

Annual Review of Teaching Scheme (ARTS)

For all staff who teach, supervise, and/or assess learning



University
of Exeter

Documentation revised August 2025

For queries, contact the Educator Development Team on eduexe@exeter.ac.uk

Annual Review of Teaching

Annual Review of Teaching is mandatory for those who teach and/or support learning. There are **two developmental options (Option A and Option B)** for colleagues to select from and agree with their Academic Lead / Line Managers. **Option A** is an observation of teaching by a peer and **Option B** is a discussion with one or more peers.

What do I need to do?

Choose and plan your ARTS activity

- Agree with your Academic Lead / PDR Reviewer which option you are going to complete.
- Identify a specific aspect of practice to focus on.
- Identify and contact a peer or peers to work with.
- Agree the date of observation or meeting. Share the relevant ARTS form.

Complete your ARTS activity

- Option A: Discuss peer observation of your teaching, and feedback from your observer. Complete 'next steps' on the form.
- Option B: Meet to discuss your chosen aspect of practice. Agree your development steps and timeline, for actions and review, completing these on the form.

Follow-up actions after your ARTS activity

- Option A: Carry out your agreed 'next steps' for development.
- OR**
- Option B: Complete your identified next steps and reflect on these via the practice development record on the form. Send to your peer.

Next steps for reflection and PDR

- Keep a copy of your ARTS forms for further reflection.
- Send a copy of your ARTS forms to your DESE/DoE and PDR reviewer (follow local guidance on this).
- Discuss your ARTS forms with your PDR Reviewer.
- Agree any follow up activity, such as CPD for further development or avenues for sharing good practice.

Overview – Annual Review of Teaching Scheme

1. What is the Annual Review of Teaching Scheme?

Annual Review of Teaching is the mandatory process designed for all staff at the University of Exeter who teach, supervise, assess and/or support learning, to review and reflect on your practice.

2. What does the Annual Review of Teaching Scheme aim to do?

Its overall purpose is to enable you to develop your education practice, by engaging with peers to provide you with constructive and critically reflective feedback and by looking together at new ideas and possibilities together.

3. What does it involve?

The Annual Review of Teaching Scheme is mandatory and requires you to engage in a formal 'Annual Review of Teaching' activity, which you must undertake during the academic year.

4. What kinds of Review can I engage in?

There are two options available to you:

OPTION A) a peer observation of a taught session or supervision meeting ([form available here](#))

OR

OPTION B)* a peer discussion or review of an identified area of practice: for example, developing a new learning resource or approach; giving feedback to students; use of the ELE virtual learning environment ([form available here](#)).

*Option B could be a group activity and has many possible areas of focus.

5. How is this recorded?

You should report on your chosen activity using the appropriate Record Form linked in each Option above. The forms should be completed at the time of the Review and submitted immediately to your PDR Reviewer. You should discuss the outcome(s) of your activity as part of the PDR process. **The deadline for completing this process each year is 1st August.**

6. How can I comment on any areas I'd like the University to know about?

The feedback sections on the forms invite you to highlight and share identified areas of good teaching-related practice. They also provide you with a specific opportunity to alert your Faculty/Service to any education-related issues that you would like the University to be made aware of.

7. Can I get any professional recognition for engaging in this scheme?

Engagement with the Annual Review of Teaching Scheme can be used as evidence to support an EduExe/HEA fellowship application. Specifically, ARTS provides evidence of PSF dimension of practice A5: *Enhance practice through own continuing professional development.*

1. Introduction

The Annual Review of Teaching Scheme (ARTS) is a key dimension of academic and professional life at the University of Exeter. Through engaging in ARTS, we can find the most creative and successful ways of teaching and assessing our students, of developing academically inspiring, demanding and research-rich curricula, and of ensuring that students have the highest quality guidance and support. This applies through all levels of the curriculum, from first year undergraduate to postgraduate research programmes.

