

# CHAPTER 7

## Programme Review

### 1. Introduction

Programme review provides an opportunity for consolidation of issues and changes about a programme. An overview is made possible through programme review to assess the effectiveness of programme monitoring, as well as to conduct a full-scale evaluation of a programme for further development and quality improvement. A review mechanism is implemented to ensure and enhance the quality of a programme.

### 2. Categorisation of Programmes for Programme Review

HKU SPACE offers both award bearing programmes and non-award bearing courses. For non-award bearing courses, the monitoring and reporting process will suffice for maintaining the quality of the programmes.

For the purpose of facilitating programme review, award-bearing programmes are divided into **two categories according to the level of the programmes in the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF)**. The two categories are

- (a) Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above;
- (b) Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below.

If a programme is offered through a collaboration agreement with another institution, and the partner has in place a comprehensive programme review system, HKU SPACE may consider synchronising the programme review processes of the two institutions or adopting the partner's programme review. The School should ensure that the purpose, scope, rigor and transparency of the programme reviews are comparable to that of the School's review. There should be adequate focus on how the programme meets local needs. The School should fully involve itself in the programme reviews.

If a programme has been subject to professional accreditation and the accredited status is subject to periodical review by the professional body concerned, the professional review may also be synchronised with the HKU SPACE programme review or be considered as fulfilling the HKU SPACE programme review requirement. The School should involve itself as much as possible in the review.

### **3. Review of Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above**

#### **3.1 Timing of Programme Review**

New programmes will be reviewed in five years after programme launch. Subsequently, a 6-year review cycle applies to all programmes, except for doctoral degrees, unless an approval period has been stipulated for a programme during validation. The first review for doctoral degree programmes should normally be completed before the 8<sup>th</sup> year ends, and thereafter at a 6-year interval for subsequent reviews. For a new programme developed by modification from an existing programme with less than 25% change of the total number of credits or of the existing programme curriculum, its first review should follow the approval period of the existing programme, and thereafter at a 6-year interval for subsequent reviews.

The process for programme review should begin one year before the end of the 6-year cycle or the end date of the approval period, whichever is earlier. The submission of the review report to the HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL) should be made at least 6 months before the end of the review cycle. This is to ensure that there is sufficient time for any programme modification to take place before the student intake subsequent to the programme review. The Academic Committee (AC) Chairman can consult the College Head and the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) Chairman if required for marginal cases.

If a programme cannot complete the programme review process before the approval period expires, the Programme Team may apply for rescheduling of the review to one year later. Such an application with written justifications is made by the Programme Team to the School Academic and Management Board (SAM). With the SAM approval, the programme can continue with new student intake for one year, while preparing for programme review. The review should normally be completed and submitted to the Board for CPE&LL at least 6 months before the end of the rescheduled period. A programme which cannot complete the review by the end of the rescheduled period will not be permitted to have new student intakes.

#### **3.2 Programme Review Procedures**

The procedures are similar to those for programme validation. Figure 1 depicts the programme review procedures.

If the Programme Team proposes changes of more than 25% in credits, re-titling or other changes to be made at the time of programme review, the AC members shall be invited to give comments prior to the programme review meeting. All the comments received shall be conveyed to the Programme Review Panel (PRP) for discussion, and the results are reported back to the AC for further action.

##### **3.2.1 Programme Review Document Contents**

- (a) an overall evaluation and highlights of the academic and professional value and merits for the period of review;
- (b) an appraisal of all the changes for the period of review;

- (c) a development plan for further quality enhancement including proposals for modifications;
- (d) other attached documents including:
  - (i) brief information on the last validation/ review of the programme;
  - (ii) the existing Programme Definitive Document;
  - (iii) Qualification Framework Level and Credit Assignment Form (QF1 Form) (Parts I-III); and
  - (iv) any other relevant information for the PRP's reference.
- (e) other supporting documents to be made available for the PRP and the QA Team, if necessary, including:
  - (i) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR);
  - (ii) External Examiner/ Academic Assessor Reports;
  - (iii) Learning Experience Survey statistics and Teaching Experience Surveys;
  - (iv) Validation Reports; and
  - (v) Student-Staff Consultative Committee Minutes.

