

Appendix 8a: Terms of reference and membership of the Programme Approval Panel

Programme Approval Panel (Route B)

Terms of Reference:

Programme proposals will be considered by a Programme Approval Panel, which has the following responsibilities:

1. To ensure that the proposed/modified programme will fulfil the University's expectations of academic standards and quality;
2. To ensure that the provision meets the University's programme approval criteria (Appendix 5);
3. To ensure that students will have the opportunity to develop and achieve the agreed learning outcomes of the programme;
4. To ensure that students will have the opportunity to engage as partners in the quality assurance of their education;
5. To identify and commend good practice in programme design and delivery;
6. To identify and commend good practice in the management of academic standards and quality of the students' educational experience;
7. To ensure that the provision meets the requirements of any relevant PSRB and/or external awarding body/organisation;

To advise the University Senate on whether or not to approve the proposal and whether there should be any conditions (mandatory) or recommendations (discretionary) associated with that approval.

Membership

A Programme Approval Panel will normally comprise the following members, as a minimum.

1. Chair
 2. Internal Panel Member
 3. Student Panel Member
 4. External Advisor
 5. SEO Officer
1. The Chair will be a member of University staff, external to the proposing School/Division, with considerable experience of and training in the Programme Approval process. The Chair's main responsibilities are as follows:
 - To attend the Planning Meeting and agree the schedule of meetings for the event;
 - To understand the broad nature of the proposal;
 - To scrutinise the documents and identify lines of inquiry and any requirements for additional evidence;
 - To submit a written indication of the lines of inquiry and requests for evidence to the

SEO Officer by a date agreed at the Planning Meeting;

- In advance of the event, with the SEO Officer, to collate lines of inquiry and any requirements for additional evidence from the Panel in a timely manner;
 - To chair the Programme Approval event in a manner that enables the Panel to explore lines of inquiry and test the proposal against the programme approval criteria, (Appendix 5);
 - To help ensure that the Programme Approval process and event is conducted in a respectful and collegiate manner that is transparent and fair;
 - To work in an open and transparent way that supports the Programme Proposer, AC (SELE), and programme team in meeting the demands and requirements of the process;
 - At the conclusion of the Programme Approval event to summarise the outcomes and provide a verbal report to the Programme Proposer and AC (SELE);
 - To enable the outcomes of the Programme Approval event to be recorded formally by the SEO Officer;
 - To contribute to the production of the Summary Report and Report of the Programme Approval event that is written by the SEO Officer;
 - To review evidence that a proposal has met any conditions of approval and will address recommendations for action;
 - To sign off the final approved proposal and submit the Programme Approval and Sign-Off Form to the SEO Officer by an agreed date.
2. An Internal Panel Member will be a member of University staff, external to the proposing School/Division, with experience of and/or training in the Programme Approval process. The role of the Internal Panel member is as follows:
- To understand the broad nature of the proposal;
 - In advance of the event, to scrutinise the documents and identify lines of inquiry and any requirements for additional evidence;
 - To submit a written indication of the lines of inquiry and requests for evidence to the SEO Officer by a date agreed at the Planning Meeting;
 - To help ensure that the Programme Approval event is conducted in a respectful and collegiate manner that is transparent and fair;
 - To work with others constructively and as an effective member of the Panel;
 - With others, to explore the lines of inquiry and test the programme proposal against University requirements, the Quality Code and any relevant external requirements;
 - To work in an open and transparent way that supports the Programme Proposer and programme team in meeting the demands and requirements of the process;
 - To support the Chair in ensuring that the outcomes of the Programme Approval event are summarised effectively in a verbal report to the Proposer and in the Report;
 - As required, to assist with the production of the Report and/or the review of evidence that a proposal has met conditions of approval and will address recommendations for action.
3. A Student Panel Member will be a current or recent student of the University, external to the proposing School/Division and is a trained member of the Panel. The Student Panel Member is nominated by the Students' Union as a full member of the Panel. The role of student Panel members is as follows:
- To understand the broad nature of the proposal;