As you are teaching and/or supporting students' learning, you will be part of the University's Annual Review of Teaching process, which aims to enhance learning and teaching. This document explains the principles, purposes and process of the Annual Review of Teaching Scheme, and how this relates to:

- Development of your academic practice
- Annual [PDR \(appraisal\) processes](#)
- National recognition for your role through the relevant strand of the university's [EduExe Framework](#), accredited by Advance HE to award [HEA fellowships](#).

2. What is Annual Review of Teaching?

Annual Review of Teaching is a collegial activity which underpins our ethos as a research and teaching community. The University comprises many subject disciplinary groups, interdisciplinary and professional networks, and communities of practice. Sharing perspectives, experiences and creative ideas within and across these groups can help us focus on key areas and identify priorities for change and development. This activity can support and encourage our development as individual staff members at all stages of our careers; it can also build teams and contribute to a strong team ethos. Peer dialogue occurs as an informal activity on a day-to-day basis; but formal Annual Review of Teaching is a mandatory and recorded activity to identify good practice as well as aspects requiring development for individuals, teams and disciplines.

Annual peer observation of teaching has traditionally been part of University life and this is useful for new colleagues, as part of the induction and professional formation process, as well as for established colleagues as part of continued professional development. Peer observation also provides a third perspective, helping to moderate the views of students and the individual member of staff. The Annual Review of Teaching Scheme extends the peer observation activity, engaging colleagues in a focused opportunity to discuss and explore practice, to identify areas for individual or team development and to share good practice for the benefit of the wider community.

3. What does Annual Review of Teaching at Exeter aim to do?

The overall purpose of ARTS is to enable you to develop your individual and collective practices in relation to your teaching, by asking one or more colleagues to provide you with constructive and critically reflective feedback, and by looking together at new ideas and possibilities together. This approach is designed to promote creative thinking around what you do as an educator.

This scheme requires a formally recorded, annually monitored, peer review process in relation to teaching. Teaching is defined here in the broadest sense and incorporates any activities which support

student learning, curriculum development and assessment. The scheme is designed to enable all staff who teach, supervise and/or support students' learning to gain feedback from one colleague, or from a group of colleagues where appropriate, as part of the process of reflecting on their own practices. The guidelines which follow describe the essential elements of the University of Exeter's scheme.

However, to complement the Annual Review of Teaching process, Faculties or departments may choose to devise detailed procedures and variations which reflect particular disciplinary traditions, processes and approaches to teaching.

Please note that these guidelines do not incorporate procedures for observations or reviews of teaching which are triggered by poor performance. In these circumstances separate procedures are required, which are best considered in a policy relating specifically to performance management.

4. What does it involve and how is this recorded?

The Annual Review of Teaching Scheme is mandatory and requires each of us to engage in a form of 'Annual Review of Teaching' activity during the academic year.

Any activity selected for review will involve peers in working alongside each other and commenting on a colleague's work. The Review activity should be a two-way conversation, in which each participant questions and learns from the other. It should entail an open, honest but constructive conversation, in which creative ideas for development and enhancement are the key focus. It is therefore important to follow the protocols of the Review process.

The Annual Review of Teaching Scheme at Exeter offers **two developmental options, A and B**, from which staff can select, under the guidance of their Academic Leads and/or line managers. It is likely that different options will be appropriate for different roles and at different times in each colleague's career.

Option A is based on the more traditional observation of a teaching session. This is strongly recommended for all staff in the early years of their teaching career, including all those on probation, and can continue to be highly useful for more experienced staff.

Option B provides a flexible framework for more established staff to focus on and *actively develop and improve* an identified area of practice, and may take place in addition to peer observation of teaching. Possible themes include but are not limited to:

- Curriculum design
- Developing a research-informed and/or inquiry-led learning and discovery approach
- Internationalisation
- Designing innovative assessment methods (formative and/or summative)
- Improving feedback practices
- Doctoral supervision
- Development of resources, for example the ELE (Exeter Learning Environment)
- Teaching diverse student groups
- Personal/ academic tutoring
- Incorporating digital tools in teaching and learning

Option B allows for developmental dialogue between pairs (as with the traditional peer teaching review exercise), but also allows for discussion and review among small groups. This can be particularly helpful when a common issue has been identified for a programme or subject area.

