Code of practice for the design and approval of new programmes and periodic programme review

Academic year 2017/18
Code of practice for the design and approval of new programmes and periodic review

Contents

Quality and Curriculum Management (QCM) project.................................................. 1
Introduction ................................................................................................................... 1
Aims and benefits of the processes ............................................................................. 2
Timescales for the processes ....................................................................................... 2
  Process deadlines ...................................................................................................... 2
  Marketing deadlines .................................................................................................. 3
University requirements ............................................................................................... 3
  Programme structures ............................................................................................... 3
  The nature and naming of combined awards ......................................................... 4
  Contact hours .......................................................................................................... 4
  The critical evaluation for periodic review ............................................................. 4
Development of a new programme proposal .............................................................. 5
  Initial programme development ............................................................................. 5
  Marketing ................................................................................................................. 5
Pre-validation approval ............................................................................................... 5
  Programme marketing, advertising and recruitment at pre-validation approval ........ 7
Preparing for validation/review .................................................................................. 7
  Planning meeting .................................................................................................... 7
  Required documentation ......................................................................................... 8
  Submission document ............................................................................................. 8
  Programme specification ......................................................................................... 9
Module descriptors ...................................................................................................... 9
  Taught unit descriptors ........................................................................................... 9
Staffing ....................................................................................................................... 9
  Programme handbook ............................................................................................ 9
Consultation with relevant parties ............................................................................ 10
  Personal development planning ........................................................................... 10
Public information ..................................................................................................... 11
  Submission of the documentation ......................................................................... 11
The validation/review process and the event ............................................................ 11
  Composition of a validation/review panel ............................................................. 12
  Briefing pack for the validation/review panel ......................................................... 13
The responsibilities of the programme team ............................................................ 13
  Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) involvement ....................... 14
Outcomes of the validation/review event ................................................................. 15
Virtual validation/review process .............................................................................. 15
Code of practice for the design and approval of new programmes and periodic review
Introduction

1. The design and approval process (validation) is the quality assurance mechanism by which a proposed programme of study is scrutinised in order to assure Senate (the academic authority) that the programme meets the University's expectations for quality and academic standards.

2. The validation of a programme is managed in four distinct phases, as follows:
   - programme design and pre-validation approval of the proposed programme
   - further development and submission of the documentation covering the proposed programme of study
   - a meeting to validate the programme, which is known as the 'event'
   - post-event activity

3. Periodic review is the process by which periodically the University assures itself that existing programmes of study continue to be relevant, current, meet their stated aims and objectives/learning outcomes, and are adequately resourced.

4. The review of a programme is managed in four distinct phases. These phases can be categorised as:
   - evaluation/development by the programme team
   - planning meeting and confirmation of titles of the programme of study
   - review event and judgement/decision which is then recommended for approval to the Quality and Standards Sub-committee (QSS)
   - post-event activity

5. Following initial validation, approved programmes of study will, from time to time, be subject to review. The timescale will often be dictated by conditions and recommendations contained in the report of the initial validation or previous periodic review report.

6. The Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards (QES) will maintain a programme register of internal provision which will monitor programme approval periods and dates for periodic reviews. It will also record, where appropriate, professional accreditations. Using the provision register, an annual schedule of events due for review will be planned and implemented.

Quality and Curriculum Management (QCM) project

The QCM project has been established to automate the following processes and will be carried out in three distinct phases:

Phase 1: modification process (to be completed for 2017/18)
Phase 2: suspension and withdrawal processes (to be completed for 2018/19)
Phase 3: validation and periodic review process (to be completed for 2019/20)

The principles of each process will remain as they are at the moment but some detail of how they operate in practice may change. Because of this it may be necessary to make some amendments to processes following the publication of this Code of practice.

For further information on the project visit its [webpage](mailto:webpage) or contact the project team ([qualitysupport@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:qualitysupport@surrey.ac.uk)).
7. This Code of practice is intended to provide detailed information and guidance about the design and approval and periodic review processes and the responsibilities of all participants.

Aims and benefits of the processes

8. Both processes aims to:
   - support and encourage quality enhancement
   - continually improve and assure the quality of the programmes taught at the University
   - promote areas and examples of good practice
   - support the quality processes with Faculties, Departments and Schools

   They also promote the following benefits:
   - the opportunity for the programme team to take a holistic view of the quality and standards of the programme(s)
   - the provision of a formally structured opportunity to reflect and develop new approaches and/or enhance current practices
   - an independent and external confirmation of the quality and standards attained across a whole programme/group of programmes
   - the opportunity for good practice to be recognised, verified and disseminated

Timescales for the processes

9. The timescales for the validation of a new programme or the review of an existing programme can vary greatly. It should be possible to complete either process within three to four months (see Appendix 4 for a process flow chart), not including time spent completing the pre-validation process. Timings can be dependent on the volume of and prioritisation of scheduled events for any given year.

10. For new programmes, pre-validation approval is subject to certain deadlines, which differs for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. For undergraduate programme proposals, it is the expectation that the programme proposer should alert the relevant Faculty Marketing Team, Student Services and Administration Directorate (SSAD) staff, Associate Dean Learning and Teaching (ADLT) and Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards (QES) to the new proposal at the earliest opportunity.

11. Approval periods run from September to August, following the academic year cycle. It is University policy that all programmes must be reviewed before the end of their approval period.

12. The panel can only award a maximum approval period of five years. Under normal circumstances the University will not extend the approval period. However in very exceptional circumstances, no more than a one year extension may be granted with approval from the Vice-Provost (Education and Students).

13. The schedule for the review of programmes is managed by QES. Programme teams will be contacted directly by the relevant Academic Quality Officer (AQO) when their programme is due for review.

Process deadlines

14. It is expected that all pre-validation approval forms are submitted to QES by no later than the end of August one academic year prior to the proposed introduction of the programme. This is to ensure that there is enough time to finalise the schedule and manage the distribution and workload of the events across the year. Programme teams who exceed this deadline, but still wish to introduce their programme(s) in the
following September must seek special dispensation from QES, and provide detailed reasons explaining why the proposal cannot be postponed.

