

## The role of the panel and panel members

It is expected that the panel will work collegially as a team to ensure that the programme(s) and award(s) being validated or reviewed are at an appropriate academic standard and level, which is consistent with the QAA [Framework for higher education qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#) (FHEQ), and that the learning opportunities enable students to achieve the learning outcomes. While all team members may explore any areas covered by the validation/periodic review process, the following information outlines the principal likely areas of focus of the panel as a whole and the individual panel members. The outcomes of the validation/review (conditions/recommendations) will be a collective judgement of the panel reached by consensus.

### **Panel**

The panel as a whole are expected to:

- (i) consider/review the rationale, aims and objectives (expressed as learning outcomes) of the programme;
- (ii) consider/review the appropriateness, currency and relevance of the structure and content of the programme of study;
- (iii) consider/review the programme(s) coherence, integration and progression in meeting stated aims and objectives;
- (iv) assure itself that the principal and subsidiary awards available within the programme, are consistent with the FHEQ and any other relevant national [subject benchmark statement\(s\)](#);
- (v) assure itself that programme titles for the principal and subsidiary awards accurately reflect the content of the programme;
- (vi) assure itself of the adherence of the programme to any appropriate subject benchmark statement(s) (the University's normal expectation is that, as a minimum, the threshold standards for appropriate benchmarks should be addressed);
- (vii) consider/review whether the programme meets the specifications of PSRBs or other relevant external bodies as appropriate;
- (viii) ensure that the programme conforms to the standard University structure;
- (ix) consider the nature of the proposed teaching and learning methods and ascertain whether it is consistent with the University/Faculty/Department/School strategy;
- (x) comment on the appropriateness and adequacy of the assessment strategy to measure the learning outcomes of the programme overall and the stated learning outcomes for each module;
- (xi) consider the balance and variance of assessments methods offered on the programme with a view to determining whether they show progression and an appropriate learning experience;
- (xii) assess for each module how the delivering Faculty intends to assess students through formative assessments and provide students with formative evaluative feedback on their progress (the University expects Faculties to include at least one opportunity to provide students with a piece of work for each module, designed to be returned to students with evaluative feedback on their performance towards meeting the stated learning outcomes in sufficient time to impact any summative assessment);
- (xiii) consider/review the opportunities available to students to be introduced to personal development planning (PDP) and to undertake PDP activities at each level or stage throughout the programme;

- (xiv) consider/review the appropriateness of any placement/collaborative activity, ensuring that due diligence and risk assessments have been completed;
- (xv) consider review the arrangements for any placement activity for the supervision and, where appropriate, the assessment of students;
- (xvi) if the programme(s) includes a Professional Training Year (PTY) ensure that it has been appropriately considered and validated prior to the submission of the programme(s) to a validation event;
- (xvii) ensure that appropriate facilities and resources (including technical support) are in place or planned to support the programme(s);
- (xviii) ensure that the proposed academic and professional/service staffing is adequate and appropriate to the programme of study;
- (xix) for review events only, ensure that the academic (and professional) staffing remains adequate and appropriate for the programme in the light of changes put in place since initial validation/the last periodic review and / or changes proposed in the future;
- (xx) ascertain whether there will be any external/guest/associate lecturers/markers involved with the programme(s), the extent of their involvement and the procedures for training and monitoring their contribution;
- (xxi) assure itself that quality assurance mechanisms are appropriate and that they conform with University, and if relevant PSRB, requirements;
- (xxii) for validation events only, ensure that suitable arrangements have been made where it is not possible to include new programme(s) in to existing Board of Studies and Boards of Examiner;
- (xxiii) examine the implications of the programme as contained in the submission for students with special needs and, as far as possible, assure itself that there are no unnecessary barriers to access by disabled people. Where there are particular restrictions these should be advised to applicants in promotional literature and the student handbook (who should be referred to the University's Disability Co-ordinator in the first instance);
- (xxiv) for review events only, consider the rationale for and details of any proposed changes to the programme.

### **Chair**

The Chair is a senior member University staff and a member of the University's Quality and Standards Sub-committee. The Chair is from a different Faculty to that of the programme(s) under consideration.

*Before the validation/review event the Chair is expected to:*

- (i) inform the validation and review coordinator, in advance, if they have any issues or concerns and resolve any queries regarding the proposal or the event before the event date;
- (ii) work with the validation and review coordinator to set the agenda and organise the panel, where necessary;
- (iii) read the documentation and prepare discussion points/questions for the private panel meetings, meeting with the programme team and, in the event of a review, meeting with students.

