

## CONTINUOUS MONITORING: RISK MATRIX

### The Process

As part of the University's commitment to move to a position of risk-based quality assurance, the Continuous Monitoring process ensures that course leaders establish a risk rating for their course. This element of the process is to be used for constructive purposes, to help the course team, school and faculty in their planning activity and also to identify and disseminate practice that constitutes enhancement. Through identifying risk factors, decisions can be made about the level of change required to maintain a viable, relevant course of appropriate quality. This in turn will help shape the revalidation cycle and ultimately, *may* result in perpetual validation when a course consistently meets its target metrics (qualitative and quantitative) and the course team is seen to continuously take positive action to address any matters raised throughout the life of the course. However, this will not preclude the option of re-validation where course teams and faculties deem it appropriate.

Once the course team has made its judgement, a dialogue will take place with school management which may result in a different view. This will then be scrutinised via the Continuous Monitoring process feeding up through Faculty Quality Assurance Committee (FQAC) and Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), and might be subject to challenge if the measures indicating the quality (in its broadest sense) of the course contradict the rating. As is noted below, issues of a non-quality assurance may also be identified and actioned as part of this exercise.

### Risk Rating

The risk rating judgement is qualitative but informed by statistical data that is made available to course teams throughout the academic cycle. The table below provides *indicative* examples of what might be considered as 'High,' 'Moderate' or 'Low' risk for each of the metrics that will be reviewed, but this is not prescriptive and there is no algorithm to determine the outcome. The judgement is to be made on the basis of consideration of the metrics alongside the context within which the course and the course team are situated.

A formulaic approach based, for example, on variance from targets of NSS or Graduate Outcome results is to be avoided, as a course could "look" low risk due to the lag in data, or be labelled high risk when there are no significant issues identified (for example, if re-validation is required due to changes in professional body requirements).

Faculty teams discuss targets for courses against those at University level. Course teams are expected to understand where they stand against those targets and what needs to be done where improvements are indicated. This should all feed in to the dialogue and discussion leading in to making a rating decision. This will both guard against persistently poor measures being ignored and measures that are not representative forcing inappropriate consequences. The contextual statement can be used to address any apparent discrepancies between the evidence and the rating.

An example of a quality-related issue would be if the evidence indicates a course needs significant changes in curriculum, possibly due to feedback from students and/or employers a revalidation. That might result in a high risk rating. However, another course team might decide that they need to change some modules in the course to account for changing industry needs or staffing base. This is less risky and might, therefore, lead to a moderate risk rating. It is important to note that the table below provides 'indicative' examples. A course might be rated 'moderate' despite having good indicators, because the course team have recognised a need to make significant changes to avoid a future dip in e.g. employability figures.

Ratings can also be applied for non-quality related matters. One example is poor recruitment due to increased competition. The rating then should reflect the action. For example, if the dip in recruitment is sufficient to warrant a request to close the course, this might be a high risk rating. If it just needed a specific marketing push a moderate risk rating may be more appropriate.

**Table 1: Continuous Monitoring Risk Indicators<sup>1</sup>**

Type of Data	Metric	Standard Period Data Available	Indicative Risk Factors					
			High	x	Moderate	-	Low	✓
Quantitative	First sitting board data <sup>2</sup>	1 May – 1 Aug	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)		Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)		At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change	
	Second sitting board data	1 Nov – 1 Feb	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)		Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)		At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change	
	Good Honours data	1 Aug – 1 Nov	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)		Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)		At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change	
	PG Performance data*	1 Nov – 1 Feb	Significantly adrift from target		Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk		At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change	

<sup>1</sup> A metric used to identify our risk exposure over time

<sup>2</sup> Including commentary on outliers

			Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)	(either positively or negatively)	
	Pass Rates	1 Aug – 1 Nov	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)	Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)	At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change
	Recruitment Numbers	1 Aug – 1 Nov	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)	Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)	At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change
	LOOP	1 Nov – 1 Feb	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)	Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)	At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change
	Retention	1 Feb – 1 May	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)	Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)	At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change

	Graduate Outcomes	1 Feb – 1 May	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)	Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)	At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change
Quantitative /Qualitative	NSS	1 Aug – 1 Nov	Significantly adrift from target  Anticipating significant change  (either positively or negatively)	Moderately adrift from target  Anticipating moderate risk  (either positively or negatively)	At target or very near  Anticipating minimal or no change
Qualitative	Current year action plan	1 May – 1 Aug	None of the actions have been addressed or partially addressed in year	Some actions addressed or partially addressed in year.	All actions progressing or completed
	Employer Feedback	1 May – 1 Aug	Indicates serious concerns in respect of the curriculum being suitable for industry  Indicates serious concerns about work placement activity	Indicates improvements could be made to the curriculum to make it more suitable for industry  Indicates a potential lack of clarity or coherence in work placement activity	Curriculum is appropriate for industry  Work placements are being managed effectively
	Annual Link Officer Report*	1 May – 1 Aug	No visits have taken place  External Examiner reports not been received by the partner	Only one continuous monitoring event was held  Course information was not received in a timely manner by the partner	Visits have taken place, evidence of partnership working noted, no significant concerns raised

	Collaborative Course Report*	1 May – 1 Aug	Assessment delivered at the partner differs from the on-campus course  RTS applications out of date or incomplete prior to course commencement	Students have difficulty accessing materials for assessment  Partner due for external review (QAA/Estyn)	Good communication and partnership working noted
	Module Reports	1 May – 1 Aug	Incomplete documentation  Major staffing issue noted  Major resource issue noted	Majority of documentation complete  Recommendation to amend assessment or teaching methods	All complete  No major issues have been raised
	PSRB	1 May – 1 Aug	New set of PSRB regulations or procedures being introduced	Visit or audit resulted in a number of recommendations more substantial than housekeeping but not high risk	Visit or audit resulted in a satisfactory report with minimal or low risk recommendations
	(Re)validation <sup>3</sup>	1 May – 1 Aug	Conditions not met by deadline  Recommendations not considered	Recommendations considered but further resource / financial investment required to action	Recommendations considered and actioned, where appropriate
	SSCLGs	1 Nov – 1 Aug	They have not taken place or the majority have not taken place  Major concern raised about a member of staff, specialist resource or level of teaching	Over half have taken place  Recommendations made about the curriculum and/or teaching / learning that would add value	All have taken place  No major issues have been raised

<sup>3</sup> or any recommendations arising from a (re)validation

	Verbal external examiner comments at boards	1 May – 1 Aug	Indicates concerns with academic standards (i.e. non-alignment with the FHEQ; lack of parity of treatment of students)	Indicates concerns with academic quality (i.e. assessment bunching; outdated learning and teaching materials)	Satisfactory or provides suggestions to be considered for enhancement
	External Examiner Report	1 Nov – 1 Feb			

\*Where applicable