15. All validation events must take place before the end of April in the academic year preceding the academic year in which the programme will be introduced. Similarly review events must take place before the end of May in the last academic year of the current approval period. This is to ensure that enough time is allocated to the post-event activity prior to the recruitment/return of students.

16. A timeline for the relevant processes is discussed and agreed at a planning meeting, which for validation takes place once the pre-validation pro-forma has been approved and for reviews during the summer period prior to the new academic year (see paragraphs 53-54 below on planning meeting for further information). As part of this timeline the programme team are expected to submit documentation prior to the event and a response to any conditions and/or recommendations set by the panel along with any amended documentation following the event.

17. If the documentation at any point does not meet the deadline agreed or is deemed to be of poor quality the Chair of the Quality and Standards Sub-committee (QSS) and the Director of Quality Enhancement and Standards will be informed. Following consultation they will then contact the relevant Executive Dean and the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) for action.

Marketing deadlines

18. Where possible the Marketing Department ask that they be notified about new programme proposals by early May, two years prior to the academic year in which the programme(s) plan to be introduced. Marketing will then carry out the initial research on the proposed programme(s) for the pre-validation approval form. In order for the undergraduate pre-validation proposals to meet marketing deadlines for the prospectus and major recruitment fairs, the pre-validation proposal must have been approved in full by no later than the last working day in October two academic years prior to the date of introduction (i.e. if a programme is to start in September 2018, the pre-validation approval will need to have been approved by the last working day in October 2016 at the latest).

19. Where possible for postgraduate programme proposals the programme proposer, in the first instance, should make the relevant Faculty Marketing Team aware of the proposal by no later than mid-September, two academic years prior to the date of introduction. By the last working day of the following February the pre-validation proposal should have received final approval in order for the programme to meet the prospectus and recruitment fair deadlines.

University requirements

Programme structures

20. Information on the requirements for programmes, including credits and levels is given in the Regulations for taught programmes.

21. It is University policy that all modules are 15 credits in structure and not multiples thereof, with the exception of practical/project/dissertation modules. Modules should be balanced evenly across the two semesters of the academic year.

22. All programmes should follow the University’s Regulations, Codes of practice and relevant policies. Any deviation, due to Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Body (PSRB) requirements, should be reported to QES as soon as they are known and in advance of the event. A detailed rationale with reference to the PSRBs documentation should be provided within the submission document (benchmarking and consultation section).
The nature and naming of combined awards

23. The Faculty will be responsible for the initiation and implementation of its programmes of study and for the organisation of their delivery. In the case of major/minor combinations, the Faculty responsible is the one that is contributing the ‘major’ element of the programme, including the responsibility for programme review. Responsibilities for a joint programme (50:50) will reside with the Faculty with administrative responsibility for the programme unless the Faculties decide between them that the other Faculty will take responsibility.

24. When considering new programme proposals for pre-validation approval which involve collaboration with another Faculty or unit of the University, the approvers will seek written evidence in the form of a signature from the appropriate Executive Dean of Faculty on the programme approval form. This would certify that the collaborating Faculty has been fully consulted, accepts the resource implications and/or terms for the transfer of resources and that the proposal is consistent with the collaborating Faculty’s strategic plans and will be adopted within this context.

25. Requirements for the nature and naming of combined awards can be found in the Regulations for taught programmes.

Contact hours

26. When designing the programme content the programme team will need to consider the contact hours related to each module and the time dedicated to assessments. This guide is to help programme teams guard against overloading students through heavy assessment loading or a heavy teaching schedule. Nominally, 1 credit = 10 hours of learning, therefore a 15 credit module should have 150 hours of overall student workload including assessments and private study.

27. A breakdown of the contact hours detailing the amount of hours assigned to, for example: lecturers, tutorials, seminars, virtual learning, coursework preparation and private study for each module will need to be on all module descriptors.

The critical evaluation for periodic review

28. The evaluation by the programme team will usually result in suggested amendments to the programme, which will be validated as part of the review event. The review process gives the programme team an opportunity to scrutinise their programme(s) and analyse whether there are any changes needed to improve the programme. Only major changes as defined within the Code of practice for programme and module modifications should be considered and approved through the periodic review process. All minor modifications must be approved through the modification process prior to or following the periodic review, ensuring that the changes being made are in line with the modification process deadlines.

29. The periodic review process also ensures that independent scrutiny of the programme takes place and provides the institution with assurance of the quality and standards of the programme. The approach is one of peer review. The programme(s) is considered and evaluated by a panel of peers, who are both internal and external to the University.

30. Where applicable, the programme team will also need to consult their Faculty Marketing Team to ensure that any necessary market research is carried out to ensure that the proposed change will be effective. Any market research carried out will need to be presented in the review documentation for the panel’s consideration.

31. Critical evaluation cannot be undertaken for validation events as it is a new proposal, however a consultation with relevant stakeholders is expected are part of the planning and development stages of a proposal (see paragraphs 68-70 below).
Development of a new programme proposal

32. Normally new programme proposals are expected to be developed in line with the University’s strategic planning cycle. They will need to be incorporated into the academic plan for the Faculty.

Initial programme development

33. A programme proposal is usually initiated and originally developed within the Faculty. All proposals should be consistent with the Faculty strategic development plan. The proposal should be developed, initially, within the Faculty. Relevant parties should also be consulted and discussions evidenced within the validation documentation:

(i) academic staff within the University from a different subject area
(ii) staff within the University with professional services expertise, such as education developers, Library staff, Additional Learning Support staff
(iii) staff from other higher education providers
(iv) contacts in industry
(v) contacts in professional practice
(vi) contacts in research
(vii) Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
(viii) external examiners
(ix) employers
(x) organisations within the community
(xi) collaborative links
(xii) former students and/or students studying in cognate areas

34. Programme teams will also need to contact QES, by e-mail (gesadmin@surrey.ac.uk) during the initial stages of programme development to inform them of the proposal. This is to ensure that all proposals can be factored in to the workload of the events schedule. The Academic Quality Officer (Validation, Reviews and Professional Bodies) will be able to provide advice on the processes and provide guidance and support where necessary.