*During the event the Chair is expected to:*

- (i) chair meetings of the panel;
- (ii) ensure that members of the panel, staff and students are able to contribute to the discussion and further explore themes with the programme team, and students in review events;
- (iii) within the initial meeting, provide a brief overview of the University's processes and its outcomes, noting which areas need to be covered, using the *Code of practice* as guidance;
- (iv) ensure that the external assessor(s) understand the process;
- (v) clarify and enable the role of any PSRB representative(s);
- (vi) ensure that the event runs smoothly and to time;
- (vii) set the agenda for the initial private panel meeting;
- (viii) establish an agenda for private panel member meetings and meetings with the programme team (and students for periodic review events) based on the themes identified by the panel in the initial meeting;
- (ix) ensure there is sufficient evidence that the indicators listed in the validation report checklist have been addressed appropriately;
- (x) elicit and evaluate panel members conclusions;
- (xi) identify and record areas of good practice;
- (xii) in conjunction with the validation and review coordinator, compose the panel's commendations, conditions and recommendations and ensure that they are clear and achievable;
- (xiii) check that the panel agree with the conclusions;
- (xiv) feedback the outcomes to the programme team at the conclusion of the event.

*After the event the Chair is expected to:*

- (i) approve the feedback letter produced by the validation and review coordinator directly following the event;
- (ii) approve the final report for consideration by the Quality and Standards Sub-committee;
- (iii) consider the programme team's response to conditions and to offer further revisions or consider them met.

### ***Validation and review co-ordinator***

The validation and review coordinator is a member of the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards.

*Before the event the validation and review coordinator is expected to:*

- (i) set a planning meeting with the programme team to discuss the relevant process, provide guidance and set a timeline for the validation/review process;
- (ii) establish a panel in accordance with the requirements of the *Code of practice*;
- (iii) manage the appointment of the external assessor(s), based on the nomination by the Faculty and obtain approval of the appointment by the Chair of the Quality and Standards Sub-committee (or Deputy Chair if the programme is within the same Faculty as the Chair of the Quality and Standards Sub-committee);

- (iv) advise the Faculty on the submission requirements as specified in the *Code of practice* (this should initially be covered during the planning meeting);
- (v) compile the programme for the day for the validation/review event for agreement by the Chair;
- (vi) circulate the submission documentation and briefing pack;
- (vii) read the documentation and prepare discussion points/questions for the private panel meetings, meeting with the programme team and, for a review, meeting with students.

*During the event the validation and review coordinator is expected to:*

- (i) provide information and advice on the University's *Regulations* and the relevant *Codes of practice*;
- (ii) keep a formal record of the event and its outcomes using the standard reporting template;
- (iii) contribute to discussions, where applicable.

*After the event the validation and review coordinator is expected to:*

- (i) write the feedback letter, and once approved by the Chair, circulate to the panel and programme team;
- (ii) write the validation/review report and circulate to the Chair initially for approval, and then to the rest of the panel;
- (iii) once approved by the panel, circulate the report to the programme team highlighting the deadline for any conditions;
- (iv) once received, circulate the programme team's response to conditions and recommendations to the panel with the amended documentation for checking and approval;
- (v) if further revisions are needed the validation and review coordinator will communicate with the programme team to set a further deadline for the re-submission;
- (vi) collate the panel's responses and inform the programme team when the conditions have been met;
- (vii) liaise with the Secretary to the Quality and Standards Sub-committee to ensure that progress of the validation/review event is reported.

Throughout the process the validation and review coordinator is expected to liaise with the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) where appropriate, particularly when the event is being conducted conjointly.

### ***Internal panel member(s)***

One or more internal panel members will be appointed in accordance with the *Code of practice*. Internal panel members cannot be from the Faculty of the programme being considered at validation/review, but must be a member of staff at the University of Surrey.:

*Before the event the internal panel member is expected to:*

- (i) read the documentation and prepare discussion points/questions for the private panel meetings, meeting with the programme team and, in the event of a review, meeting with students, in particular:
  - review the annual programme review process and form a judgement on the effectiveness by which the programme team:

- reviews progression, completion and award data, identifies and takes action to support student achievement and progression
  - takes in to account the views of external examiners and students
  - examine the information available to students in support of their studies (including the programme handbook) and form a judgement on whether this information is accurate, complete and effective. In periodic reviews this judgement will be informed by discussions with current students
  - review the arrangements for personal tutoring to ensure that these are effective and operate in accordance with the University's procedures
  - review the arrangements put in place to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to students with protected characteristics (including, gender, disability and ethnicity)
- (ii) highlight any issues to the validation and review coordinator, that need to be dealt with prior to the validation/review event.