- In advance of the event, to scrutinise the documents and identify lines of inquiry and any requirements for additional evidence;
 - To submit a written indication of the lines of inquiry and requests for evidence to the SEO Officer by a date agreed at the Planning Meeting;
 - To help ensure that the Programme Approval event is conducted in a respectful and collegiate manner that is transparent and fair;
 - To work with others constructively and as an effective member of the Panel;
 - With others, to explore lines of inquiry and test the proposal against the programme approval criteria, (Appendix 5);
 - To work in an open and transparent way that supports the Programme Proposer and programme team in meeting the demands and requirements of the process;
 - To support the Chair in ensuring that the outcomes of the Programme Approval event are summarised effectively in a verbal report to the Proposer and in the Report;
 - As required, to assist with the production of the Report and/or the review of evidence that a proposal has met conditions of approval and will address recommendations for action.
4. An External Advisor, who will be a subject specialist nominated by the Programme Proposer and approved at the Planning Meeting in line with University criteria. The role of External Advisor is as follows:
- From the perspective of her/his subject specialist knowledge, industrial role and/or professional expertise to advise the Panel on the suitability of the proposal;
 - To understand the broad nature of the proposal;
 - In advance of the event, to scrutinise the documents and identify lines of inquiry and any requirements for additional evidence;
 - To submit a written indication of the lines of inquiry and requests for evidence to the SEO Officer by a date agreed at the Planning Meeting;
 - To help ensure that the Programme Approval event is conducted in a respectful and collegiate manner that is transparent and fair;
 - To work with others constructively and as an effective member of the Programme Approval/Standing Approval/ISR Panel;
 - With others, to explore lines of inquiry and test the proposal against the programme approval criteria, (Appendix 5);
 - To work in an open and transparent way that supports the Programme Proposer and programme team in meeting the demands and requirements of the process;
 - To support the Chair in ensuring that the outcomes of the Programme Approval event are summarised effectively in a verbal report to the Proposer and in the Report;
 - As required, to assist with the production of the Report and/or the review of evidence that a proposal has met conditions of approval and will address recommendations for action.
5. The SEO Officer, who will normally be a members of the Standards and Enhancement Office, or, exceptionally, a member of Academic Support Services. The role of the SEO Officer is as follows:
- To manage the operation and recording of the Programme Approval event effectively;
 - To organise and attend the Planning Meeting and note the meeting formally;

- To recruit the Panel and provide them with guidance about their role in the Programme Approval process and with access to the Proposal Development Record (PDR) in Moodle containing the proposal documents;
- To make all necessary housekeeping arrangements for the Programme Approval event, including the access information for virtual meetings; any hotel and travel arrangements, as required, for members of the Panel;
- To help ensure that the External Advisor receives the claim form for expenses and payment of the agreed fee and to process the completed form;
- To understand the broad nature of the proposal and to have reviewed the documents;
- In advance of the event, by a date agreed at the Planning Meeting, with the Chair, to collate lines of inquiry and the draft themes for discussion;
- In advance of the event, by a date agreed at the Planning Meeting, to send the collated list of lines of inquiry and any requests for further evidence to the Programme Proposer and AC (SELE);
- To support the Panel to explore lines of inquiry and test the proposal against the programme approval criteria, (Appendix 5);
- To ensure that the event is conducted in a respectful and collegiate manner that is transparent and fair;
- To work in an open and transparent way that supports the Programme Proposer, AC (SELE) and programme team in meeting the demands and requirements of the process;
- To ensure that the main points of discussion and the outcomes of each meeting and the overall event are recorded formally;
- At the conclusion of the event to provide a written summary of the outcomes and support the Chair to provide a verbal report to the Programme Proposer(s);
- To write the Summary Report of the Programme Approval event in a timely manner (normally, within five working days) in the agreed format;
- To use the formal written record of the event to inform the preparation of the Report;
- To write the Report of the Programme Approval event in a timely manner (normally, within 20 working days) in the agreed format;
- To monitor the timeliness of the response by the Programme Proposer to any conditions of approval and recommendations for action, issuing reminders as necessary;
- To alert the Standards and Enhancement Senior Officer and Head of Quality Systems in cases of late submission (any more than 5 working days) of responses to conditions of approval and recommendations for action;
- To receive evidence that a proposal has met any conditions of approval and/or recommendations for action. To make this evidence available to the Chair and/or other members of the Panel, as required;
- To confirm that the Chair signs off the final approved proposal and submits the Programme Approval and Sign-Off Form to the SEO Officer by the required date;
- To maintain a full electronic record of the Programme Approval process from start to finish in the agreed manner within SEO;
- To submit the Report of the event to Education Committee in a timely manner (i.e. the

