

## **033. Annual Monitoring Procedure**

# Annual Monitoring Procedure

<b>Policy owner:</b>	<b>Academic Director (CEO)</b>
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## Policies to be read in conjunction:

- New Programme Design and Approval Policy
- Programme Changes, Suspensions and Withdrawals Policy
- Information, Marketing and Promotions (CMA) Policy

## SECTION A: INFORMATION AND OVERVIEW

### 1. Introduction

IFG holds educational quality assurance and enhancement as a key institutional priority, and has annual monitoring systems in place to ensure that courses of study are reviewed and assured appropriately and that key stakeholder feedback is taken into account. Our annual monitoring systems are designed to ensure our educational delivery is and remains fit for purpose in relation to the character and portfolio of our small institution, and that IFG demonstrably aligns with the OfS B Conditions governing quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes. The systems aim to incorporate internal and external peer involvement as fully as possible, and to operate throughout the daily life of the institution.

### 2. Annual Monitoring Purposes

The purposes of this Policy and our Annual Monitoring processes are to:

- Ensure that the courses and programmes offered at the institution remain academically rigorous and relevant to the needs of students and the wider community.
- Establish a formal, systematic process for reviewing courses to assess quality, effectiveness, and student satisfaction.
- Engage students and academic staff in the ongoing development and improvement of the learning experience.

- Provide a clear process for handling course modifications, the validation of new programmes, and changes based on external input.
- Ensure fair treatment for students.

### **3. Annual Monitoring Processes and Mechanisms**

The following quality assurance and enhancement processes and mechanisms comprise our annual monitoring systems:

- a) Course Validation and Modification
- b) Periodic Review of Courses
- c) Annual Monitoring of Courses
- d) External Examiner Nomination and Reporting
- e) Student representation
- f) Student feedback
- g) Student Surveys (e.g. National Student Survey and internal undergraduate and postgraduate surveys)
- h) Peer Observation of Teaching
- i) Consumer Protection and CMA Compliance (CMA)
- j) Ensuring fair treatment of students (OfS Condition C5)
- k) Student transfer procedures and accreditation of prior learning
- l) Access and Participation Monitoring

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The College's Academic Board, chaired by the Academic Director, is the senior academic body of the institution and as such has responsibility and authority over academic standards in the institution, receiving periodic review and validation reports, as well as approving major and minor changes to courses (subject to validating body agreement). Under the auspices of the Board, the Academic Director has overall responsibility for the quality assurance and enhancement of the institution.

The Academic Director has academic oversight of the development of all HE courses, their specifications and their delivery. They, together with the Director of Studies and the Director of Professional Programmes, acts as a liaison between Course Leaders and the Academic Committee on quality assurance providing guidance and advice on the course specific implications of quality assurance such as the development of aims and learning outcomes, and the ways in which generic principles translate into pedagogically appropriate practices.

They support academic staff in the production of documentation for course periodic reviews and advise on the choice of External Examiner nominations and appropriate external peers for periodic review. They also champion and lead on academic quality enhancement.

The Director of Studies manages and administers quality assurance and enhancement processes, provides advice and guidance on quality assurance issues generally and draws together oversight of courses, sharing good practice and pedagogic enhancement.

The annual monitoring and review processes outlined in this policy are essential to maintaining the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of courses at IFG. By engaging with students, staff, and external stakeholders, our institution seeks to continuously evolve the student learning experience whilst simultaneously maintaining academic standards.

This policy will be reviewed at least once every three years and updated as necessary to reflect changes in institutional priorities, regulatory requirements, and best practices in higher education.

## SECTION B: ANNUAL MONITORING PROCESSES

The Academic Committee receives an annual monitoring report every year that consists of the following:

- Course Annual Monitoring reports, including:
  - External Examiner Reports
  - New course validation reports (where applicable)
  - Revalidated course validation reports (where applicable)
  - Course Periodic Review reports (where applicable)
- NSS Datasets along with commentary from the NSS Review (see Section g, below)
- Student Survey/Feedback results
- Report on Consumer Protection and CMA Compliance (CMA)
- Actions arising from the monitoring process for ensuring fair treatment of students (OfS Condition C5)
- Admissions data, including data on student transfers in and out of IFG
- Access and Participation Monitoring Report

### a) Periodic Review of Courses

Each course undergoes a periodic review at least every 5 years to assess its quality, relevance, and alignment with the institution's strategic goals.

The review process includes:

- Self-evaluation by the course team.
- Review of student performance data, external examiner reports, and feedback.
- Input from students, academic staff, and external stakeholders.
- Consideration of actions and data arising from annual monitoring of the course.
- Consideration of the wider academic and professional context.

Recommendations from the periodic review are implemented, with an action plan developed to address any identified areas for improvement. Where deemed appropriate, the Academic Director may order a periodic review of a course to take place at an earlier juncture than the 5 year cycle.