### **3.2.2 Programme Review Panel**

The Panel is established by the QAC. It normally consists of

Chairman (AC Chairman)

Two external specialists (academics or professionals in the subject specialism of the programme)

External Examiner/Academic Assessor

Panel Officer (AC Secretary)

### **3.2.3 Programme Review Meeting**

The PRP will review and discuss the Programme Review Document with the Programme Team, teachers, students and, if possible, graduates will be invited to meet with the Panel to provide feedback.

### **3.2.4 Programme Review Report**

At the end of the meeting, the PRP will normally recommend one of the following:

- (a) the continuous monitoring and annual reporting has been effective and the programme may continue, with implementation of the development plan; or
- (b) further improvement is necessary to ascertain the quality of the programme before the programme may be permitted to continue; or
- (c) the programme should be discontinued, namely to have no new intake and to phase out.

The 6-year cycle of reviews applies if an approval period is not specified. If the Panel specifies an approval period, another review will be required before the period ends.

### **3.3 Post-Programme Review Meeting Action**

Upon approval by the Board for CPE&LL of the PRP's recommendation to continue the programme, the Programme Team shall proceed to prepare for student admission. Any changes to the programme as an outcome of the programme review should be reflected in a new Programme Definitive Document and a new Student Handbook.

All programme review activities, including adoption of the review process by partner institutions, or professional bodies, shall be listed for annual reporting to the QAC and the Board for CPE&LL for information and for monitoring the QA process.

## **4. Review of Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below**

### **4.1 Timing of Programme Review**

The timing for the review will be within 6 months after the end of a year of study. Programme reviews will be listed for the information of the Board for CPE&LL at the end of an academic year.

### **4.2 Procedures of Programme Review**

The programme review is conducted via the annual monitoring process as presented in Figure 2. A report in the form of Annual Monitoring Report template will be prepared by the Programme Team and will be submitted to the AC and College Board (CB) for consideration.

If the programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below form part(s) of a cluster of programmes at higher HKQF levels, the Programme Team can opt to apply the programme review process at HKQF Level 4 and above to programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below.