You should report on your chosen activity using the appropriate form highlighted in section 4 on p.2 of this document. The outcome of your activity should be discussed with your PDR reviewer as part of the PDR process. A summary of Annual Review of Teaching activity should then be noted in the Annual Review of Modules and the Faculty Annual Student Experience Review (ASER)/ Professional Service Directorate review. The forms should be completed at the time of the ARTS review and submitted immediately to your PDR Reviewer. The deadline for completing this process each year is 1st August.

6. How can I comment on areas I'd like the University to know about?

The feedback sections on the ART forms invite you to highlight and share identified areas of good practice in relation to teaching and learning. They also provide you with a specific opportunity to alert your department, faculty or service to any issues regarding good teaching and learning practice which you would like the University to be made aware of.

7. Institutional minimum requirements

All staff who teach, including those who only supervise postgraduate research students, must engage in a recorded Annual Review of Teaching Scheme activity (either Option A or Option B) once a year. This activity may be dialogue on a one-to-one basis, or may, with the guidance of the Academic Lead or Line Manager, involve a wider group. Each individual must participate annually, both as a reviewer and as a reviewee, using the activity to inform their practice.

8. Annual Review of Teaching: Links with the annual PDR (appraisal) process

The Performance and Development Review (PDR) is intended to enable all staff who teach, supervise and/or support students' learning to perform at the highest level, by facilitating discussions related to performance, personal development and career progression.

If you are a member of academic staff, the outcomes from the ARTS activity should be discussed and recorded in the 'Education' section of your PDR; these will be areas of good practice as well as developmental actions being taken by the individual as a result of the feedback. For Professional Services staff who teach or support students' learning, your annual PDR can be used flexibly to record the outcomes of your ARTS activity, depending on the nature of your role and the scope of the ARTS activity undertaken.

For all staff, the ARTS activity should be considered to be part of your continuing professional development (CPD), and discussions about your future CPD may usefully include consideration of future areas on which to focus in the next round of ARTS activities. This record will also provide useful evidence of your commitment to developing your own academic and/or professional practice where you are pursuing professional recognition through the [EduExe Framework](#).

9. Annual Review of Teaching (ARTS) and the EduExe Framework

You can use both the formal process of the Annual Review of Teaching Scheme (ARTS) and more informal peer discussion as evidence of your professionalism at all stages of your career, should you choose to apply for recognition of your teaching-related role. Gaining national recognition happens at the University of Exeter through the [EduExe Framework](#), which offers HEA Fellowships (accredited by Advance HE) in Associate, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow categories.

For more information on the EduExe Framework, and how you can gain recognition for your teaching-related role, please see the [EduExe Framework](#) website and relevant Sharepoint pages for each accredited route of the framework ([ASPIRE Professional recognition pathway \(PRP\)](#), [Learning and Teaching in Higher Education \(LTHE\)](#), and the [Academic Professional Programme \(APP\)](#)).

10. What should you do with your ARTS Records and paperwork?

ARTS should form part of your ongoing continuing professional development (CPD), and we therefore recommend ensuring that you keep your paperwork organised so that you can refer to it and reflect regularly on your practice. In terms of practical steps, we suggest the following:

1. Keep your copy of your ARTS forms in a centralised location within your files, organised to reflect each academic cycle.
2. Each year, send a copy of the ART Record form to your Director of Education and PDR Reviewer **by 1st August**. All Annual Review of Teaching records will be summarised and anonymised and will inform Annual Review of Modules and other evaluative reviews as appropriate.
3. File a copy of your ARTS forms in your PDR portfolio for discussion with your Academic Lead or line manager under the 'Education' heading.
4. Where you are reviewing others for their ARTS, make a note of ideas you've developed with them, as this can be included as evidence of CPD in your PDR.
5. You and the colleague(s) with whom you work as part of ARTS can use this activity as evidence of self-development in application for fellowship via the EduExe framework, and particularly within the experiential pathway to fellowship, [ASPIRE PRP](#).