### b) Annual Monitoring of Courses

Each course undergoes an annual monitoring process to ensure ongoing quality and performance, with relevant actions and data arising from annual monitoring feeding into periodic reviews of courses. The key elements of the annual monitoring process include:

- Review of course performance data (e.g., student progression, assessment outcomes, pass rates).
- Evaluation of student satisfaction and feedback, including National Student Survey (NSS) results and internal course surveys, and any relevant data arising from student complaints.
- Consideration of any issues raised by external examiners and course committees.

- Reflection on any changes to academic policy, external regulations, or institutional strategy that may affect the course.

A formal report on the annual monitoring of courses is submitted to the Academic Committee for approval, and an action plan is developed for any necessary improvements. Reports may be submitted to regulatory and validating bodies where requested/required.

### **c) External Examiners and IFG annual monitoring**

External examiners are not formally required to carry out play a crucial role in assuring the quality and academic standards of courses at IFG. The process for nominating and managing external examiners is set out in the External Examiner Code of Practice, and relevant summary information can also be found in the IFG Assessment and Feedback Policy.

External Examiners play the following role in annual monitoring:

- The external examiner is provided with clear guidelines on their responsibilities, including reviewing assessment materials, moderating exam scripts, and providing feedback on the overall academic standards of the course.
- Arising from the above, an annual report from the external examiner is submitted, along with a response from the Course Team, to the Academic Committee for monitoring.
- Actions taken in response to any issues raised by External Examiners are reported to the Academic Committee, with a formal response provided to the External Examiner.
  - During the monitoring process, the Academic Committee will note any issues raised by external examiners along with the Course Team response, and will agree any action to be taken. Where a Course Team has proactively taken action in response to the External Examiner's report, the Academic Committee will determine whether any further action is required.

### **d) Student Representation**

Students are actively involved in IFG's quality assurance and governance processes relating to their courses. IFG's main formal body in this regard is the Student Committee, which is a sub-Committee of the Academic Board. The Committee is co-chaired by the Director of Studies and the Academic Director. The role of student representatives on this Committee is to:

- Provide a student perspective on issues relating to course delivery, curriculum, assessment, and support services.
- Ensure effective communication between students and academic staff.
- Bring forward student feedback and concerns to the Committee for discussion and action.

As a small institution, IFG maintains a continuous ongoing dialogue with our students and the highly formal processes that are in place in large institutions can be counter-productive to this dialogue. Therefore, students from each course and cohort are invited to put themselves forward to sit as members of the Student Committee, with normally a maximum of 3 students from any one course sitting as members. In years where membership is high, sittings of the Committee may be divided to support meaningful dialogue and work of the Committee that will naturally occur in a smaller group.

Student Committee members can be nominated by other students or staff at any time during the academic year to sit on the Committee, and are encouraged to engage actively in discussions and provide feedback on behalf of their

peers. A report of matters discussed, student feedback and actions agreed by the Student Committee is submitted to the Academic Committee for monitoring and to close the feedback loop, at the next available meeting following a sitting of the Student Committee.

### **e) Student Feedback**

Student feedback is a central part of our annual monitoring process and provides valuable insights into the quality of the student learning experience. Feedback is collected through:

- Course-specific surveys conducted at the end of each module or course to capture students' views on teaching, learning, and assessment.
- National Student Survey (NSS): Results from the NSS are reviewed annually to identify trends and areas for improvement in student satisfaction.
- Internal Undergraduate and Postgraduate Surveys: These surveys provide additional insights into student experiences across a range of courses.

All feedback is reviewed by the Director of Studies and the Academic Director, and actions are taken to address any issues raised. Other members of staff as relevant may be involved in the review process.

### **f) Student Surveys (e.g., National Student Survey and Internal Surveys)**

IFG recognises that participation, when appropriate, in the National Student Survey (NSS) is a valuable data source relating to undergraduate students' experiences.

**NSS Review:** The NSS results are reviewed by the Academic Director, the Director of Studies, and where relevant the Director of Marketing and the Director of Professional Programmes, along with relevant Course teams, and an action plan is developed to address any areas where student satisfaction is lower than benchmark. Actions may also be taken to address areas where NSS scores are at or above benchmark but where these are below other area scores.

In addition to the NSS, internal surveys are conducted for both undergraduate and postgraduate students to gather more specific feedback on course delivery, content, and support services.

### **g) Peer Observation of Teaching**

Peer observation of teaching is an important mechanism for enhancing teaching quality and professional development. All teaching staff participate in a peer observation scheme, which:

- Provides opportunities for staff to receive constructive feedback on their teaching.
- Promotes the sharing of good practice across the institution.
- Contributes to the continuous professional development of academic staff.

Peer observation is conducted annually, and staff are required to reflect on the feedback received as part of their personal development planning. Relevant detailed information pertaining to the peer observation process can be found in the IFG Staff Development Procedure.

### **h) Consumer Protection and CMA Compliance (CMA)**

IFG is committed to compliance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and the guidance provided by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). This includes:



- Ensuring that all course information, including course content, fees, and regulations, is accurate, clear, and transparent.
- Providing clear processes for handling student complaints and appeals.
- Ensuring that students are fully informed about their rights and responsibilities, including refund and compensation policies.

