

# **RAO Self - Assessment Report (SAR)**

**Guidance for centres preparing their SAR**

The actual format in which you submit your Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is entirely a matter for your Centre, but the following notes indicate the topics which GQAS would like to see covered as part of your document.

The SAR should be submitted together with your completed Application form (RAO 1) and Evidence Checklist (RAO 3), plus the items of evidence you have listed in the Checklist.

This guidance provides suggested overall contents for a SAR. You may wish to include other information about your Centre, but please remember that the SAR must support your Application form and provide sufficient helpful information to enable GQAS inspectors to gain an initial overall impression of your Centre.

## **Section 1 Overview of Centre**

Please provide a brief description of your Centre, including information on:

- When and why your Centre was established
- The Centre`s location and links with the local community
- A brief description of premises and facilities
- Programmes currently being delivered
- Current student numbers
- Any current sources of external funding
- Levels /attainment of students on entry
- Progression routes for your students
- Any other factors which may affect the performance of the Centre
- Brief comments on any expansion or development plans

Feel free to include tables of data if you feel that they are appropriate. Ensure that your format is clear and designed for an external reader who doesn`t know your Centre!

## Section 2 Overall self - evaluation of the Centre

Please comment on how effectively you feel you meet the needs of your students.

Refer to the RAO Standards and Criteria and suggest areas in which you consider the Centre is demonstrating **major strengths**. Indicate what **evidence** there is to support your claims.

Also, identify any obvious overall **areas for improvement** and suggest realistic **actions** that may be appropriate in these cases.

### **EXAMPLES.....**

#### **Major strengths**

*Individual support for students*

*Supportive induction programme*

*Clearly defined policies and procedures*

#### **Evidence**

*Positive student survey feedback*

*Evaluation form feedback*

*Systematic policy framework*

#### **Overall areas for improvement**

*Inadequate library resources*

*Lack of consistent assessment*

*Poor promotion of centre*

#### **Actions**

*Defined learning resource budget*

*Assessment team meetings; standardisation exercises; formal internal verification arrangements*

*Revise website content; use social media proactively*

When you are drafting this section you should only include the **most significant** identified strengths and areas for improvement. You will be asked to comment in more detail on less critical factors later.

## Section 3 Student data

If you wish to provide data in addition to that which you presented in the Application form (RAO 1), please do so. You might wish to indicate the proportions of students leaving programmes before completion. If you prepare students for externally set examinations, it would be helpful to present pass and failure rates.

If you use a tabular format to present this information, please ensure that it is clear. It might help if you use several tables, rather than try to combine everything in one complex table.

Ask yourself: will this really make sense to someone who is unfamiliar with the data?

## Section 4 How far does the centre meet the RAO Standards?

Refer to the RAO Standards and Criteria.

Comment on particular **strengths** that you feel the centre demonstrates (together with **evidence** to support your claim), as well as **areas for improvement** and proposed **actions**.

The RAO Standards and Criteria cover the following areas:

1. Management of health and safety and premises security
2. Management and governance
3. Student recruitment and selection
4. Quality of teaching learning and assessment
5. Internal quality assurance
6. Management of academic standards
7. Student welfare and support
8. Student achievement and progress
9. Public information
10. Support to students progressing overseas

Clearly reference each comment you make to the appropriate defined criterion of the RAO Standards.

Do not feel that you must comment on **every** criterion! GQAS is seeking a thoughtful and considered response about areas in which you really consider the centre to be doing really well, in addition to a critique of obvious matters needing attention.

**EXAMPLES.....STRENGTHS.....**

**Criterion 2.4.2 'Priorities and targets are agreed and revised in a systematic manner'**

**Strengths**

*There is a defined process for reviewing the strategic plan*

**Evidence**

*Detailed minutes of review meetings*

**Criterion 5.9.1 'The centre operates an effective performance review process for all staff'**

**Strengths**

*Performance review is embedded within the centre*

**Evidence**

*Well defined and clear procedures;  
good feedback from staff*

**Criterion 7.1.3 'The centre takes steps to determine the student voice and to respond appropriately'**

**Strengths**

*There is a well-defined student engagement process*

**Evidence**

*Minutes of Student Committee meetings;  
student engagement policy document*

**Criterion 8.3.1 'There are clear progression routes for all programmes'**

**Strengths**

*There is a clear arrangement for briefing students*

**Evidence**

*Briefing presentations; records of attendance and student feedback on usefulness of process*

**EXAMPLES....AREAS for IMPROVEMENT.....**

**Criterion 1.7.8 'The Reception area is appropriately laid out and there is seating for visitors'**

**Areas for improvement**

*The Reception area is cramped and inappropriate*

**Actions**

*Provision for improvements in next facilities budget*

**Criterion 2.3.1 'Each committee and board has written terms of reference...'**

**Areas for improvement**

*These have not yet been formalised*

**Actions**

*Target for completion in 3 months*

**Criterion 4.6.1 'The centre schedules timetabled tutorial sessions'**

**Areas for improvement**

*Arrangements are currently informal*

**Actions**

*To be discussed at Academic Board*

**Criterion 5.6.1 'Arrangements for recruiting staff are fit for purpose'**

**Areas for improvement**

*The current arrangements are unsatisfactory*

**Actions**

*Plans to be drawn up and approved for a systematic recruitment and selection process*

## **Final considerations**

Before you submit the SAR, check it carefully and ensure that it is clearly written, can be easily understood by an external reader, and provides helpful additional information to support the Application form.

You may wish to give the SAR a distinctive cover page or contents list, but please remember that it is not designed to stand alone but to be considered by GQAS in conjunction with your Application form and the evidence items you have provided (listed in the RAO 3 Checklist).