35. For a programme proposal which involves more than one Faculty, consideration will need to be given to whoever assumes the administrative responsibility for the programme and how the teaching will be shared. A supporting statement from each Executive Dean or their nominee will also need to be included in the submission document. See paragraphs 23-25 above for further guidance on joint and combined programmes.

Marketing

36. Programmes must not be advertised until pre-validation approval has been granted. For more information see paragraphs 50-52 below.

Pre-validation approval

37. Once a programme proposal has been sufficiently developed, a form for pre-validation approval will need to be completed. All sections will need to be completed with all the relevant information to ensure that enough information has been provided; this is so that approvers can make an informed decision on whether the proposal should be put through the validation process. Although at this stage the approvers are only looking at the viability of the proposal, more information will be required for the validation process.

38. All new programmes, whether they are undergraduate, taught postgraduate or postgraduate research must go through the pre-validation process.

39. Staff completing the pre-validation form will need to include a brief outline of any potential placement or collaborative activity.
40. A business case will also need to be completed in consultation with the relevant Business Finance Manager and appended to the pre-validation pro-forma. There is a separate template for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

41. A marketing checklist will also need to be completed as part of the pre-validation approval process, which should also be appended to the pre-validation pro-forma.

42. The Library should also be consulted and there is a Library checklist which will need to be completed for their records. Programme proposers are required to meet with their Faculty Engagement Librarians prior to Faculty approval to discuss the proposal.

43. Once the form has been completed it will be ready to submit for approval. Before it can progress to validation, the form will need to be considered and signed.
   - for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes the form must be signed by: the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) on behalf of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee (FLTC) and following consultation with the SSAD Student staff and Head(s) of School/Department, Executive Dean, Faculty Marketing Officer/Manager, Business Finance Manager, Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards, Chair of the subgroup of the Fees, Bursaries and Scholarship Group on behalf of the Group and the Vice-Provost (Education and Students)
   - for postgraduate research programmes, with taught elements, the form must be signed by: the Faculty Postgraduate Research Director on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee (FRDC), Executive Dean, Faculty Marketing Officer/Manager, Business Finance Manager, Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards, Chair of the subgroup of the Fees, Bursaries and Scholarship Group on behalf of the Group, the Vice-Provost (Education and Students) and the Vice-Provost (Research and Innovation).

44. Once all Faculty signatures have been obtained the pro-forma will need to be sent to QES for consideration by the Academic Quality Officer and Director of Quality Enhancement and Standards. Once all parties are happy with the pro-forma, QES will manage the process for institutional level approval.

45. At any stage the proposal may be sent back to the programme proposer for revisions. If the relevant Faculty senior management committee supports the proposal then it should be incorporated in to the Faculty plan.

46. Once the pro-forma is approved, the programme team, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching, Student Services and Administration Directorate staff, Student Recruitment, Admissions, Planning, Marketing and Faculty Postgraduate Research Director (if applicable) will be informed by the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards.

47. Changes should not be made to the programme information that is presented to the public between pre-validation approval and the validation event. Where change is needed this should be clearly listed within the public information section of the submission document (for templates click here, also see section 4.5) which can then be approved by the panel and communicated to the relevant parties to update their records, i.e. marketing content team.

48. Where changes must be made prior to the validation event the Academic Quality Officer (Validation, Periodic Reviews and Professional Bodies) should be consulted prior to any changes being made to any public information.

49. See Appendices 2 and 3 for process flow charts for pre-validation approval.
Programme marketing, advertising and recruitment at pre-validation approval

50. A programme may only be advertised externally, and a UCAS number obtained (undergraduate programme only), once a proposal has been approved through the pre-validation process. Advertising programmes that have received pre-validation approval should make clear the status of the programme. This is normally done by putting 'subject to validation/approval' on all advertising material.

51. However if the pro-forma is not signed by the relevant institutional level signatories it may be referred to the University Executive Board, who may also set conditions for further approval and a deadline will be agreed. During the period in which the conditions are being considered, the programme may be advertised as 'subject to validation/approval' and offers of places may be made, but the offer must clearly state that it is made 'subject to validation/approval'. If the conditions do not meet the deadline then the period of approval will lapse and all marketing material must be removed from the webpages and the places offered rescinded. In some instances the University Executive Board may specify that the programme may not be advertised until the conditions have been met.

52. Instances where a proposed programme does not receive approval through the pre-validation process applicants will be informed by no later than 5 August.

Preparing for validation/review

Planning meeting

53. The relevant Academic Quality Officer will convene a planning meeting with relevant staff, usually the programme team. The planning meeting will usually take place between, the summer period preceding the academic year the programme is due to be validated / reviewed and the first semester. A template for the planning meeting can be found here. The purpose of the meeting is to:

(i) outline the validation process
(ii) confirm the schedule of the validation/periodic review
(iii) discuss panel and programme team membership
(iv) discuss the nomination and approval of external representation on the panel (further information can be found in within the external assessor nomination form and paragraphs 85 – 87 and 95 – 97 below)
(v) discuss any programme adjustments related to PSRB requirements
(vi) discuss documentation requirements
(vii) discuss roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process, ie what the programme team will be responsible for
(viii) discuss University, national and international benchmarks and requirements
(ix) confirm anticipated numbers at the validation event, ie the programme team, students and the panel
(x) confirm certain requirements in relation to the process, eg consultation during the design and development stages of the programme for validation events and consultation about any programme developments for review events with relevant parties which then inform the proposal/changes to the existing provision.

The agreed outcomes of the meeting together with the nominal date for the event will be confirmed in writing by the AQO with the attendees.

54. Guidance and advice is available to all of those involved in the validation/review process. Programme teams proposing a new programme are able to contact QES with any queries they may have on the process. They may also wish to speak to another member of staff who has recently been through the process and can act as a mentor and provide advice on completing the documentation, the event and post
event activity. Also new panel members may wish to receive a form of mentoring from an experienced panel member. In both instances QES should be contacted and they will make every effort to find a suitable member of staff to provide the relevant guidance and support required.

