

**Quality and Standards Assurance Manual –  
Section 4 The Evaluation, Monitoring and  
Review of the College’s Academic Provision**

## GLOBAL COLLEGE MALTA

### QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL (2021)

#### Section 4 THE EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE COLLEGE’S ACADEMIC PROVISION

##### Students’ views on their academic experience

1. The College seeks to involve its students in the evaluation of modules and programmes of study. The College’s arrangements for collecting, analyzing and reporting on students’ views of the College’s academic provision include:
  - Quantitative and qualitative data relating to programmes of study and modules, obtained through analysis of evaluation questionnaires;
  - Minuted Staff-Student Liaison Meetings;
  - Student representatives on College committees; and,
  - Student representation on review panels involved with the periodic review of the College’s academic provision.

##### **The evaluation and monitoring of modules**

2. Module evaluation is an important mechanism by which the College gathers and assesses information from students about their experience at module level. Module evaluations are useful in helping College staff to identify levels of student engagement in their own learning, areas of good practice and areas where improvements could usefully be made. The results of module evaluations are used to enhance the student learning experience.
3. Each module delivered at undergraduate and taught postgraduate levels is subject to a formal module evaluation questionnaire, which is typically given to students at, or towards, the end of module delivery. There are separate module. College teaching staff may sometimes make time available within a timetabled lecture or seminar for completion of the module questionnaire so as to encourage meaningful response rates.
4. All College staff, and teaching staff in particular, make students aware of the purpose and value of the College’s module evaluation exercise and provide guidance to students about how to

complete the Questionnaire. At all times students need to be assured that their responses will remain anonymous.

5. All questionnaires issued to students on a study programme must include the following five questions (referred to by the College as the ‘Core Question’ set) at the top of each questionnaire, in the following order with no interspersed questions. The questions must be graded on a five point scale from 5 ‘Excellent’ to 4 ‘Very Good’ to 3 ‘Satisfactory’ to 2 ‘Needs Improvement’ to 1 ‘Inadequate’. The five questions are as follows:

Core 1 (a) (Related to individual teaching)	The lecturer explained things well	1-5
<i>or</i>		
Core 1 (b) (Related to team teaching activities)	Teaching staff explained things well	1-5
<i>or</i>		
Core 1 (c) (Related to supervision)	My project/dissertation supervisor was helpful	1-5
Core 2	The programme was intellectually stimulating	1-5
Core 3	I am satisfied with the overall quality of the programme	1-5
Core 4	What was good about the programme?	Open text
Core 5	How could this programme be improved?	Open text

6. The minimum requirement for the questionnaire is the inclusion of five core questions. If desired, programme teams can extend the questionnaire by adding further questions. However, programme teams are encouraged by the College not to add a large number of additional questions since doing so may have an adverse impact on student participation levels and response rates (in other words, students may be dissuaded from filling in long and time consuming questionnaires).
7. Students should be given clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and advised when it will be circulated.
8. The programme or module leader should analyse the student responses that have been received and prepare a ‘Summary and Response’ document in collaboration with the other relevant colleagues at the College. In order to demonstrate to students that their feedback is valued, closing the feedback loop is an essential part of the College’s evaluation processes. In completing programme Summary and Response documents, College staff are encouraged to reflect on the feedback provided and to follow up on issues identified in more detail and greater depth, if necessary, to ensure that responses are targeted and result in a real improvement to the learning experience. Accordingly, the summary report must include an action plan to address, or otherwise respond to, issues raised by students. Where planned actions could impact across the College’s programme offering and/or have associated resource implications,

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programme leaders should discuss these points further with colleagues including, where relevant, College management.

