

STUDY PROGRAMME REVIEW (SPR) PROCEDURE

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STUDY PROGRAMME REVIEW (SPR) PROCEDURE

Vocational study programmes are dynamic in nature due to the strong element of industry involvement; therefore these programmes should be reviewed, renewed, and readapted when, and if, necessary – not only to satisfy the quality assurance components within an education institution but also to satisfy the needs of the industry. While programmes review should be an ongoing process, a holistic or full review should be carried out every two years. There are a number of elements which need to be considered during a programme review, such as: (i) the Scientific Committee feedback; (ii) Lecturers' module self-review; (iii) student module questionnaire; (iv) suggestions from the Board of Studies; (v) external assessors' feedback; and (vi) industry consultation. The feedback obtained from the stakeholders, together with the necessary data collected during this exercise, should be analysed by an *ad hoc* Programme Review Committee and the outcome of this study reflected in the necessary changes to the programme.

The different departments under the direction of the Director of Studies and Academic Managers shall carry out a programme review as specified in the below procedures. This process is an important aspect of the Institutes' quality assurance mechanism and serves to ensure that programmes are of acceptable quality, appropriate vocational and academic standard and relevant to the needs of the industry.

1. Scope of Study Programme Reviews (SPR)

The purposes of undertaking a programme review are:

1.1 to evaluate and ensure the effectiveness and educational sustainability of programmes and whether the learning outcomes set for each module are being achieved by students;

1.2 to involve a number of educational stake holders, such as students, lecturers, management and the industry and consider their feedback when reviewing programmes;

1.3 to ensure that programmes remain current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and practice in its application;

1.4 to improve the study programme, particularly its structure, diet and curriculum by developing changes to individual modules. Changes may include; updating, addition, removal, reinterpretation of learning outcomes; learning hours; assessment patterns; transversal elements; and type of delivery of the modules and the methodology employed;

1.5 to evaluate how lecturers are implementing their learning and teaching methods to ensure the currency, coherence and fit with the Institutes aims and objectives;

1.6 to ensure that the Institute carries out a self-evaluation on all programmes approved by itself and be able to identify areas for improvement while taking the necessary actions in response to the weaknesses identified during this exercise;

1.7 to enable external stakeholders, notably the industry, to actively participate directly in the development and enhancement of curricula, thus bringing study programmes closer to their needs and improving employability prospects of graduates.

2. Core Benefits of Study Programme Review (SPR)

2.1 SPR enables the entity to improve curricula practices and take new approaches toward teaching and learning while doing all this within a formal framework.

2.2 SPR provides both internal (or independent) and external confirmation of the quality and standards attained when delivering a specific study programme.

2.3 SPR mitigates bad practices while it recognizes, verify and disseminates elements related to appropriate educational operational standards.

SPR allows for the identification of common themes and issues within the Institute which could benefit from co-ordinated action.

3. Outline of procedure

3.1 Study Programme Review (SPR) should be undertaken for every programme. Academic Managers are required to obtain feedback taking into account a range of factors. The Institute of Tourism Studies suggests that the following items are discussed during *ad hoc* focus groups which target specific study programmes:

3.1.1 Programme Specifics:

- a) The programme's Learning Outcome
- b) The mode of learning and whether this is attainable according to the MQF level.
- c) The assessment methods (summative, formative, other) and if this is the appropriate method for the specific module
- d) Progression within the programme
- e) Programme content, including programme structure, subject areas covered, and programme currency (whether it is up to date in terms of research developments, professional requirements etc.)

3.1.2 Minutes of the Board of Studies

3.1.3 External Examiners'/Evaluators' Reports:

- a) What recommendations have been made by the external examiners?
- b) What actions will be taken as a result?
- c) Verbal feedback given by externals at examination boards should also be discussed

3.1.4 Statistical information from the current and previous year:

- a) Admissions e.g. the ratio of applications to entrants, rise or fall of number applications
- b) Student numbers and staff/student ratio
- c) Student profile i.e. analysis by age, domicile, gender, full-time/part-time ratio, disability
- d) Progression, Attrition and completion rates, based upon the percentage of those enrolled who are subsequently successful at each stage of the programme
- e) Student achievement e.g. pattern of degree classes awarded, standards sought from and obtained by students, information about students' first employment destinations
- f) Any additional statistical data generated by the Department, Institute, or Centre, considered to be relevant to the objectives of Programme Review

3.1.5 Outcomes of student module feedback questionnaires:

- a) Is the feedback generally satisfactory?
- b) What weaknesses/strengths were identified?
- c) What action will be taken as a result of student feedback?

3.1.6 Staff feedback and comments:

- a) Will there be any changes to units because of staff changes?
- b) Is the balance of teaching and assessment optimal?
- c) How does staff feedback correlate with student feedback?

3.2 The Board of Studies shall decide whether to undertake SPR at Board level or through *ad hoc* Sub-Committees. It may decide that the Board of Studies for a programme can function as such an *ad hoc* Sub-Committee. The decision on the composition of the Sub-Committee shall be driven by practical consideration, such as the number of programmes for review.

3.3 The Sub-Committee charged with the SPR (in consultation with the Director of Studies) will present a list of persons within the academic staff who may contribute towards this exercise.

3.4 A preliminary meeting will be held with the Director of Studies and Academic Manager to identify the adequacy of the identified persons, and the resources required to collect the information necessary for the conduct of such an internal evaluation.

4. SPR Evaluation Document

4.1 Following review of available documentation, the SPR Sub-Committee, in consultation with the Director of Studies, should prepare a draft document – this can be a revised diet in an excel sheet containing the comments on the individual modules. The committee shall officially present the results to the Board of Studies. The SSPR evaluation document should contain the following information:

- An Introductory Section
- Overarching objectives of the programme under review
- Evaluation of the aims of the programme
- Evaluation of the Learning Outcomes including progression from one level to the Other (where applicable)
- Evaluation of the Curriculum
- Evaluation of the Assessment methods
- Learning Resources and the Effectiveness of their Utilisation
- Stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes to the programme
- Supporting Evidence to the SED

4.2 Following consideration of the draft SPR Evaluation document, a finalised document will be discussed and approved (or otherwise) by the Board of Studies.

5. Outcomes of Programme Review

5.1 The *ad hoc* sub committee needs to write a short summary of the findings but will be also in charge of coordinating the implementation of the changes suggested during the SPR exercise. The committee shall liaise directly and be led by the Curriculum department who take final decisions on key elements related to ECTSs allocation and distribution of hours etc.

5.2 The necessary changes must be presented to the Board of Studies within two months from the date of presentation of the SPR findings to the Board of Studies.