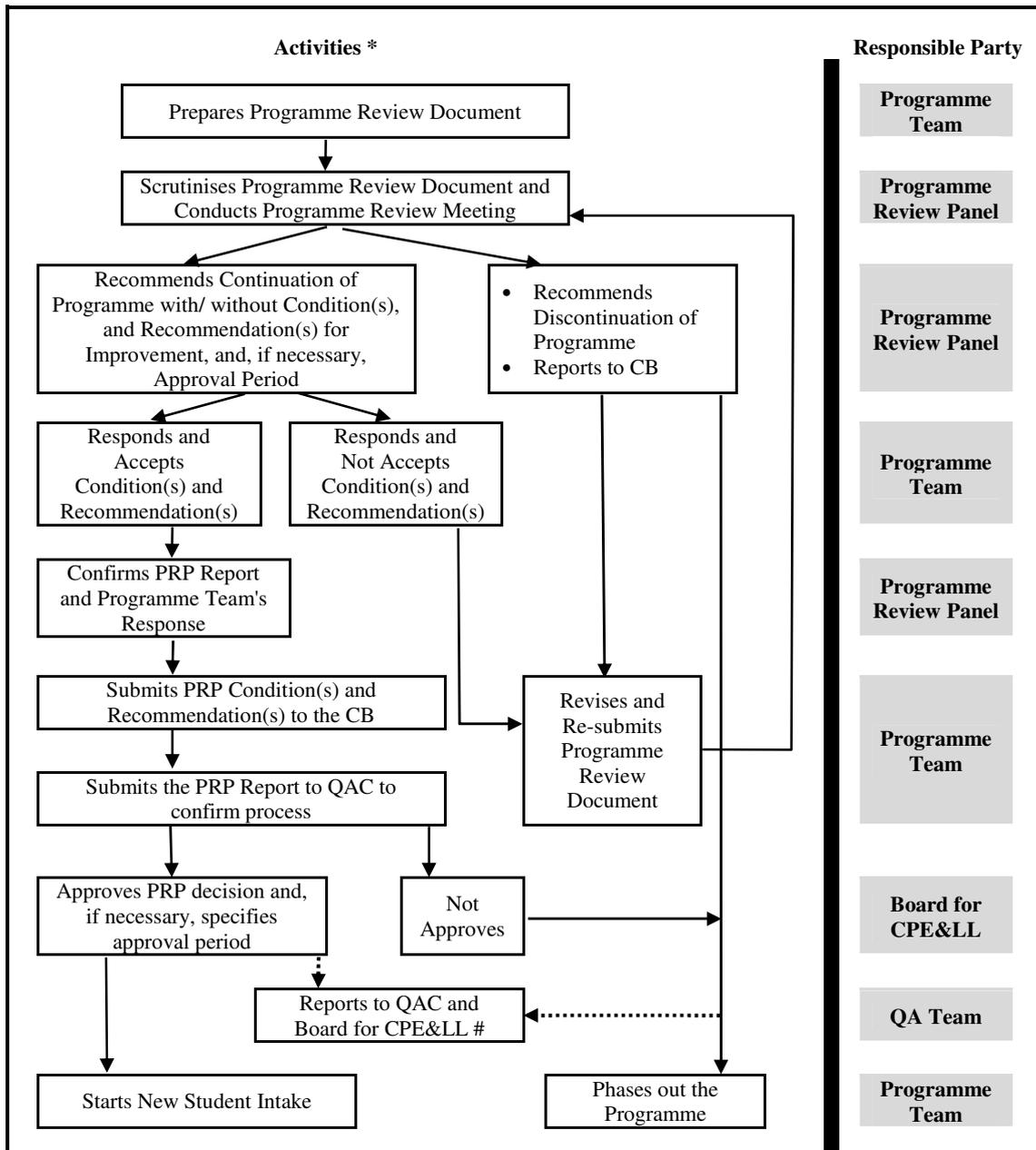
### **4.3 Post-Programme Review Action**

Upon CB's approval, the Programme Team shall proceed to prepare for student admission. Any changes to the programme should be reflected in a new Programme Definitive Document, QF1 Form and a new Student Handbook.

In the case that the CB recommends discontinuation of the programme, the Programme Team may propose a new programme which will be subject to the programme approval process. The existing cohort of students shall normally not be affected unless recommended by the AC and approved by the CB, and as recorded in the report.

All programme review activities shall be listed for reporting on an annual basis to the QAC for information and for monitoring the QA process. The same will be reported to the Board for CPE&LL.