9. The means by which this is achieved is for each programme team to decide, but may include publishing information in the Moodle space, on notice boards, in Staff-Student Liaison meetings or through providing an oral or written report to any programme student representatives who can then arrange their own procedures for dissemination of the information to their peers. Where there might be a time lag between questionnaires being issued and analysed and the next scheduled meeting of the Staff-Student Liaison meeting, programme teams should use one of the other methods listed above for disseminating the questionnaire outcomes and actions. It is important that students receive feedback in a timely fashion.
10. Access to all data associated with individual programmes is restricted with only aggregated data being more widely distributed and used for College development purposes.
11. The outcomes of evaluation questionnaires may also be analysed and recorded centrally within the College. Module evaluation, including reference to student performance, forms part of the programme’s overall evaluation when engaging performance review. Though not mandatory to do so, programme teams and module leaders are encouraged to conduct mid-module evaluations. The content and format of such mid-module evaluations is not prescribed by the College and it is expected that programme teams will make use of informal, continuous student feedback delivered during the delivery of a module.

#### **Staff Student Liaison Meetings**

12. Staff-Student Liaison Meetings (SSLMs) are overseen by the College and enable staff and student representatives to engage in meaningful discussion. The system is designed to obtain evaluative student feedback to ensure the continued quality and enhancement of the College’s academic provision.

#### **Employers’ views on the College’s academic provision**

13. Where possible, the views of employers are sought on the College’s academic activities. In particular, the College recognizes the value of securing employer feedback on the design and delivery of programmes to ensure that the content not only reflects latest developments and thinking in a particular academic area but also to ensure that the graduates produced by the College are ready to enter the workplace with appropriate skills and confidence. Where appropriate and practicable, the College seeks to invite employers to provide comments on the curriculum for a programme prior to its approval and to subsequently have a periodic engagement with the delivery and development of the programme.

#### **Programme monitoring**

14. The purpose of the College’s programme monitoring processes are to use a range of data sources to consider, design, implement and track the impact of initiatives intended to enhance

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the academic experience of students studying on the College’s programmes. The College’s review process enables delivery teams to consider objectively whether their programmes are academically rigorous, innovative and meet student and any stakeholder expectations. An important part of the College’s review process is the input received from the College’s students.

15. Annual monitoring is one of the key mechanisms by which the College systematically ensures the continuing standards and quality of its academic provision and is based on the premise that:
- Staff across the College are responsible and accountable for maintaining standards and enhancing the quality of students’ learning opportunities;
  - Shared responsibility and accountability require frank and open exchanges between programme delivery teams, College support services and College management;
  - The processes by which both opportunities and threats to standards and quality are defined, identified and assessed should draw fully on a range of expertise and experience from across the College.
16. The key characteristics of the College’s annual programme monitoring activities are that they are:
- Evidence-based and include staff and student feedback;
  - Evaluative (rather than simply being ‘descriptive’ reports);
  - Predictive (as well as ‘reflective’);
  - Risk-focused, drawing upon the experience and expertise of College staff and other stakeholders to identify and evaluate opportunities and threats
  - Action-focused with programme evaluations proposing actions to mitigate risk; and,
  - Enhancement-focused so as to enable the identification and evaluation of good practice that is suitable for general dissemination for the purpose of enhancing quality across the entire College.
17. A template for the completion of an annual programme monitoring report is attached at **Appendix 12** to this Manual.
18. Once the annual report form has been completed and agreed by programme teams, they will be considered by the College’s Quality Assurance Committee and then the College’s Academic Board. Where appropriate, feedback will be provided to programme teams and matters requiring intervention will be drawn to the attention of the College’s management team.

### **Monitoring of the College’s Research Degree activity**

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19. The College requires that each of the programmes that it offers is subject to regular evaluation and review and this includes its Postgraduate Research (PGR) provision. The annual monitoring of PGR degrees relates to the College’s Doctor of Philosophy programmes. It is acknowledged that PhD programmes are significantly tailored towards the needs of each individual student. Nevertheless, it is important that the College is able to assure itself as to the state of the research environment to which it admits postgraduate research students.
20. Ideally, postgraduate research monitoring reports should only comment upon activities throughout the year under review. It is, however, recognized that it can sometimes be useful to contextualise some comments or actions in the light of the previous/forthcoming year. In these situations, College staff are encouraged to be specific about the year they are referring to.