**Required documentation**

55. The following documents must be produced for the validation/review:

(i) submission document
(ii) sections from the programme handbook
(iii) module descriptors ([template available here](#)). All new modules must be presented using the module descriptor template. If a module already exists then it will need to be downloaded from the module catalogue and presented in the documentation along with the new modules. Programme teams should ensure that existing module descriptors contain all the information asked for on the template
(iv) programme specification ([template available here](#))
(v) letters of agreement from other parts of the University contributing to the programme (validation only)
(vi) information on the involvement of University of Surrey staff and any external/guest/associate lecturers/markers on the programme (see staffing information template)
(vii) collaborative agreements – Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding (validation only for new agreements)
(viii) confirmation of an external examiner appointment (validation only or if an external examiner is coming to the end of their appointment)
(ix) external examiners’ reports for the last three years (review only)
(x) the programme team’s response to all of the external examiners’ reports (review only)
(xi) annual programme review reports for the last three years (review only)

56. Templates for the required documentation can be downloaded [here](#). It is advisable that templates are always downloaded from the website and not stored locally to ensure the most recent template is used. If an incorrect template is used the documentation will be sent back requesting that the correct template is utilised.

57. All documentation should be submitted electronically, both for initial checking and Faculty approval and for circulation to the panel. For the latter stage programme team are expected to e-mail their documentation to gesadmin@surrey.ac.uk.

**Submission document**

58. The submission document provides information for the panel about the management of the proposal and is intended to supplement information contained in module descriptors, the programme specification and programme handbooks. Where information is required in both the programme handbook and the submission document, the emphasis of this information should be different. An example would be the personal tutoring system: the submission document should outline the strategy employed and how the system will be managed and the programme handbook should relate to what the student can expect from the tutorial system.

59. Within the submission document for periodic review there is a critical evaluation section. Further guidance on the evaluation part of the review process can be found within the submission document guidance template. Within the evaluation section of the submission document the programme team are expected to list any changes made to the programme since the last validation/review event and list any changes they wish to have the panel approve as part of the periodic review process. Only major changes, such as a programme name change, should be submitted to the
Code of practice for the design and approval of new programmes and periodic review

All other changes that are considered minor should be considered through the minor modification process, prior to the review where possible, and receive final approval at Faculty level. For further information on what is considered a major or minor change, see the Code of practice for programme and module modification.

Programme specification

60. One standard template is used across the University for all programme specifications (see the template here). The Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards can provide further support in the development of the programme specification. It is expected that each programme has its own programme specification, although related programmes for example such as the Bachelors/Integrated Masters should appear on the same specification.

61. The definitive versions of all programme specifications will be held by QES. They will be renewed annually and uploaded to webpages by QES. The programme specification will also be reviewed and subsequently approved through the periodic review, validation and modification process where appropriate.

62. Programme specifications can be used as a source of information for students (both current and prospective), employers, teaching teams, internal reviewers, external examiners and PSRBs. It is considered best practice to seek comments from potential employers, where appropriate, on the programme specification during the curriculum development/evaluation phase.

Module descriptors

63. One standard template is used across the University for all module descriptors at the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) levels 4, 5, 6 and 7. Initially the development of new modules should be carried out using the template available here.

64. All modules should be kept up-to-date and annually reviewed to ensure that the most current information is available to the public domain.

Taught unit descriptors

65. The taught unit descriptor should be used when programmes at FHEQ level 8 adopt non-credit bearing taught components, eg EngD and PsychD programmes. One standard template is used across the University in these instances, see the template available here for further information.

Staffing

66. Staff information, such as involvement in the programme being validated/reviewed, should be provided with the required documentation in the format shown in the staffing information template. This includes any external involvement, ie external/guest/associate lecturers/markers.

Programme handbook

67. As part of the validation/review process the panel must consider and subsequently approve information that is to be presented to students in relation to the programme(s). A standard University template for programme handbooks is available from the Student Services and Administration Directorate (SSAD) which is updated annually. All programme handbooks are updated once the template for the upcoming academic year is released; this is usually at the start of the summer prior to the new academic year. As part of the process the programme team must complete and submit the following sections of the programme handbook for the upcoming academic year:
• programme information (including all listed sub sections)
• the Professional Training Year (if applicable)
• professional and statutory body requirements (if applicable)
• external examiners
• dissertation/project

Following the completion of the validation/review process the sections that have been considered by the panel must be incorporated into the programme handbook once the new template becomes available. All references to the University’s Regulations and Codes of practice must not repeat the content of those documents but have links only to the relevant document.

Consultation with relevant parties

68. For the validation process consideration, where appropriate, by relevant parties should normally take place early in the planning and development phase of the proposal. The Programme Leader needs to ensure that there is sufficient input to ensure the viability and currency of the proposal.

69. Comments should also be sought for the review process, where appropriate, from relevant parties in the early stages of the review of the programme(s). The Programme Leaders need to ensure that there are appropriate comments on the evaluation of the exiting programme(s) and on any curriculum developments.

70. If any consultation has taken place this must be confirmed in the submission document (benchmarking and consultation section) detailing which external source has been consulted and how they have contributed to the design and/or development of the programme. Examples of possible parties who may be consulted are as follows.

(i) academic staff within the University from a different subject area
(ii) staff within the University with professional services expertise, such as education developers, Library staff, Additional Learning Support
(iii) staff from other higher education providers
(iv) contacts in industry
(v) contacts in professional practice
(vi) contacts in research
(vii) Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
(viii) external examiners
(ix) employers
(x) organisations within the community
(xi) collaborative links
(xii) former students and/or students studying in cognate areas
(xiii) current students

Personal development planning

71. A section on Personal Development Planning (PDP) will need to be completed within the submission document. A form of PDP should be embedded within each programme which allows students to develop their transferrable skills. Examples of how this is achieved include: having individual modules dedicated to PDP, a theme that runs through the programme and is evidenced through various assessments and module learning outcomes or voluntary sessions/workshops that do not form part of the programme. It is the responsibility of the Programme and Module Leader to ensure that PDP has been embedded within their programmes/modules and that the extent of the PDP is sufficient. PDP arrangements will be reviewed through the validation and periodic review processes.
Public information

72. As part of the validation/review process, comments will be requested on the information available to the public in relation to the programme. The public information section within the submission document asks the author to comment on areas such as the website, prospectus and UNISTATS detailing how they have ensured the accuracy of the information presented. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to ensure that the information is fit for purpose and trustworthy/accurate.