**Figure 1**  
**Review Process for Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above**

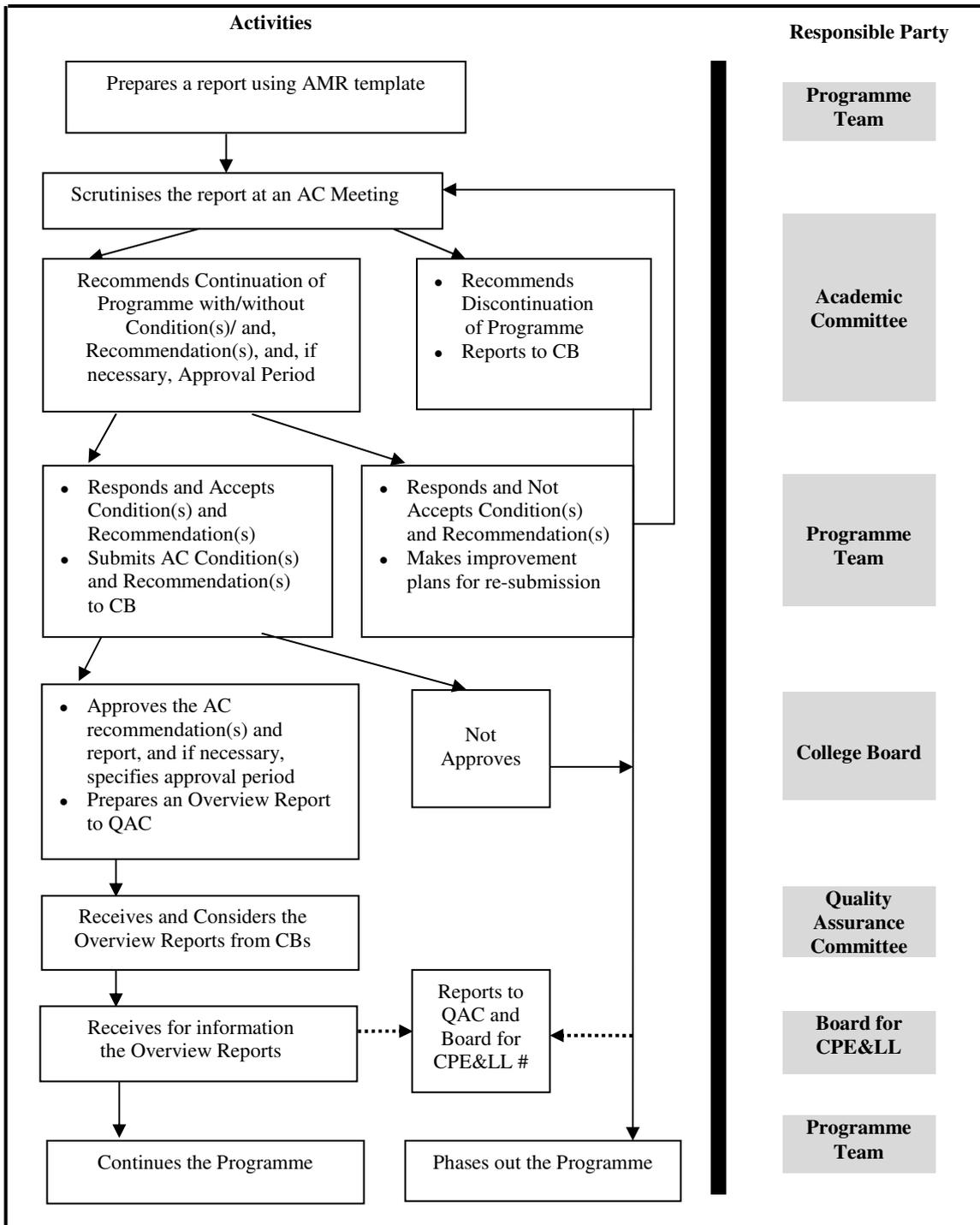


....► reporting for information

\* For programmes for which an approval period has not been stipulated, a 6-year cycle of reviews applies. For programmes with an approval period, the process for programme review should begin one year before the end date of the approval period.

# Programme review activities shall be listed for reporting on an annual basis via the CB to the QAC for information and monitoring of the QA process. This reporting may be done prior to or after the new student intake, depending on the timing of the review and the QAC meeting schedule. The same will be reported to the Board for CPE&LL.

**Figure 2**  
**Review Process for Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below**



...→ reporting for information

# Programme review activities shall be listed for reporting on an annual basis via the CB to the QAC for information and monitoring of the QA process. This reporting may be done prior to or after the new student intake, depending on the timing of the review and the QAC meeting schedule. The same will be reported to the Board for CPE&LL