**Report format**

21. Each active Research Supervisor is responsible for preparing an annual report which will draw on qualitative data gathered by the supervisor, for example student feedback and any and External Examiner reports. Where the supervisor identifies any issues or enhancement opportunities that they may not be able to action on their own behalf, they should clearly indicate those for the attention of the College’s Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Board.
22. In considering annual research degree monitoring reports, the College’s Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Board must be able to provide in their minutes:
- an assurance on the quality of the research environment within which the College’s postgraduate research students are located;
  - an assurance that the procedures operated by the College are appropriate; and,
  - information on any action that has been taken, or that will be taken in future, to further enhance postgraduate research provision and the experience of students registered on those awards.

**Periodic Review of the College’s academic activities**

23. In order to ensure that the College can have confidence in the quality of the learning experience and standard of achievement across its academic provision, the College will conduct periodic reviews of its study programmes. The overall focus of these reviews will be on using existing information as an evidence base to identify trends in student recruitment, student satisfaction and student outcomes and evaluate how well programme delivery teams have responded to key challenges and built upon areas of success and good practice. The findings of the reviews will be used to inform plans for further enhancement to provision and practice, as well as action points where improvement may be required. The College seeks to operate a flexible framework which allows individual reviews to focus on the issues suggested by the evidence base and which are most relevant to the programme team.
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24. The process for periodic review of programme areas will be coordinated by the College’s Academic Dean. The review process will comprise a number of activities including:
- the collation of data relating to the programme of study under review;
  - the scrutiny of that data by an appointed panel and agreement of key themes and issues for discussion;
  - meetings with representatives of the programme of study under review;
  - a report on review outcomes; and,
  - a response to the review outcomes from the programme team.
25. The College’s programmes of study will normally be subject to periodic review on a rolling cycle at least every five years. Academic Periodic Review may be scheduled to take place at any point in the academic year provided that relevant members of staff and student representatives are available to engage with the review panel. The overall schedule for a review will be agreed with the programme team at least six months in advance.

**Review panel membership**

26. The panel for an Academic Periodic Review will normally include the following:
- Review Chair: the College Academic Dean;
  - An External Adviser;
  - An Academic Reviewer: an academic member of staff from another programme of study offered at the College;
  - A recent Graduate: a former student from the programme of study who has graduated in the past two years;
  - A Student Reviewer: a current student from another study programme offered by the College; and,
  - A Review Secretary: a member of College support staff.
27. The review panel will be provided with the following information:
- A data set relating to the programme of study under review, collated by the College Registry; and,
  - A brief contextual statement provided by the programme of study under review.

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28. The data set will include information relating to the previous five full academic years, or as many years as are available if less than five years, in the following areas:
- Statistical data on student recruitment and performance;
  - Statistical data on student satisfaction;
  - Information on resourcing;
  - Information relating to the development and currency of provision; and,
  - Information relating to programme quality assurance and enhancement.
29. The programme team whose programme is under review will be asked to provide a brief contextual statement to identify what they consider to be the key challenges and successes of the previous five year period, and the main aspirations for improvement and development over the next five year period. The data set and the programme team’s contextual statement will be provided to the review panel electronically approximately two months prior to the review meeting(s) with the programme team. The information provided will be used by the review panel to identify trends over the review period and particular themes to be pursued in the review meeting(s) with the programme team. The data set will be shared with the programme team under review prior to circulation to the review panel.
30. At the conclusion of discussions with the various representatives of the programme team, the review panel will hold a private meeting in order to discuss its conclusions and agree the outcomes of the review. Outcomes will be focussed on recommendations and action points which are intended to address aspects which require improvement, or opportunities to build on existing good practice. The review panel may also choose to commend specific features of innovative or excellent practice which are distinctive in the study programme. Though outcomes will be predominantly for the attention of the programme team, the review panel may make recommendations to the wider College. The review panel may also identify potential risks and will be required to make a judgment on the currency and appropriateness of the academic provision.
31. An oral report on the review panel’s key findings will be provided by the Review Chair to the programme team at the end of the review meeting, though specific recommendations may be further refined as the review report is drafted.
- Review report and follow-up**
32. Following the review meeting, the Review Secretary will draft a report summarising the discussions and detailing the outcomes of the periodic review. The conclusion of the report will clearly detail the recommendations identified by the review panel and whether these are the responsibility of the programme team or another area of the College. Once drafted, the report will be sent to the programme team for the identification of any factual inaccuracies and misrepresentation. Once the report has been finalised it will be circulated to the programme team and any other areas of the College to which recommendations have been made.
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33. The full report will be considered at the next available Quality Assurance Committee meeting. The Quality Assurance Committee will consider any areas of potential risk identified by the review panel and how these may best be monitored. In addition, where the review panel has reached an exceptional judgement that the provision may require review and amendment or (very rarely) is recommended for withdrawal, the Quality Assurance Committee will consider how these aspects may best be followed up. The outcomes of the discussions and activities at the College’s Quality Assurance Committee will be reported to the College’s Academic Board.

