SECTION H: THEMATIC REVIEWS

1 The Function of Thematic Reviews

Thematic Reviews are intended as an open review to enhance practice across the Institution in a strategic area. The purpose of thematic reviews is to evaluate the strategic direction and performance of the theme across the University, to audit the area of work and its operation and to ensure appropriate quality assurance and enhancement arrangements are in place. The review will be concerned with both ‘fitness of purpose’ and ‘fitness for purpose’. A programme of themes for review will be determined by the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee/University’s Research Committee on behalf of the Senate.

2 The Content of Thematic Reviews

Thematic reviews allow close scrutiny of key areas and their operation across the University to allow attention to detail, and to links between different units, that other quality assurance processes may not produce. The aim of thematic reviews is to evaluate the area under consideration in relationship to university, service and School mission statements, aims and objectives, strategic plans and the external environment.

Thematic reviews will focus on an areas relationship, as appropriate to the theme being reviewed, with:

i) quality assurance, management and enhancement issues;
ii) teaching and learning, and assessment;
iii) C&IT strategies;
iv) University’s Strategic plans;
v) student retention, progression and achievement;
vi) research and scholarly activity;
vii) policies for staff development;
viii) the articulation and assurance of standards;
ix) external reports and annual evaluation;
x) links with professional bodies, employers, and other external organisations;
xii) links between Schools and Services in the University;
xiv) cost effectiveness.

3 Documentation Required for Thematic Reviews

The documentation submitted to thematic review panels should utilise existing documents wherever possible but should include the following:

i) self-evaluation reports (not exceeding 4-6 sides of A4) where a service is responsible for the area, highlighting current perceived strengths and achievements, matters requiring and receiving attention and focusing on the relevant issues listed in paragraph 2 above;
ii) self-evaluation reports from Schools (not exceeding 4-6 sides of A4) highlighting current perceived strengths and achievements, matters requiring and receiving attention and focusing on the issues listed in paragraph 2 above;
iii) an appendix document of appropriate supporting information such as relevant regulations, procedures and policies relating to the theme.
4 **Appointment of Thematic Review Panels**

4.1 Thematic review panels are appointed to act on behalf of the Senate and report to it. The chair of the panel will normally be a senior academic member of staff. At the appropriate time the Assistant Registrar, in consultation with the chair, of the panel will prepare a draft membership for the panel, approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)/ (Research & Enterprise). External membership of the panel will reflect the nature of the theme under consideration.

4.2 In addition to the chair, panels must normally comprise at least:

i) one senior member from a School in the University;
ii) a senior member from a Service in the University;
iii) a member of a major University Committee;
iv) two external members who are recognised as having relevant expertise and who have not had a close association with the University over the previous three years;
v) a representative from the Students’ Union.

5 **Conduct of Thematic Reviews**

5.1 The Assistant Registrar will circulate the documentation for consideration by the panel. After receipt of the documentation the panel will hold a pre-meeting, which may be held virtually, to draw up a list of issues for consideration during the thematic review, a draft programme and allocation of responsibilities.

5.2 The programme for each review is determined by the chair of the panel and the Assistant Registrar following the pre-meeting with members of the panel.

5.3 The programme typically should include the following:

i) a meeting with key users/stakeholders,
ii) a meeting with representatives of formally established committees or groups,
iii) meeting(s) with a sample group of staff involved in the area,
iv) meeting(s) with relevant support staff,
v) meeting(s) with a range of students undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research students and recent graduates (if appropriate),
vi) inspection of facilities (if appropriate).

6 **Reports of Thematic Reviews**

6.1 Panels are asked to report in detail on their conduct of the review, to draw conclusions and to make recommendations.

6.2 Following the review, Registry will produce a draft report for approval by the review panel before submission of a final report to the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee/University’s Research Committee.

7 **Response by Schools or Services**

7.1 The Schools or Services must prepare and submit a report on the actions taken in response to the findings of the panel to the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee/University’s Research Committee within one calendar year of the review.