KING'S INNS

Programme Monitoring and Review Policy

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01		
02		
03		

KINGS INNS 1541

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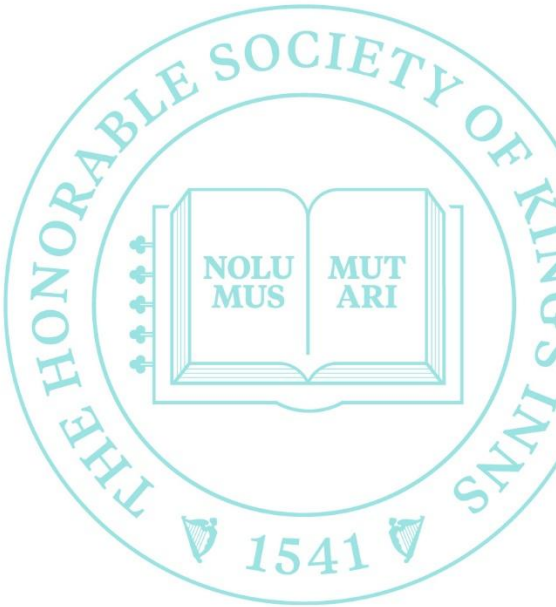

KINGS INNS 1541

1. Purpose of Policy

This policy sets out the principles governing the monitoring and review of programmes of education offered by the Honorable Society of King's Inns (King's Inns), in accordance with its mission to provide excellence in professional legal education. The policy applies to all programmes leading to a King's Inns award or a joint award with another institution and all programmes leading to an award on the National Framework of Qualifications.
The policy aims to ensure that all programmes are regularly evaluated and updated to maintain their academic quality, relevance and currency, and to enhance the learning experience and outcomes for learners. The policy also aims to ensure that all programmes comply with the standards and criteria of external bodies, where appropriate. This includes the Legal Services Regulatory Authority ("the LSRA"), Quality and Qualifications Ireland ("QQI") and the Mediators' Institute of Ireland ("MMI"), where applicable to the programme in question.
The policy recognises that programme monitoring, and programme reviews are integral parts of the quality assurance and enhancement cycle, and that they should be embedded, integrated and ongoing, involving both internal and external stakeholders. The policy defines two main types of programme evaluation:

- **Programme monitoring** is a regular process of collecting and analysing feedback and data on the delivery, performance and impact of a programme, and identifying and implementing actions for improvement.

- **Programme review** is a periodic process of conducting a comprehensive and critical appraisal of one or more programmes, based on self-evaluation and external peer review, and resulting in recommendations for enhancement or change.

Any action planned or taken as a result of programme monitoring or programme review will be communicated to all those concerned.

2. Scope of Policy

The policy is relevant to all education and training programmes that the King's Inns School of Law provides, and to all members of the King's Inns community who are involved in providing those programmes. This includes the Dean, Registrar, coordinators, learners, teaching and administrative staff who are directly engaged in teaching, learning and assessment.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Purpose of monitoring and review

Ongoing monitoring and review of programmes of education are essential elements of the quality assurance system to ensure that quality and standards are maintained, issues addressed, improvements are implemented, and that programmes are responsive to learners' needs.

Monitoring and review are connected but separate phases of this process. Both processes play a crucial role in maintaining and improving educational standards.

In line with the ESG *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2015), monitoring and review of a programme includes an evaluation of:

(1) The content of the programme in light of developments in the relevant field of learning and / or legal practice
(2) The changing needs of society
(3) The learners' programme workload, progression and completion
(4) The effectiveness of procedures for assessment of learners
(5) The learner expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme
(6) The learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme.

3.2 Monitoring of programmes at King's Inns

Monitoring is an ongoing process that involves regular observation, assessment, and data collection. It focuses primarily on day-to-day operations within an education system, an institution, or programme. The main purpose of monitoring is to track progress, identify emerging issues, and ensure that standards and processes are consistently followed. Ongoing monitoring identifies areas for change and prompts incremental improvements to a programme over time.

King's Inns values feedback as an important part of ongoing monitoring. The principal feedback sources are learners, academic / programme / course coordinators and external examiners.

King's Inns applies a robust system of ongoing internal monitoring. The purpose of this system is to ensure that:

- Curriculum, programme design and content are regularly reviewed
- Issues highlighted by learners, academic staff and external examiners can be considered and addressed and feedback given, where appropriate
- Accurate data is available on enrolled learner numbers
- Accurate data is available on learner progression and performance (where applicable)
- Proposed changes and the rationale for change can be considered, agreed at programme meetings, and reported back to the School of Law Faculty Board for approval, who will make a recommendation to the Education Committee in relation to the adoption or otherwise of the proposed changes.

On all programmes:

- Feedback is an important part of ongoing monitoring and feedback will be sought from learners, coordinators, members of the teaching team(s) and external examiners
- Learner feedback is gathered, in accordance with the Learner Feedback Policy, in a detailed online end of programme survey which is reviewed by the appropriate coordinator(s), Dean, Registrar, Librarian, facilities team, and other relevant staff, if appropriate, who consider what follow up action, if any, is required on foot of the survey.
- Coordinators responsible for programmes and / or modules meet with the Dean and Registrar to discuss the programme and assessment

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- Marking standards are subject to external examination and grades are only confirmed and published to learners following a meeting of the Board of Examiners for that programme[1].
- External examiners provide written reports following the assessment process, the content of which is considered by the registrar, dean and coordinators and, where appropriate, the School of Law Faculty Board and Education Committee in the event that change is recommended
- Data on enrolled learner numbers, attrition rates and performance are gathered.