Option A: ARTS Observation of a taught session

The purpose of peer observation at Exeter is to enable the colleague being reviewed to invite another colleague's views on all, or selected, areas of practice *relating to the delivery of a taught session*. This could be a lecture, seminar, practical class, tutorial or field trip; it may also relate to the supervision of postgraduate research students. It is important to make time after the session for genuine discussion of areas of practice; **this is not about one- directional feedback, but an informed discussion, so that both the reviewee and the reviewer learn from the experience of session observation.**

What are the steps needed for Option A?

- 1. Identify a taught session you wish to reflect upon**, and agree with your Academic Lead or line manager who will be able to observe you and give you constructive feedback. Agree the date, time, and plan a date for the follow-up discussion.
- 2. Communicate all relevant information to the colleague observing your session before it takes place.** Make sure that you give the colleague(s) providing you with feedback enough background to understand the context of the taught session or developmental activity. Complete the brief description section of the ARTS Option A paperwork to provide them with relevant contextual information.

Agree in advance which aspects of the session should be the focus of the observation – for example, engaging students in active learning; use of resources; issues of inclusion and equality; eliciting student feedback. The reviewer(s) may be invited to attend to very specific features of your practice, or you may give them the freedom to comment on any aspect of the activity. Ensure you add this information on the ARTS Option A paperwork, and give this to your observing colleague, along with the feedback form for use during the session.

Decide whether (and what) to tell any students who might be present in a session that there'll be a colleague observing your practice.

- 3. During the observation of a taught session**, the observer should remain unobtrusive and not get involved in the session unless you have discussed and agreed otherwise. Observers should stick to the agreed focus, and record particular events, behaviours and talk as concrete examples for investigation that might provide insights about teaching and learning. Observers should also be mindful of the language used in writing the record, and avoid judgmental statements or interpretations that are not based on evidence available through specific examples.

- 4. After the session, schedule time to talk through the observations** noted on the form, ideally straight away after the session. It is helpful to agree in advance of the meeting the way the feedback discussion will work and the timeline for completing paperwork. For example, who will speak first? Is there a preferred way of approaching the positive and developmental comments?

It is often considered good practice for the person who has been observed to speak first and reflect on their session, opening up a dialogue with the observer. It is also advisable for the observer to begin feedback with some positive comments, following with constructive criticism or challenging of practice

and ending with suggestions about how practice might be developed further.

In your conversation, you should discuss:

- **Areas of good practice** which should be noted to share with other colleagues (as appropriate) and inform the reviewee's PDR
- **Areas which would benefit from being developed further:** How will you work on these? How will you know whether the developments have been successful?
- **New ideas for practice**, *for both the reviewee and the reviewer*, emerging from the dialogue

5. Engage in active listening and respect colleagues' confidentiality throughout the ARTS process. The process of any developmental dialogue is intended to build confidence and identify possible future action, and it is therefore important to listen attentively and to aim for a genuine, evidence-informed exchange of ideas. Feedback should be specific, clear, constructive and honest.

Your colleague(s) should not use the information/record of your ARTS Peer Observation & Feedback Record for any purpose without prior agreement. The person observed should be able to use the information from the review in any way they consider appropriate, e.g. for PDR (appraisal), promotion, teaching awards and EduExe/HEA Fellowships.

Option B: ARTS Discussion focusing on a selected area of practice

The aim of ARTS dialogue is to enable you to improve an aspect of your teaching-related practice, with the assistance of one or more colleagues. It involves a meeting with your reviewer(s) in small groups, or in pairs to discuss a specific aspect of practice, identify steps for development, and to then reflect on changes implemented as a result of the peer discussion.

What are the steps needed for Option B?