73. UNISTATS data is a Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) requirement; each undergraduate programme must have a UNISTATS record. Further information on this can be found here.

74. Additional cost information must also be published for programmes and modules to ensure that students are aware of any additional costs associated with the programmes they are applying for. As part of the validation and review process programme teams are expected to comment on the accuracy of the information within the submission document and ensure that where necessary the information is amended if it is not up to date. This information should be reviewed on an annual basis.

Submission of the documentation

75. Once the submission document for the validation/review process has been written the programme team will need to submit the documentation to QES and the ADLT. It is their responsibility to check that the documentation is fit for purpose and meets the standards and requirements for a submission document, and that all documents are included. Once the ADLT is satisfied they will need to complete the Faculty approval checklist. Once the form has been signed by the ADLT the programme team are required to send an electronic copy along with the signed Faculty approval checklist to the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards at gesadmin@surrey.ac.uk. The Academic Quality Officer will check through the documentation electronically at the same time as the ADLT and mark up any changes or amendments and send it back to the author for revision. A list of the changes will be kept to ensure that changes have been made when the amended documentation is submitted for the panel’s consideration.

76. The Faculty Student Service Managers (or their nominee) should be consulted, where applicable, as part of the Faculty approval process.

77. It is advisable that the documentation is submitted to the Academic Quality Officer, the ADLT and SSAD staff at least one month before the event, the date of which will have been set in the planning meeting. This will ensure enough time for changes to be made, if needed.

78. Once approved at Faculty level and initially checked by the AQO the documentation will need to be submitted to the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards at least two weeks prior to the event, to allow enough time for the documentation to be circulated to the panel to read in preparation for the event.

The validation/review process and the event

79. The Quality and Standards Sub-committee (QSS), appointed by the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC), has overall responsibility for the validation of all new programmes of study and of periodic review of existing programmes of study.
**Composition of a validation/review panel**

80. A validation/review panel is a group of suitably qualified and experienced people established on behalf of QSS to consider a programme of study that has either been approved through the pre-validation approval process or is due for re-approval through the periodic review process. Their main aim is to ensure that the programme(s) of study is of an academic (and professional) standard appropriate to the level and nature of the proposed award(s) to which it will lead, is compliant with the University’s Regulations, Codes of practice and policies and is supported by adequate and appropriate human and physical resources.

81. Further information on what the panel review and consider, as well as a role descriptor for each individual panel member, is given in Appendix 1. All internal panel members will need to have received the relevant training before they can act in the relevant roles. Further information on training events can be sought from QES at gesadmin@surrey.ac.uk.

82. Panels are appointed by QES once the planning meeting has taken place and the dates have been set. A panel should comprise:

- a Chair
- one panel member from another Faculty or School/Department
- one external assessor (a second external can be nominated depending on the size, complexity or level of expertise required for the proposal)
- one student representative from another Faculty or School/Department
- a staff member of the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards who will act as the validation and review coordinator

83. All events should have a full panel, as listed above. However in exceptional circumstances, such as illness or unforeseen circumstances, the event may go ahead without the internal panel member or student representative. Comments from panel members will be sought if they are unable to attend the event. In some instances another member of QES may be asked to sit on the panel to ensure that an acceptable number of people are able to review and advise on the documentation and the programme.

84. It is the usual expectation that the Faculty representation (programme team) at the event will be: Programme Leaders, Heads of Schools/Departments, and any other key staff involved in the teaching and development of the programme(s). It is not a necessity that the ADLTs and SSAD staff attend, this is left to the discretion of the Faculty. It is advisable that the staff that attend are well-placed to answer any questions to the panel may have at the programme team meeting during the event. The Programme Leader must ensure that any information from this meeting is disseminated to the relevant members of staff who were unable to attend.

85. The Chair, who is usually a member of QSS, must not have been involved in the development of the programme being validated/reviewed, and must not belong to the Faculty offering the programme.

86. The student representative is appointed through the University of Surrey Students’ Union (USSU) and must be from a different Faculty or School/Department to that of the programme(s) under consideration. The student representative will normally have experience of being a student representative for a programme, a postgraduate research student or hold a post within the USSU. The principal role of the student reviewer is to bring to the process the student perspective. Appendix 1 gives further information on the role of the panel and the student representative.
87. There is normally only one external assessor to provide subject expertise on the panel. However another external assessor may be nominated if there is a range of programmes being validated/reviewed or, in some cases where the Faculty wish to have a representative from industry or practice as well as an academic. The academic external(s) should have experience of a similar programme at another comparable HEI where possible, usually a Senior Lecturer level or above and ideally with programme management experience.

88. Where the programme is being validated or reviewed with a PSRB, the external assessor will usually be a representative from the PSRB. In such circumstances, panel composition will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

89. The external assessor(s) may not be a current or previous external examiner nor have had any involvement in the delivery or development of the programme(s) being reviewed for the past five years. They must also not currently be serving as a collaborative co-supervisor for any postgraduate research students. Emeritus academics will be considered on a case-by-case basis. External assessors are expected to provide expert and objective judgements on the proposal advising the panel, where appropriate, on the curriculum, benchmarking, learning outcomes, assessment and the comparability of standards with other HEIs.

90. The validation and review coordinator will be an AQO from the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards and be a full member of the panel in the role of validation and review co-ordinator. The validation and review coordinator will liaise with the Chair to ensure the smooth running of the day and draft the agenda for discussion during the day and provide advice and support to the panel on the quality criteria to be addressed, the University’s Regulations and Codes of practice. They also have the responsibility of producing the feedback letter and validation/review report and monitoring and chasing the completion of the conditions and response to the recommendations, if applicable.