In addition to the above, further methods of data collection may be used where appropriate, including:

- Online feedback surveys completed by members of the teaching team(s) for specific programmes for specific reasons (e.g. to gather data on training needs)
- Additional mid- programme or mid-academic year surveys may be completed by learners on longer programmes
- Focus groups may be held in which feedback is sought from current learners and / or programme graduates seeking additional feedback on specific aspects of the programme, its delivery or assessment.
- Informal feedback.

Programme monitoring informs strategic decision-making at programme level. It also informs decision making at the corporate level regarding the allocation of resources to existing programmes, the development of new programmes or the discontinuation of current programmes.

Programme teams are comprised of the coordinator(s) for the programme, the dean and the registrar. Programme teams meet periodically and submit an annual report on the programme to the School of Law Faculty Board on the programme. This report will consider all data emerging from ongoing monitoring during the academic year. Where the annual report suggests changes to the programme, these will be discussed by the School of Law Faculty Board in the first instance and a recommendation made to the Education Committee, who will be the final decision maker. Where the annual report highlights significant concerns in relation to the programme, it is open to the School of Law Faculty Board to recommend to the Education Committee that King's Inns trigger a review of the programme.

3.3 Review of programmes at King's Inns

Review involves a periodic, in-depth assessment of a programme and is conducted at specific intervals. It involves a comprehensive examination of various aspects, including teaching, learning, assessment, programme design, and overall quality. The primary purpose of review is to evaluate the effectiveness of a programme or a set of programmes. A programme review will usually involve external perspectives. Reviews contribute to continuous improvement by identifying areas for enhancement. They also serve as a mechanism for external accountability, where appropriate.

It is the policy of King's Inns to carry out periodic programme reviews on a rolling basis.

[1]Note: the advanced diploma in Mediation differs from other programmes in that there is external examination at the first marking phase, where recorded assessments are marked by external examiners registered with the Mediators' Institute of Ireland. In order to ensure compliance with MMI standards, there is no separate external examination of this programme.

Periodic programme reviews:

- Ensure that quality assurance mechanisms are consistent and transparent
- Provide evidence that internal monitoring processes are reliable and effective
- Allow King's Inns to demonstrate that its monitoring processes and quality assurance procedures are sufficiently robust to withstand external review
- Allow programme teams to review and monitor the impact of incremental changes and improvements to their programme over a longer review period
- Identify further opportunities to enhance the learning experience
- Identify further opportunities for the improvement of the curriculum or programme delivery methodology
- Permit King's Inns to assess the continued validity and relevance of the programmes offered.

The periodic programme review process is conducted in a consistent and systematic manner, with due regard for relevant differences between programmes of different types.

The overall aim of the review process is on-going enhancement of all activity within the school.

The process involves:

(1) Completion of a self-assessment report (SAR) on the programme by the programme team
(2) Appointment of a Review Group by the Education Committee, to include at least one expert in teaching and learning and at least one expert in the field of study. Consideration of the SAR by the Review Group and a site visit by the review group. The Review Group will provide a draft report, including recommendations for quality improvement which will be presented and discussed with the programme team before it is finalised.
(3) The Review Group prepares final report and a quality improvement plan. The report and the quality improvement plan will be considered by the School of Law Faculty Board. The School of Law Faculty Board will make a recommendation to the Education Committee in relation to the quality improvement plan and how the plan will be implemented.
(4) Follow up by the programme team on the quality improvement plan, who will report back to the School of Law Faculty Board on the steps taken.
(5) The Dean will report to the Education Committee on progress on the implementation of the quality improvement plan.

The flagship programmes, the Diploma in Legal Studies and Barrister-at-Law degree, will be reviewed every five years.

Advanced Diploma programmes will be reviewed within seven years, but on a rotational basis which means that no more than five programmes are reviewed in any given academic year. Advanced Diploma reviews will not coincide with the review of either the Diploma in Legal Studies or the Barrister-at-Law degree programmes. Reviews of the Advanced Diplomas will, taking account of the resources available, be a modified version of the review process for the flagship programmes.

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4. Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals who are involved in the delivery of educational programmes at King's Inns will comply with this policy. Specific responsibilities include:

- Coordinators, lecturers and tutor panel members should engage in self-monitoring of their teaching methods and learner engagement, and should participate in monitoring and review as required
- The administrative staff will monitor key data sources such as enrolled learner numbers, learner attrition rates and ensure that any mandatory reporting is done
- Learners have a responsibility to provide feedback on their programme of study, as required.

The Dean of the School of Law is the owner of this policy and will, along with the School of Law Faculty Board, oversee the implementation of this policy.

5. Monitoring and Review

The policy owner is responsible for monitoring implementation of the policy, ensuring that all associated documents are updated and current, and that the policy is reviewed as required.

The policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of first approval unless changes are required owing to legal, statutory and/or organisational change.

All policies and policy changes are approved by Council on the recommendation of Standing Committee. Policies relating to the School of Law will be reviewed in the first instance by the Education Committee before being recommended to Standing Committee.

6. Associated Documents

- Self-Assessment Report (SAR) Template (Appendix 1)

7. Referenced Policies

- Programme Development and Approval Policy
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy
- Learner Feedback Policy

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APPENDIX I

Template for Self-Assessment Report to be developed

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