next meeting after the event);

- To submit the Summary Report of the event to Senate in a timely manner and once all relevant requirements have been met.

The exact composition of the Panel is determined at the Planning Meeting. The number of internal and external Panel members will normally be increased for large and/or diverse provision and/or where collaborative partnerships or external awards are involved.

In the case of a proposal comprising off campus provision, the Panel members and especially the External Advisor shall have relevant experience of the approval of collaborative provision. For proposals that involve a partner outside the UK the External Advisor shall normally have experience of approval of international collaborative provision.

Members appointed on behalf of a PSRB, and/or an external awarding body / organisation, as relevant, can be included in the Panel. Their responsibilities will normally be similar to those outlined above, but the precise remit of such members is normally determined by the relevant PSRB/external awarding body/organisation. The arrangements for integration of external approval arrangements with the University approval processes will be determined at the Planning Meeting.

Training and mentoring for members of a Panel

Training is provided to ensure that all members of a Panel are informed about the University's current process for Programme Approval. All Panel members, including Chairs, should successfully complete the University's training for members of Programme Approval Panels. SEO Officers are required to undertake training that is provided within the Standards and Enhancement Office.

Mentoring arrangements are provided for novice Chairs and members of Programme Approval Panels, information about which is available on request from SEO (see Key contacts, see Appendix 2).

Panel decisions and reporting

The Programme Approval Panel is required to make a recommendation to the University Senate on approval/ non-approval of the proposal.

The decisions of the Programme Approval Panel will be as follows:

1. Approval for a 5-year period or until the next Periodic Review and Re-approval;
2. Approval for a designated period of time (less than 5-years);
3. Non approval with detailed reasons.

Additionally, the Panel may specify mandatory Conditions of approval and/or discretionary Recommendations for action, as follows.

Conditions of approval

- Definition: A condition of approval is a mandatory requirement that must be completed prior to the approval and sign-off of the proposed programme.
- The current approach to Programme Design and Development (cf. Chart1) is intended to

obviate the need for academic conditions of approval.

- If the proposal has followed the process for preparation of programme documents, there should not be any academic or documentary conditions of approval.
- Where the Panel considers that a small number of conditions of approval are required, exceptionally, before a programme is fit for purpose, these should be specified.
- Where the Panel considers that more than five conditions of approval are required before a programme is fit for purpose, the decision of the Panel should be non-approval. In such cases, guidance is available from the Academic Registrar and members of SEO (see Appendix 2).

Recommendations for action

- Definition: A recommendation for action is a discretionary requirement for consideration and action, normally, within the first year of programme operation.
- The maximum number of recommendations for action is normally no more than three.
- Any recommendation should describe action that will enhance the fitness for purpose of the programme.
- Prior to the approval and sign-off of the proposed programme, the Programme Proposer may be required to provide a written indication of the ways in which any recommendation(s) will be addressed.
- Any recommendation should be the subject of monitoring and evaluation by the programme leader, AC (SELE) and programme team during the first year of operation of the programme.

A report of progress on Recommendations to be included in the Programme Plan that is completed for annual monitoring of