91. All panel members must have not have had any involvement in the programme(s) under consideration. Each appointment will be completed on a case-by-case basis bearing in mind cross Faculty/School/Department programmes and shared modules.

**Briefing pack for the validation/review panel**

92. The Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards will prepare a briefing pack of information to be sent with the documentation to the panel. The briefing pack and the documentation will be sent to the panel members electronically. The Programme Leader will receive the agenda for the day and details of the panel membership.

93. Prior to the event all panel members will be sent a pre-event comments form, a copy of which will be included within the briefing pack. The form is to be completed once the documentation has been reviewed and should be submitted to QES by no later than two days prior to the event. This form will help the validation and review coordinator identify any issues in advance of the event and can also be used as a guidance to University expectations in relation to areas that will be considered through the validation/review process.

**The responsibilities of the programme team**

94. The programme team have responsibilities before and during the event, which can be summarised as follows:

- maintain contact with the ADLT, SSAD staff and QES
- nominate the external assessor
• write the documentation in accordance with this Code of practice and ensure the relevant deadlines are met
• ensure that appropriate consultation and input has been secured from relevant parties
• engage with the process and contribute to discussion
• provide a response to any conditions and recommendations set by the panel following the event along with the revised documentation

95. The external assessor nomination process will be discussed in the first instance during the planning meeting, where a timeline and dates for the main event will be set. Following the meeting the validation and review coordinator will send the external assessor nomination template to the programme team. The validation timeline will include a deadline for the submission of the nomination form to QES. Once this form is submitted it will be forwarded to the Quality and Standards Subcommittee for consideration.

96. All nominees, with the submission of the nomination form, need to provide a photocopy of their passport or other accepted documentation (photo page and relevant visa pages) to prove that they are eligible to work within the UK. They will also be required to bring their passport with them to the validation event to be presented to the validation and review coordinator. For further information about this and a list of other documentation that is acceptable to prove eligibility to work within the UK see the following link.

97. Once the nomination is approved the validation and review coordinator will inform the programme team and send an official appointment letter to the external assessor. The letter will also inform the external assessor that they will need to present their passport to the validation and review coordinator for checking at the event.

Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) involvement

98. Every effort will be made to hold a joint validation event with the PSRB. Usually accreditation is sought following the validation of the programme and then future periodic review events are held jointly with the professional body. Programmes must be approved by the University through the relevant quality assurance process, before accreditation is sought from an external body. Where a joint accreditation event is held with the University, it is seen as good practice to arrange a planning meeting between the programme team, PSRB and QES as soon as possible, in some cases this may be a year in advance of the joint accreditation event.

99. PSRB input into a periodic review event will have been discussed and identified at the planning meeting. In the case of a joint review and accreditation event, the attendance of members of the PSRB may satisfy the need to have an external assessor. Sometimes a PSRB or the University may wish to maintain separate review/accreditation procedures. In these instances, where possible, the accreditation event should be arranged so that the outcome can inform the University’s periodic review processes.

100. Where accreditation is sought post validation approval/renewed outside of the periodic review process, the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards will need to be kept informed. This includes: the reasons for seeking accreditation (for new accreditations), the timescales for approval in relation to the accrediting bodies processes, the outcomes of the event and, if approved, how long the approval period is for. A copy of the approved accreditation report must be sent to gesadmin@surrey.ac.uk for filing within five working days of receipt.
Outcomes of the validation/review event

101. At the end of the event, the panel will reach one of the following decisions:
   - (re-)approval with/without conditions and/or recommendations for the standard length of approval (normally five years)
   - (re-)approval for a fixed period not normally exceeding five years with/without conditions and/or recommendations
   - rejection, with detailed reasons

102. The event will conclude with verbal feedback to the programme team. The outcomes will be for a specified period of approval (normally for maximum of five years, though this may differ in exceptional circumstances) with any attached commendations, conditions and recommendations where necessary. Dates for the receipt of responses to conditions and recommendations will be agreed at the event.

103. The panel may identify commendations where examples of good practice are evident. Any commendations will be detailed within the feedback letter and event report.

104. Conditions are those matters which the panel requires to be addressed or undertaken to its satisfaction within a specified timescale and, without which, approval should not be granted.

105. Recommendations are matters which, in the judgement of the panel, should be reviewed for the overall benefit of the proposal but in which the panel is generally open to reasoned argument.

106. If a proposal is rejected, detailed reasons must be given in the report. Any conditions arising from the event will be detailed points of action that must be fulfilled satisfactorily by a given agreed date. The panel and the Chair will agree how responses to conditions will be considered, whether by the whole panel or by approval of the Chair only.

107. Panel members and Programme Leaders will be asked to complete a feedback form after the event, in order to identify any issues and any areas of best practice from the process. The feedback forms can be found here.

Virtual validation/review process

108. Where a validation and/or review is assessed to be low risk it may be possible to undertake a virtual validation process. The decision to undertake this process in lieu of the standard process will be made by the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards. Examples of when the virtual process may be used include:
   - where the programme is based on curriculum requirements that are nationally prescribed
   - where a positive outcome has been achieved through a PSRB re-accreditation process that has been carried out independent of the University’s periodic review process
   - where a single programme is subject to validation/review and no major concerns have been identified through the various University quality assurance processes. For review there would need to have been no major concerns raised since the previous review or clear evidence that any concerns have been resolved

109. The process will include a reduced panel consisting of a Chair, external assessor, validation/review co-ordinator, and, if availability permits, a student panel member. Instead of physical meetings the process will be carried out via comment forms and questionnaires. The Chair and the validation/review co-ordinator will be expected to meet to collate responses and if necessary call a meeting with the programme team
Code of practice for the design and approval of new programmes and periodic review

110. All templates for the virtual process are the same as those utilised for the standard process. The only additional template is the student questionnaire which will be produced for each event based on the queries raised by the panel.

