

GUIDELINES FOR PRODUCING THE SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT (SED) FOR PERIODIC REVIEW

It is important that the Self-Evaluation Document (SED) is an analytical and evaluative rather than a descriptive document. It should not be more than 20 pages long and include a reflective interpretation of the data from the supporting documentation.

The SED is a summary which demonstrates that a subject provider has reflectively evaluated the following, in a constructively self-critical manner:

- the appropriateness, effectiveness and quality of the curricula of its programmes, including CPD programmes;
- the alignment of curricula to the Liverpool Curriculum Framework hallmarks and attributes;
- the quality and appropriateness of the learning environment provided for all students, whether online or on-campus in Liverpool or elsewhere;
- the quality of the support provided for all its students;
- the quality of the support and development opportunities provided for staff;
- the appropriateness and effectiveness of its management of the academic standards and quality enhancement
- its ability to meet relevant Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration.

It should discuss both strengths and weaknesses of provision, as perceived by the department/school under review. The document is an opportunity for the provider to demonstrate how the strengths of the provision identified since previous reviews have been built upon, and how any weaknesses identified have been addressed. Where weaknesses remain, plans for addressing these should be summarised. Reviewers will give credit for appropriate remedial plans that address effectively any acknowledged weaknesses.

The student community should be engaged in the development of the SED; in the introductory paragraph of the SED the subject provider should outline the methods used and the efforts made to maximise the participation of all cohorts of students.

The SED should focus on the following (please number each paragraph for ease of reference):

1. The Curricula*

The SED should evaluate the effectiveness of the content and design of the curricula in enabling the intended outcomes of programmes to be achieved and academic standards to be maintained/enhanced. Specific issues for consideration include:

- academic and intellectual progression within the curriculum;
- appropriateness of content in relation to the level of the award;
- inclusion of recent developments in the subject;
- reflection of best practice in pedagogy;
- adherence to the UoL principles of assessment and alignment with the Liverpool Curriculum Framework;
- reflection on the extent to which the programmes fulfil the University's accessibility requirements and meets the wider context of inclusive curriculum/education.

****The evaluation of the curricula should be undertaken with reference to the QAA Quality Code and External Examiner/student views where relevant***

The SED should explain the overall curricula in respect of the following:

- (a) Research-connected teaching The SED should explain:
- how current and cutting-edge research findings are incorporated into the syllabi;
 - the progressive build-up of students' critical understanding of the nature of research and enquiry, both in disciplinary and generic contexts;
 - the development of students' practical research skills.
- (b) A varied diet of assessment The SED should explain:
- the range and variety of assessment methods used and an evaluation of their effectiveness in enabling students to demonstrate achievement;
 - the progressive build-up of authentic assessment;
 - the effectiveness of assessments in discriminating between different categories of performance;
 - how the assessment strategy enables the development of employment skills such as confidence, leadership, entrepreneurship;
 - the effectiveness of the assessments used in promoting students' reflective learning (especially through formative assessment, peer- or self-assessment);
 - how marking criteria has been reviewed to confirm that, where appropriate to the subject and/or nature of the assessment, the requirements relating to English language proficiency in the Code of Practice on Assessment, Appendix A, and the OfS condition B4.3, have been met.¹
- (c) Innovative modes of delivery and Active Learning The SED should reflect on the extent to which the modes of delivery of teaching and learning are innovative and promote active learning, and evaluate their effectiveness. This could include, for example, discussion on:
- the range and appropriateness of teaching methods;
 - the variety of ways in which student participation is encouraged and achieved;
 - the effectiveness of team teaching.
- (d) The learning and study skills that are in the curricula The SED should:
- articulate how the department/school identifies the learning and study skills needed by students;
 - explain how the department/school gains an understanding of where these skills are taught, practised and assessed and where they need to be developed;
 - evaluate the effectiveness of strategies employed by the department/school to deliver an appropriate range of learning and study skills for all students.
- (e) Digital fluency and technology-enhanced learning The SED should explain and evaluate
- the department's/school's current use of e-learning and articulate the strategies for developing it further
 - how students' digital skills are developed progressively.
- (f) Confidence and employability The SED should explain:
- how the department/school identifies the employability skills that are relevant to and needed by its students;
 - how the department/school gains an understanding of where employability skills are taught, practised and assessed and where they need to be developed;
 - how the department/school assesses the effectiveness of its employability strategies and its engagement or interactions with employers.

¹ See note 1 for details of B4.3.