**Outcomes requiring further procedures**

34. Where it is determined through the review process that a specific programme may require amendment, further approval processes will apply. Where the amendments to provision are deemed to be substantial then this may require that the programme is subject to a re-approval process. The schedule for this will be determined in negotiation between the College Academic Dean and the programme team. Where any suggested amendments are more moderate it may be appropriate for these to be progressed as minor modifications. In such cases, the College Academic Dean will provide advice to the programme team on the appropriate route for approval.
35. Where it is very exceptionally recommended that a programme should be withdrawn entirely, the programme team will be required to consider this and if in agreement submit an application for withdrawal of the programme. This is expected to be a very rare occurrence due to the operation of the College’s other standards and quality assurance procedures which should provide early identification of any serious operational issues. Where the programme team do not wish to act on such a recommendation a case must be presented to College’s Quality Assurance Committee as to how the concerns which lead to the recommendation will be addressed.
36. Where it is recommended that new programme developments should be pursued, this will be subject to the College’s normal programme approval process set out in other sections of this *Quality and Standards Assurance Manual*.



**Appendix 12**

**ANNUAL MONITORING**  
**Programme Monitoring Report**

**Guidance:**

- This form is designed to enable the College’s programme teams to reflect on various aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience. The form is intended to allow programme teams to provide key information for the attention of the College: it is designed to be light touch and to work alongside other academic standards assurance activities.
- The Form covers all types of credit-bearing provision: undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research.
- The report should be **brief** (suggested length of no more than three pages). Use bullet points where possible.
- Reports should not contain information which identifies any individual.

<b>Programme:</b>	
<b>Report written by (please include any contributors):</b>	
<b>Date of Report:</b>	

**1. Provide a high-level overview of the operation of the programme**  
*(Please provide a summary of the key developments from the last academic year and the key issues arising from the review of available evidence. As Annual Programme Monitoring is an exceptions reporting process, it is not necessary to comment on all aspects of the programme where there are no particular developments or issues to note. The purpose of the overview commentary is to focus on the specific areas that may require further consideration by the College as highlighted by key programme performance indicators, rather than providing commentary on all aspects. Actions should not be included in this section but should be included on the action plan).*

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**2. Provide a more detailed reflection on the operation of the programme including academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience**

This section may include but is not limited to (as appropriate):

- A consideration of student progression and outcomes (focussing on the difference in attainment of groups of students compared with previous years)
- Student engagement in and feedback on the programme
- Feedback received from other stakeholders such as External Examiners, employers, etc.)

**3. Update on actions planned from previous year's annual programme monitoring**

*(If there are actions to be carried forward to the forthcoming academic year, give reasons explaining why this is so and ensure they are included on the action plan for the forthcoming academic year)*

**4. What has worked well this past year and what would you like to retain?**

This could include, for example: changes to courses, including content, assessment and delivery methods; and any changes that may have been made to processes.

**5. What could have worked better and/or requires further development?**

Please identify any actions or areas for improvement in relation to the successful operation of the programme.

**Actions identified:**

*(Formulate an action plan for the forthcoming academic year. The actions should be:*

- *Drawn from the issues identified in the Overview Commentary section of this report*
- *Specific and achievable within a stated time period (SMART)*
- *Owned by a named individual(s) where responsibility for action rests)*

**1)**

**2)**

**Etc.**