- 1. Identify an area of your practice that you wish to improve, and contact a colleague or small group of colleagues who might be able to assist you.** Agree the date for your peer discussion.
- 2. Communicate all relevant information to the colleague with whom you will be speaking before your conversation.** This should include the context of your practice, and the area you would like to discuss.
- 3. During the peer discussion,** discuss the area of your practice you wish to develop and identify what you intend to do and how you will evaluate the development you wish to implement. **You should complete a record of the meeting and set a date for subsequent review.**
- 4. Engage in active listening and respect colleagues' confidentiality** throughout the ARTS process. The process of any developmental dialogue is intended to build confidence and identify possible future action, and it is therefore important to listen attentively and to aim for a genuine, evidence-informed exchange of ideas. Your colleague(s) should not use the information of your ARTS forms for any purpose without prior agreement.
- 5. After the peer discussion,** implement the steps for developing practice which you have identified,

and gather the evaluative evidence as identified in your preliminary meeting. Complete the review section of the ARTS Option B Form (Practice Development Record), and **send this to your reviewer(s) for them to consider and comment on your developments and evaluation.**

6. How does this work for colleagues wishing to engage in ARTS as a group?

With the approval of your Faculty, it can be effective for groups within a particular subject discipline or professional area to use ARTS to support and develop their work. This encourages subject groups to take ownership together and address the developmental needs of the group as a whole. For example, in any one year a group may wish to adopt a strategic focus, on a particular aspect of teaching that has arisen through monitoring or student feedback, using Option B of the scheme for peer dialogue. The details decided by the group can include:

- the types of teaching activities that will be reviewed/observed each year;
- the people who will undertake the reviews each year;
- the timetable for review;
- how to share the outcomes of the review

As a group, discuss the ARTS process first and agree that group peer dialogue would be a useful activity for all members of that group. In many institutions teaching groups facilitate the professional development activities identified in peer observations. This is an effective way of taking the outcomes of peer observations forward. You are welcome to contact the Educator Development Team if you would like further guidance or support with this activity.

Annual Review of Teaching Scheme (ARTS) Option A: peer observation

Reviewee name (person being observed)			
Reviewer(s) name			
Date		Number of students	
Subject, level, type of session			
Session topic			
Focus of observation			
Session element (and prompts):	Notes:		
<u>Session content and structure:</u> Were aims and ILOs made clear? Was there a logical and coherent structure to the session? Was signposting used? Comment on: • Research-informed • International perspective • Transferable skills			
<u>Learning activities, resources and student engagement:</u> Were appropriate learning technologies used effectively? Were resources constructively aligned to ILOs? Learner-centred approach used? Were learners actively engaged?			
<u>Assessment for learning:</u> What methods of informal assessment were used (i.e. to check session ILOs being met)? How is this session linked to summative assessment?			
<u>Summary and consolidation of learning:</u> Was there a summary provided? What consolidation work was set?			

Feedback Section (for discussion)

Areas of good practice (include specific evidence from the session observed):		Suggestions for sharing good practice (including discipline/service-, College-, university-, sector-wide):
1.		
2.		
3.		
Areas for development (include specific evidence from the session observed):		Suggested activity to support development (e.g. CPD, literature) – be specific:
1.		
2.		
3.		
Summarise any next steps which have been agreed following this feedback discussion:		
Signature of reviewee (person observed)		Date:
Signature of reviewer		Date:

Annual Review of Teaching Scheme (ARTS) Option B: discussion on an aspect of teaching practice

Activity to be undertaken as a pair or small group in agreement with Academic Lead/ Line Manager or equivalent.

Name of reviewee			
Name of reviewer(s)			
Date		Faculty/Programme	
Which area of practice do you wish to address?			
What actions will you take to address this area of practice?			
How will you evaluate this change? For example, what mechanisms for student feedback, peer review, or education scholarship might you use?			
Proposed date for follow-up review:			

Practice Development Record (after change has been implemented)

Date		Name of reviewer (s) (if different from above)	
Briefly describe the change implemented:			
What was the outcome of the change implemented? Use specific evidence from your evaluation of practice.			
Summarise any recommendations or developments for your own future practice:			
Are there any further points of note or good practice to record?			
Aspects that you would like to make known to your College/Service and/or University, and through which forum:			
Summary of reviewer(s) comments:			
Signature of reviewee			Date:
Signature of reviewer(s)			Date:
Additional follow-up required? If so, proposed date?			