The Marketing and Partnerships Director is responsible for producing an annual report which addresses these three requirements, that is submitted to the Academic Committee as part of the IFG annual monitoring process. The report may as necessary carry any recommendations for consideration and approval by the Academic Committee.

### i) Ensuring fair treatment of students

Along with its monitoring of compliance with consumer law, IFG has an annual monitoring process that aligns with the Office for Students' (OfS) Condition C5, which is focused on treating students fairly. This part of our annual monitoring process is intended to ensure compliance with regulatory expectations and uphold the institution's commitment to fairness and transparency. Below is a structured approach to establishing such a process:

#### i. Policy and Document Review

- **Annual Audit:** The Marketing and Partnerships Director will conduct a comprehensive yearly review of all student-facing policies, terms, and conditions to ensure they are current, clear, and accessible. This includes enrolment agreements, course summary documents, student handbooks and other published material information..
- **Fairness Assessment:** The Marketing and Partnerships Director supported by other staff as necessary, will evaluate these documents for fairness, ensuring they do not contain terms that could be deemed unfair or detrimental to students. IFG is mindful of the importance of removing or revising any terms that may lead to student detriment, therefore this forms the focus of the fairness assessment.

#### ii. Stakeholder Engagement

- **Student Feedback:** IFG will solicit and analyse feedback from students regarding their experiences and perceptions of fairness in institutional policies and practices.
- **Staff Training:** The Marketing and Partnerships Director will ensure staff undertaken relevant training to ensure they understand and implement policies that promote fairness and are aware of the implications of Condition C5. Monitoring of staff training completion rates will be undertaken as part of this annual monitoring process.

#### iii. Compliance Monitoring

- **Regulatory Updates:** The Marketing and Partnerships Director is responsible for ensuring that IFG stays informed about changes to OfS regulations and guidance related to student fairness and consumer protection, and reporting on these areas to Academic Committee and other IFG governance bodies as appropriate.
- **Internal Audits:** The CEO & Executive Director, The Marketing and Partnerships Director and/or Academic Director may order internal audits to assess compliance with Condition C5, focusing on areas identified as high risk for unfair practices. The reports of such audits will be submitted to the Board of Governors and the

Academic Committee for monitoring and assurance purposes, with any recommendations requiring approval made to either body as appropriate to required action.

#### iv. Risk Management

- **Identifying Risks:** In his annual audit of ensuring fair treatment of students, the The Marketing and Partnerships Director will seek to identify and highlight to the Board of Governors and Academic Board potential areas where students might experience unfair treatment, such as changes to course content, fees, or delivery methods. Where swift action is necessitated, the Chair of Academic Board may take Chair's Action that will be reported to the Board of Governors at its next meeting; advice and guidance from the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors may be sought where it is deemed necessary before any such action is taken.
- **Managing Identified Risks (Mitigation Strategies):** Identified risks will be added to the institutional Risk Register and monitored by the Board. Where risks are reported to the Academic Committee, the The Marketing and Partnerships Director is normally responsible for closing the feedback loop on these issues unless otherwise delegated by the Academic Committee.
  - Where risks are identified, IFG will develop and document strategies to mitigate identified risks, ensuring that any changes are communicated effectively and that students are not adversely affected.

#### v. Reporting and Accountability

- **Annual Report:** The Marketing and Partnerships Director will prepare a detailed annual report outlining the institution's efforts to comply with Condition C5, including policy revisions, training initiatives, and measures taken to address student feedback.
- **Governance Oversight:** This report will be submitted to the institution's governing body to ensure accountability and to facilitate strategic discussions on enhancing fairness in student treatment.
- **Action Plans:** Based on the findings from the annual report and stakeholder feedback, action plans aimed at addressing areas of concern and improving practices related to student fairness will be put in place.
- **Benchmarking:** IFG will compare our institutional practices with sector standards and peer institutions to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

By implementing this structured annual monitoring process for ensuring fair treatment of students, IFG proactively ensures compliance with OfS Condition C5, demonstrating our commitment to the fair treatment of students within a transparent and supportive educational environment.

#### j) Access and Participation Monitoring

The Academic Board will receive a report on Access and Participation as part of the overall Annual Monitoring Report, which will include relevant datasets and any commentary from relevant staff, along with any recommendations for consideration by the Academic Board. An update report on any agreed actions will be reported back to the Academic Board.

**k) Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

As part of IFG's commitment to embedding inclusive practices and removing barriers for all students, not only those from underrepresented groups, IFG carries out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) where appropriate including when making changes to this policy.

EIAs enable the College to identify potential or existing barriers and to proactively consider and implement reasonable adjustments. This supports the College in meeting its anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010.

EIAs may be conducted in relation to both student and staff matters for key policies and student experience matters.

See Appendix A within IFG's Equality Impact Assessment Template and Guidance.