**Post event activity**

**Feedback letter**

111. Shortly after the event the validation and review coordinator will produce a letter, which is a summary of the commendations, conditions, recommendations, approval period and the deadline for providing a response. Once the validation and review coordinator has completed the feedback letter it is forwarded to the Chair for approval and is then circulated to the rest of the panel and the programme team. The feedback letter allows the programme team to have a summary of the action points directly following the event enabling them to start work on the completion of any conditions.

**Event report**

112. The validation and review coordinator will also write the *event report* shortly after the event. The report will summarise the main points covered during the event and document the conclusions of the event. The draft report will be circulated to all members of the panel for amendment/ratification. A copy will then be sent to the Programme Leader for their records and to confirm matters of accuracy, if necessary. The event report should normally be sent to the programme team within three working weeks of the event.

113. In consultation with the Chair, a final version of the report will be drawn up and submitted to QSS. The panel’s report will not be deemed final until approved by QSS.

114. Once the event report is approved at QSS the Sub-committee reports the approval of the validation and review report to ULTC and subsequently Senate.

**Responses to conditions and recommendations**

115. All responses to conditions and recommendations should be returned to the validation and review coordinator electronically using the form at the end of the *event report* to show where/how the conditions have been met and the recommendations considered. Recommendations from the event must be taken in to consideration when producing subsequent annual programme review reports. The documentation should be amended, where appropriate, and re-submitted to support the programme team’s response and evidence any changes. Programme teams should ensure that they clearly highlight any changes made within the documents before it is submitted for the panel’s consideration.

116. The validation and review coordinator will ensure that the conditions are approved through the process agreed by the panel. This will usually entail the electronic circulation of the conditions to the panel for reviewing. If further action is identified, this will be relayed to the Programme Leader, with a new timescale for the production of the further information. If an extension to the deadline for the submission of the conditions is needed, the Programme Leader should contact the validation and review coordinator in the first instance.

117. There is a process in place to manage instances where responses to conditions are not received by the deadline or a request for an extension is not received, see paragraphs 16 and 17 above for further information. Failure to comply with the
conditions means that the programme is not in approval and cannot be offered. No enrolments are allowed.

Response to recommendations
118. Recommendations are not a requirement, but they are issues that may necessitate action by the programme team. Programme Leaders are requested to respond to the recommendations using the form at the end of the event report template and report on them in their annual programme review report. The programme team’s response should show consideration of the recommendations and whether or not any action has or will be taken to incorporate them into the programme. In some instances documentary evidence may be requested, such as minutes of the Board of Studies, where these recommendations have been discussed.

Production of definitive documentation
119. One of the outcomes of all validation/review events will be the submission of a set of definitive documentation. The complete set of definitive documentation will be submitted electronically to the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards once notification from the validation and review coordinator has been received that the conditions have been met.

120. The definitive documentation will need to include all of the original documentation submitted for the event, amended where appropriate in relation to the conditions and any relevant recommendations following the event. The documents submitted should always include the following as a minimum:

- submission document
- programme specific sections of the programme handbook
- programme specification
- module descriptors
- all appendices
- other relevant documentation e.g. additional evidence submitted in response to conditions

121. The electronic files will be stored on the QES SharePoint site. This drive will hold all formal documentation of each programme across the University and all internal members of staff shall have read access to the files.

Event completion form
122. Following submission of the definitive documents an event completion form will be signed by the Director of Quality Enhancement and Standards and a copy will be sent to the programme team, ADLT and relevant SSAD staff.

123. The following teams will also be informed of the outcomes of the process through the Quality Systems Group e-mailing list by the validation and review coordinator, this ensures that they are notified and can take action where applicable: Student Services and Administration, Marketing, Strategic Planning, Recruitment and Admissions, the Secretariat and Finance. Further information on the above teams’ involvement with the validation process can be found here.

Overview report
124. At the end of each academic year an overview report will be produced which looks at all of the validation and review events that have taken place using the event reports, feedback forms, informal feedback and completed conditions and recommendation templates.
125. This report will be considered at QSS and ULTC and an action plan will be generated if deemed necessary and managed by the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards.

Appeals

126. Appeals against any irregularities of process, the presentation of facts within the report or conduct of the validation/review, in very exceptional circumstances, should be made in writing to the Quality and Standards Subcommittee. The appeal will be considered by those who have not been involved in the validation/review process. Appeals may not be made against a panel's judgement.
Appendix 1 – 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;

(xxii) assure itself that quality assurance mechanisms are appropriate and that they conform with University, and if relevant PSRB, requirements;

(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 programmes 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.
Appendix 2 – Pre-validation process flow chart for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes

Pre-validation process flow chart for UG and PGT programmes

1. Heads of School / Department (HoS/D) to send Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) (ADLT) and the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards early notification on new programme proposals.

2. Combined Faculty Management / Faculty Strategy (FMSS) meets to consider new programme proposals and determines whether they progress.

3. Marketing research undertaken by Faculty Marketing Manager (FMN) Approved to proceed?

4. FMSS meets to consider market research and determine whether proposal should go forward to the pre-validation approval process.

5. Programme proposer to complete the pre-validation pro-forma Approved to proceed?

6. Programme proposer to meet with the Business Finance Manager (BFM) to complete the business case

7. Programme proposer to meet with the Faculty Engagement Librarian and complete the library checklist

8. Programme proposer to submit the completed pre-validation pro-forma, business case, marketing and library checklist to the ADLT and Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee for approval (the ADLT / Chair of RTC is expected to only approve following consultation with a member of the Student Services and Administration Directorate and (HRes))

9. Forms also to be submitted to the BFM and FMN for approval.

10. Forms to be submitted to Executive Dean for approval

11. Forms to be submitted to the Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards and to a sub-group of the Fees, Bursaries and Scholarship Group for consideration and approval

12. Academic Quality Officer to inform the programme proposer of final sign off and arrange a planning meeting to discuss the next stage of the process (validation)

13. Academic Quality Officer to inform the programme proposer of the outcome.

14. Proposed to be informed of the reasons for not approving the proposal. Guidance on how the proposed may be amended should be provided and the proposal resubmitted for consideration (if appropriate).

