Periodic review Q&A

1. What is a periodic review?

A periodic review considers whether an approved qualification meets the outcomes and standards set out in the relevant education and training requirements (ETR). It is delivered over a four-year period culminating in an outcome report.

2. Who is involved in a periodic review?

The periodic review is collaborative, and includes:

- members of the GOC's Education Team
- GOC Education Visitor Panel members (panel members)
- the provider/awarding organisation
- provider/awarding organisation's stakeholders including (but not limited to), students and placement providers.

3. What happens during a periodic review?

Year zero (pre-periodic review)	• An initial meeting between the GOC and provider/awarding organisation will confirm the timeframes of the periodic review. • The provider/awarding organisation will be asked to confirm its commitment to submitting the Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) by the agreed date, engaging with the required quality assurance and enhancement method (QAEM) activity throughout the periodic review and notifying the GOC of any changes and/or events (through the usual Notification of Change and Events process).
Year one	• The provider/awarding organisation completes the SAQ and declaration. • The GOC will use the SAQ to identify areas of focus within the qualification.
Year two	• The GOC conducts QAEM activities on the areas of focus identified in year one. • Findings from each QAEM activity that have taken place in year two will be outlined in a QAEM activity report. This report will not be published but will be shared with the provider/awarding organisation.
Year three	• The GOC conducts QAEM activities on the areas of focus identified in year one or additional areas identified in year two. • Findings from each QAEM activity that have taken place in year three will be outlined in a QAEM activity report. This report will not be published but will be shared with the provider/awarding organisation.
Year four	• Findings from the QAEM activities will be used to create a periodic review outcomes report outlining the activities that have

	taken place across all years of the periodic review. This includes any changes and event notifications as well as findings from Annual Monitoring Returns. • A draft report will be submitted to providers/awarding organisations for comment. • A final periodic review outcomes report will be published on the GOC's website.

4. What is a Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ)?

The SAQ has two elements, the form and the declaration.

The form requires providers/awarding organisations to:

- comment on how the qualification meets each standard (as listed in the relevant ETR)
- list supporting documentation that could be submitted as evidence
- list any pre-planned observation/engagement opportunities by date (if known)
- provide updates against outstanding conditions
- indicate if any changes have occurred since the last QAEM activity.

The declaration:

- requires providers/awarding organisations to agree to an undertaking that they will strive to meet the standards (as listed in the relevant ETR) on an ongoing basis and agree to work with the GOC to provide assurance on this
- must be signed by an individual who takes responsibility for the meeting of the standards. This individual may vary from one provider/awarding organisation to another, but it is likely to be a qualification lead or department head.

5. Do all the documents listed in the SAQ have to be submitted at the same time as the form and declaration?

No. The list of supporting documentation given in the SAQ shows what evidence *could* be submitted to provide assurance of how the qualification is meeting a standard. We will request the suggested documentation if the standard is identified as an area of focus or further assurance is needed.

6. Will the GOC attend all the observation/engagement opportunities listed in the SAQ and who will attend?

No. The GOC will not attend all the observation/engagement opportunities listed in the SAQ. We will ask to attend if the relevant standard is identified as an area of focus or further assurance is needed.

Attendees from the GOC will be confirmed prior to the event taking place and could include a member of the Education Team and/or panel members.

7. What QAEM activities might take place in years two and three of the periodic review?

Activities may include one or more of the following:

- in-person visits to providers/awarding organisations, clinics, placements providers or other facilities
- desk-based activities including review, triage and triangulation of documentation
- observations of activities such as practical assessments
- audits
- surveys or questionnaires
- virtual meetings with stakeholders such as external examiners or members of staff
- sample-based review
- annual monitoring return.

8. How will QAEM activities be decided?

This will be influenced by various factors, including:

- the areas of focus identified during triage
- whether there are new or existing concerns (e.g. an open condition)
- considerations of risk
- whether further information is needed to provide assurance or to triangulate and confirm understanding
- planned observation/engagement opportunities (such as internal validation processes) the provider/awarding organisation has in place.

9. When will QAEM activities take place during years two and three of the periodic review?

The timing of each activity is also dependent on various factors, including the level of assurance provided within the SAQ, considerations of risk, and the level of concern. Each qualification will be subject to one to two activities in each year. This may increase if there are concerns or additional assurance is required.

10. Can the GOC align with other QAEM activities taking place (internally and/or with other regulators and professional bodies)?

Details of any relevant pre-planned observation/engagement opportunities can be listed on the SAQ. Providers/awarding organisations will have another opportunity to inform us of any relevant observation/engagement opportunities once areas of focus have been identified and shared in year one. Discussions will be held as whether it is feasible for the GOC to align with these opportunities.

We welcome any documents or information that have been submitted to other regulators or professional bodies as long as these are contextualised and it is clear how they meet our standards.

11. Will year four be subject to any QAEM activities?

No. Year four is intended to focus on findings, outcomes and report writing so it is unlikely a qualification will be subject to any further activities at this point.

12. What will be included in the periodic review outcomes report?

- Details of the qualification and provider/awarding organisation.
- A summary of the findings, including the number of conditions, recommendations, and areas of good practice.
- Details of the QAEM activity undertaken within the periodic review, including dates, who was involved, the nature of the activity and the findings.
- An update on all standards including the status they have been awarded and whether further information or action is required from the provider/awarding organisation. This will be presented in a way that will set out what was reviewed, what was missing, and suggestions of how the provider/awarding organisation might consider evidencing how it meets the standard in the future.

13. Will providers/awarding organisations have an opportunity to provide factual corrections on the periodic review outcomes report?

Yes. Once the report is completed, a final draft will be sent to the provider/awarding organisation to review and provide any factual corrections.

14. Will the final periodic review outcomes report be published?

The final periodic review outcomes report will be published on the GOC's website.

Further information

For other questions not answered by this document, please contact education@optical.org.