- (g) Work placements The expansion of work placement opportunities for students is an important objective for the University. If the department/school provides work placements the SED should explain how these are managed and evaluate their value to the student experience. Where work placements are not currently provided the SED should explain if there are plans to develop them in the future or what alternative strategies the department/school has to provide students with opportunities to engage with employers.
- (h) Global citizenship and options for international study As with work placements, opportunities for students to study abroad are another important objective for the University. The department/school should explain what opportunities already exist, if any, and articulate its plans for developing international study opportunities, possibly through the development of partnerships with similar international departments.
- (i) Use of market intelligence The SED should explain how or if the department/school uses market intelligence to inform the development of its curricula and/or portfolio of programmes and evaluate the effectiveness of using such data.
- (j) Engagement of employers or community members in the development and/or delivery of the curricula. The SED should explain and evaluate how the department/school uses the input of external stakeholders in the delivery of its curricula or to inform the development of its curricula and/or portfolio of programmes.

2. Student Support

The SED should articulate and evaluate the student support systems in place for the whole student journey for all students, covering aspects that include the following:

- recruitment and induction of students;
- identification of and action on any special learning needs;
- feedback to students on their progress;
- overall academic guidance and supervision;
- tutorial support.

The SED should articulate how it is meeting the requirements of OfS condition B2², ensuring there is sufficient support for all students to receive a high quality academic experience, to enable students to succeed in and beyond their higher education, and ensuring there is effective engagement with students to achieve these.

The SED should discuss the effectiveness of strategies of academic support, and the extent to which they take account of the ability profile of the student intake in relation to the aims of the programmes. Where appropriate the department/school should evaluate the effectiveness of its student support systems in the context of relevant student data.

3. The Learning Environment

The SED should review the adequacy and effectiveness of the learning environments provided for the different cohorts of students. In particular, it should demonstrate a strategic approach to linking resources to intended programme outcomes and to enhancement of the student experience. In respect of OfS condition B2, the SED should also show how it ensures there are

² See note 2 for details of B2.

sufficient resources in place for students to receive a higher quality academic experience and to succeed in their studies.

4. Staff Development

The SED should explain the systems and strategies in place for staff induction, mentoring and development and evaluate their effectiveness in delivering a high-quality student experience and for enhancing teaching performance.

5. Programme Management

The SED should evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken to enhance the quality and standards of provision. In particular, the SED should show how the department/school meets the requirements of the OfS condition B1.3³, which covers the academic experience. In the context of the requirements of condition B1.3 above, the SED should show:

- The structures in place within level 1 for effective programme management, including
 - how the department/school maintains an overview of the programme structure and delivery, ensuring the programme content is up-to-date, educationally challenging, coherent, and develops appropriate skills
 - monitoring of the team's engagement with existing University policies and procedures relating to learning, teaching and assessment
 - how the department/school seizes developmental opportunities in a systematic and strategic manner;
- how the department/school enhances the quality of learning opportunities by systematically building upon information or feedback that may come from:
 - external examiners;
 - external bodies, such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
 - students and graduates;
 - employers;
 - the annual subject action planning process;
 - the University's Strategic Plan;
 - University policies;
- how the department/school identifies, maintains and enhances the sharing of good practice.

The Self-Evaluation Document should indicate where the supporting evidence may be found, e.g. within other programme handbooks and other departmental/school documentation. Such references will help the reviewers in gathering evidence, and avoid the need for merely descriptive material to be included in an evaluative document.

Programme specifications for all programmes included in the review should be included with the supporting documentation for the review.

6. Liverpool Curriculum Framework Design Principles

The SED should indicate how and where the following curriculum design principles have been embedded:

³ See note 3 for details of B1.3.

- (a) All students undertake a capstone research- or enquiry-based project, which may be synoptic (allowing them to draw on a wide range of elements from the modules they have taken);
 - (b) All programmes include applied enquiry-led learning in at least one required module each year (UG only);
 - (c) The use of authentic assessment is built up progressively and maximised across all programmes;
 - (d) Formative assessment and feedback/feedforward are used to engage students in active learning in all modules;
 - (e) Students’ digital skills are developed progressively; and
 - (f) All students can undertake a substantial work placement and/or experience a period of study abroad.
- 7. OfS Condition B3: Student Outcomes Data**

The OfS B3⁴ condition, Student Outcomes, states that “Providers must deliver positive outcomes for students on their higher education courses” and includes a set of numerical thresholds that the University must meet. The numerical thresholds are:

Level and mode of study	Continuation	Completion	Progression
FT Other UG	75%	65%	45%
FT First degree	80%	75%	60%
FT UG with PG components	85%	85%	75%
FT PG taught masters	80%	80%	70%
FT PG Other	80%	80%	85%
PT Other UG	55%	55%	65%
PT First degree	55%	40%	70%
PT UG with PG components	60%	60%	80%
PT PGCE	75%	75%	85%

⁴ See note 4 for details of B3.

Level and mode of study	Continuation	Completion	Progression
PT PG taught masters	65%	65%	85%
PT PG Other	65%	60%	85%
Apprenticeship – UG	70%	55%	75%
Apprenticeship – PG	80%	80%	80%

Note: continuation relates to progressing through the programme, completion relates to receiving an award, and progression relates to obtaining graduate level employment.