End
Appendix 3 – Pre-validation process flow chart for postgraduate research programmes

Start

Heads of School / Department (HoS/D) to send Faculty
    PCG Director and the Directorate of Quality
    Enhancement and Standards early notification on new
    programme proposals

Combined Faculty Management / Faculty Strategy
    (FMSC) meets to consider new programme proposals
    and determines whether they progress

Marketing research undertaken by Faculty Marketing
    Manager (FMW)

FMSC meets to consider market research and
    determine whether proposal should go forward to the
    pre-validation approval process

Programme proposer to complete the pre-validation
    pro-forms

Programme proposer to meet with the Business Finance
    Manager (BFM) to complete the business case

Programme proposer to meet with the Faculty
    Engagement Librarian and complete the library checklist

Programme proposer to submit the completed pre-
    validation pro-forms, business case, marketing and
    library checklist to the Associate Dean (Doctoral College)
    (ADDQ) and Faculty Research Degrees Committee for
    approval (the ADDQ Chair of FRDC is expected to only
    approve following consultation with a member of the
    Student Services and Administration Directorate and
    HoS/D)

Forms also to be submitted to the BFM and FMW for
    approval

Forms to be submitted to Executive Dean for approval

Forms to be submitted to the Directorate of Quality
    Enhancement and Standards and to a subgroup of the
    Fees, Bursaries and Scholarship Group for consideration
    and approval

Academic Quality Officer to inform the programme
    proposer of final sign off and arrange a planning
    meeting to discuss the next stage of the process
    (validation)

Approved to proceed?

Yes

FMSC to inform the
    programme proposer of
    the outcome

No

Approved to proceed?

Yes

Proposer to be informed of
    the reasons for not
    approving the proposal.
    Guidance on how the
    proposal can be
    amended should be
    provided and the
    proposal resubmitted for
    consideration if appropriate.

No

Approved?

Yes

Academic Quality Officer
    to inform the
    programme proposer of the
    outcome

No

End
Appendix 4 – Validation and review process flow chart

Start

Programme team to write/amend the validation/review documentation

If not approved/further work is needed

Two weeks prior to the event: Programme team to submit the signed Faculty approval checklist, 3 hard copies and an electronic copy of the documentation to GES

Two weeks prior to the event: GES to circulate the documentation to the panel

The panel meet for the validation/review event to discuss the programmes and decide on an outcome

Yes

Approved?

No

Programme team to write a response to any conditions and/recommendations set by the panel and amend the documentation, where necessary

Programme team to submit their response to the panel’s conditions and/ or recommendations along with a full set of amended documentation to the ADO

Programme team to submit their response to the panel’s conditions and/ or recommendations along with a full set of amended documentation to ADO

Yes

Condition met?

Yes

ADO to complete an event completion form for circulation to the programme team confirming the Panel’s approval

End

If not already done so through the submission of their response to the panel, the programme team submit a definitive copy of the validation/review documentation

Two weeks to the event: ADO to circulate the event completion form for circulation to the programme team confirming the Panel’s approval

ADO to circulate the event completion form for circulation to the programme team confirming the Panel’s approval

Approval for a fixed period with/without conditions and/ or recommendations

Approval for 5 years (the maximum length of approval) with/without conditions and/ or recommendations

Rejection (with detailed reasons)

Approval

Programme to circulate the planning meeting notes, confirming any discussions and the timeline for the event

Programme to circulate the validation/ review documentation

The planning meeting will discuss the process, documentation requirements and set a timeline for the validation/review event

Before the start of the upcoming academic year: the Academic Quality Officer (ADO) will contact relevant programme teams to organize a planning meeting in relation to upcoming validations/ reviews

ADO to type-up the feedback letter detailing the outcomes of the event, which is checked by the Chair and then circulated to the programme team

ADO to type-up the feedback letter detailing the outcomes of the event, which is checked by the Chair and then circulated to the programme team

Code of practice for the design and approval of new programmes and periodic review
Appendix 5 – Virtual validation/review process flow chart

**Virtual Validation/Review Panel Process**

1. **One month prior to event deadline:**
   - Programme team submit the documentation to ADLT, FSSM and QES for initial checking.

2. **Two weeks prior to event deadline:**
   - AOO, ADLT and FSSM to check the documentation and send the programme team any amendments.

3. **Two weeks prior to event deadline:**
   - ADLT and FSSM to sign the faculty approval checklist if they feel that all changes, if any, have been made and the documentation is fit for purpose.

4. **Start**

5. **Panel members review documentation, complete the comments form and return responses by the agreed deadline.**

6. **Following the event deadline:**
   - Chair and AOO meet to discuss the panel’s responses and compile queries for the programme team.

   **REVIEW ONLY:** Chair and AOO prepare a student questionnaire based on the collated comments.

7. **A list of queries is sent to the programme team for comment.**

   **REVIEW ONLY:** Student questionnaire circulated to nominated students (a meeting may be arranged with the programme team, chair and AOO if necessary).

8. **Programme team responses are circulated to panel for review.**

   The panel are given one week to respond with any further comments, recommendations, conditions and/or recommendations.

   **REVIEW ONLY:** Student responses are also circulated to the panel for consideration.

9. **The chair and AOO meet to review and summarise the responses. A list of potential commendations, conditions and recommendations is drawn up.**

10. **AOO to type up the feedback letter detailing the outcomes of the event, which is checked by the chair and circulated to the panel for approval, then circulated to the programme team.**

11. **AOO to collate all comments and write an event report, circulate to the panel for approval and then circulate to the programme team.**

12. **When the the panel are in agreement that the conditions have been met the AOO completes an event completion form and sends it to the programme team confirming the panel’s approval.**

**Key**

- **AOO:** Academic Quality Officer
- **ADLT:** Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching)
- **QES:** Quality Enhancement and Standards Directorate
- **FSSM:** Faculty Student Services Manager

**End**