*During the event the internal panel member is expected to:*

- (i) advise the University as to whether the programme(s) threshold standards are comparable with other programmes within the University and the FHEQ;
- (ii) advise the University whether the programme complies with University *Regulations* and the relevant *Codes of practice*;
- (iii) discuss with the programme team how the learning opportunities have been enhanced;
- (iv) discuss their findings and conclusions with the panel and question the programme team;
- (v) help identify any areas of good practice.

*After the event the internal panel member is expected to:*

- (i) check and approve the validation/review report;
- (ii) check the programme team's response to conditions and recommendations to see if further revisions are needed or whether they are considered as met.

### ***External panel member(s)***

One or more external panel members will be appointed from comparable higher education institutions (and where applicable from the PSRBs or industry).

*Before the event the external assessor is expected to:*

- (i) read the documentation and prepare discussion points/questions for the private panel meetings, meeting with the programme team and, in the event of a review, meeting with students, in particular:
  - examine the content and the curriculum to determine whether it is appropriate for the subject area and comparable to similar programmes offered at other HEIs
  - review the programme and module learning outcomes and consider whether they are: set at the correct level, reflect the content and clearly demonstrate progression
  - consider whether consultation and contribution from external bodies and industry are appropriate
  - review the assessment strategy and the individual assessments methods to ensure subject and level are relevant and clearly assess the content

- determine the currency and viability of the programme in light of current trends within the subject area and industry
  - provide any suggestions for improvements or examples of good practice which could be adopted
- (ii) submit their findings to the validation and review coordinator prior to the event (a template will be circulated to the external assessor prior to the event by the validation and review coordinator);
- (iii) highlight any issues to the validation and review coordinator, that need to be dealt with prior to the validation / review event.

*During the event the external assessor is expected to:*

- (i) provide independent subject expertise and / or professional experience;
- (ii) advise the University whether the threshold standards as expressed in the learning outcomes meet the expectations of the FHEQ, relevant subject benchmarks and, where applicable PSRB/external body requirements;
- (iii) advise the University whether the delivery and assessment methods of the learning resources (including, where applicable, in professional practice) support students in achieving and demonstrating the learning outcomes and allow the outcomes to be demonstrated by students.

*After the event the external assessor is expected to:*

- (i) check and approve the validation / review report;
- (ii) check the programme team's response to conditions and recommendations to see if further revisions are needed or whether they are considered as met.

### ***Student panel member***

The student panel member will be appointed from a pool of trained reviewers (who are nominated by the University of Surrey Students' Union, USSU) from a different Faculty to that of the programme(s) under consideration. The student member will normally have experience of being a student representative for a programme or hold a post of USSU (excluding anyone who has served on a complaint or appeal panel for the programme under review). The principal role of the student reviewer will be to bring to the process the student perspective. The student reviewer may explore any themes (as a non-subject specialist) he/she wishes that impact on the student learning experience.

Key functions of the student reviewer will include, but not be limited to:

*Before the event:*

- (i) read the documentation and note any areas which may need further investigation during the validation/review event, in particular:
- the arrangements made for the student voice to be heard – examples can include the student rep system, tutorials, surveys etc
  - whether issues raised through the student voice have been considered and listened to – (only applicable for review events), information on this is found in the annual programme review reports, which are provided as part of the submission document
  - whether student feedback has been considered and listened to through the National Student Survey, Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) and student representation – (only applicable for review events)

- the Information available to students in support of their studies (including the programme handbook) and whether this information is accurate, complete and effective - in review events this judgement will be informed by a meeting with current students
- the arrangements for supporting students to progress and achieve, including personal tutoring
- the learning opportunities and resources provided to students to achieve the intended learning outcomes

*During the event:*

- (i) contribute to the discussions of the private panel meetings;
- (ii) highlight any areas that were not clear in the documentation, which need further investigation in the meetings with the programme team and students;
- (iii) ask questions that arise and are pertinent to the discussion during the event;
- (iv) ensure that all areas listed above have been considered by the programme team and the arrangements are in place in order to ensure a successful student experience;
- (v) if further work is needed ensure that appropriate conditions are set to be addressed by the programme team.

*After the event:*

- (i) review relevant sections of the validation/review report to ensure that it accurately reflects what was discussed;
- (ii) review any relevant conditions submitted by the programme team and decide whether further revisions are needed or whether the conditions are considered met.

Panel members must respond by a date specified by the validation and review coordinator. If no response is received it will be assumed that they are content with the outcomes.