The OfS has published dashboards with all the relevant data for the above thresholds at institution and subject level. In order to ensure the University meets the above thresholds, the SED should provide details of the data provided on the OfS dashboard in relation to the subjects or disciplines covered by the review, indicating where the metrics are above, at or below the threshold. The SED should also include analysis and commentary on the data.

The OfS dashboard is available here: [Student outcomes: Data dashboard - Office for Students](#).

Further information about the metrics is available here: [Setting numerical thresholds for condition B3 \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](#).

SUGGESTED TEMPLATE FOR THE STUDENT COMMENTARY ON THE SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT (SED) FOR PERIODIC REVIEW

This commentary should be written in a way that ensures that no individual student or member of staff can be identified

SUBJECT AREA:
DATE OF PERIODIC REVIEW:
COMPILED BY/DATE:

Please outline how students have been engaged in the development of the SED:

Do you think the evaluation in the SED is a fair reflection of the subject area and its provision? Please provide details/comments as necessary.

Does the SED reflect the strengths and weaknesses identified by the students? Please provide details/comments as necessary.

Are there any additional matters the students would like to highlight to the review panel?

Notes

1. OfS Condition B4 covers assessments and awards and B4.2 requires that:

“in respect of each higher education course, academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course”.

This requirement has been incorporated into the Code of Practice on Assessment, [Appendix A: University Marks Scale, Marking Descriptors and Qualification Descriptors](#):

- 2.1 Each Department will have its own set of qualitative marking descriptors which describe what each mark range represents in terms of student achievement in that particular subject. These descriptors will relate to the appropriate subject benchmark statement(s) which have been produced by each national subject community.

- 2.2 In addition to this, each Department will be required to demonstrate how English language proficiency has been checked in all submissions with a written element in the context of the subject area.
- 2.3 Where marking criteria already includes a graded element for spelling and grammar or equivalent, there is no need to include any further check. Where assessment criteria, which has written components, does not include an element for checking English language, this should be added. This does not have to be graded but must indicate that a check for English language has been made.

2. OfS Condition B2 covers resources, support and student engagement, as follows:

Scope

B2.1 This condition applies to the quality of higher education provided in any manner or form by, or on behalf of, a provider (including, but not limited to, circumstances where a provider is responsible only for granting awards for students registered with another provider).

Requirement

B2.1 This condition applies to the quality of higher education provided in any manner or form by, or on behalf of, a provide (including, but not limited to, circumstances where a provider is responsible only for granting awards for students registered with another provider).

B2.2 Without prejudice to the principles and requirements provided for by any other condition of registration and the scope of B2.1, the provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure:

- a. each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives resources and support which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:
 - i. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
 - ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education; and
- b. effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:
 - i. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
 - ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

B2.3 For the purposes of this condition, “all reasonable steps” is to be interpreted in a manner which (without prejudice to other relevant considerations):

- a. focuses and places significant weight on:
 - i. the particular academic needs of each cohort of students based on prior academic attainment and capability; and
 - ii. the principle that the greater the academic needs of the cohort of students, the number and nature of the steps needed to be taken are likely to be more significant;
- b. places less weight, as compared to the factor described in B2.3a., on the provider’s financial constraints; and
- c. disregards case law relating to the interpretation of contractual obligations.

3. OfS Condition B1 covers the academic experience and B1.3 is as follows:

B1.3 For the purposes of this condition, a high quality academic experience includes but is not limited to ensuring all of the following:

- a. each higher education course is up-to-date;
- b. each higher education course provides educational challenge;

- c. each higher education course is coherent;
- d. each higher education course is effectively delivered; and
- e. each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills.

4. OfS Condition B3 covers student outcomes and is as follows:

Scope and application

B3.1 This condition applies to the quality of higher education provided in any manner or form by, or on behalf of, a provider (including, but not limited to, circumstances where a provider is responsible only for granting awards for students registered with another provider).

B3.2 This condition applies as an initial and general ongoing condition of registration for each relevant provider and as a general ongoing condition of registration for any provider that is not a relevant provider.

Requirement

B3.3 Without prejudice to the principles and requirements provided for by any other condition of registration and the scope of B3.1, the provider must deliver positive outcomes for students on its higher education courses.

B3.4 For the purposes of this condition, delivering positive outcomes means that either:

- a. in the OfS's judgement, the outcome data for each of the indicators and split indicators are at or above the relevant numerical thresholds; or
- b. to the extent that the provider does not have outcome data for each of the indicators and split indicators that are at or above the relevant numerical thresholds, the OfS otherwise judges that:
 - i. the provider's context justifies the outcome data; and/or
 - ii. this is because the OfS does not hold any data showing the provider's numerical performance against the indicator or split indicator; and/or
 - iii. this is because the OfS does hold this data but the data refers to fewer than the minimum number of students.