

## **01.6A**

# **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR STANDING PANEL CHAIRS, STANDING PANEL MEMBERS and ADDITIONAL PANEL MEMBERS, PROGRAMME TEAMS and SERVICING OFFICERS:**

## **VALIDATION & REVIEW STANDING PANEL MEETINGS**

## CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

### **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR STANDING PANEL CHAIRS, STANDING PANEL MEMBERS and ADDITIONAL PANEL MEMBERS, PROGRAMME TEAMS and SERVICING OFFICERS: VALIDATION & REVIEW**

This series of guidance notes covers:

- Role of Standing Panel Chair (pre-, mid- and post Standing Panel meetings);
- Role of Standing Panel Members (pre-, mid- and post- Standing Panel meetings);
- Role of Programme Team Members (pre-, mid- and post- Standing Panel meetings);
- Students on programmes: Involvement in Review Standing Panel meetings;
- Reports of Standing Panel meetings.

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with, as appropriate, Section 03.1 Validation of New Programmes (Volume 2) and Section 06.2 Periodic and Elective Review of Programmes (Volume 2).

There is also further guidance in Volume 2, Section 01: Quality Assurance (Policy, Guidelines and Templates) that covers applications to the Portfolio Development Committee/Portfolio Enabling Group, Programme Specifications, Module Descriptors, DD Submission Checklist, and Contingencies for Events at Risk Through Unforeseen Circumstances.

#### **Guidance Note: Chairing of Panels**

##### **Introduction**

The Chair is critical to the effectiveness of Standing Panel operation. It is the Chair's responsibility to create an atmosphere in which critical professional discussion can take place, where opinions can be freely and courteously exchanged and in which justice and fair play prevail. Chairs of Standing Panels will be senior members of the University who are nominated by Schools and approved by AQSC.

As the custodian of professionalism and justice, the Chair's attitude, preparation and control are critical. The Chair will need to:

1. read thoroughly and demonstrate an understanding of the documentation; in particular, the Chair will be familiar with the scrutiny comments provided by the QED and Standing Panel members and the response to scrutiny provided by the Programme Team.
2. know Cardiff Metropolitan University's [Curriculum Principles](#) and identify where these are not fully embraced.

3. know Cardiff Metropolitan University's [Curriculum Design Requirements](#) for new programmes and whether a Programme Team has provided a rationale and made a sound case for deviation from the Curriculum Design Requirements and had this accepted by AQSC.
4. demonstrate a familiarity with the policies and guidelines of relevant external awarding/validating bodies and professional organisations as well as with the policies, procedures and academic regulations of Cardiff Metropolitan University;
5. concentrate on main issues;
6. establish the essential purpose of the occasion and its possible outcomes;
7. control, facilitate and guide investigation and discussion to ensure that the conclusions are clearly articulated and understood.

### **Before the Standing Panel Meeting**

8. The Chair should have early consultation with the Quality Enhancement Directorate (QED) regarding the background to the validation or review, the composition of the panel, the programme of the day and ensure that the Programme Director is familiar with the agenda and purpose of the meeting.
9. The Chair will need to:
  - a) establish the essential purpose and possible outcome (referring to the 5-point scale of possible outcomes);
  - b) clarify the details of each programme being considered:
  - c) be familiar with initial scrutiny conducted by QED and Standing Panel members which will have been communicated to and responded to by the proposing Programme Team;
  - d) hold a private meeting of the Standing Panel to explain and explore the documentation, to identify problem areas and to develop an agenda for the meeting with the proposing Programme Team;
  - e) identify Panel members who will lead discussions with the programme team on specific issues;
  - f) distinguish between management/organisational and teaching/learning issues.
10. The Chair will therefore have planned programmes for the private Panel meeting and for subsequent discussions with the programme team in which major issues are the focus of concern. The Chair will ensure that the issues to be covered are appropriate and the time apportioned for

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discussion is effective.

### **During the Standing Panel Meeting**

11. The Chair will set the scene by introducing members of the Panel and establishing clearly the purpose and possible outcomes of the meeting. The location of the activity in the wider framework of the University's internal validation/review machinery will be explained as will its relation to the external awarding body, where necessary.

The final outcome will be a written report with recommendations to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and, where applicable, for the relevant external awarding body.

12. The Chair will confirm an agenda for discussion and indicate that different members of the panel will give a lead on issues.
13. It is the Chair's responsibility to guide discussion and ensure that the Panel's questioning is clearly understood and responded to and that with each major issue there is a clearly understood conclusion, which may incorporate a condition or recommendation.
14. The Chair should intervene if the discussion is being diverted, is trivialising or sticking on what is a difference of opinion, or is taking up too much time at the expense of the rest of the agenda.
15. The Chair should ensure that the Panel members are confident of:

for validation the quality and standard of the programme through exploration of areas such as compatibility with the University's goals and mission ( e.g. employability, sustainability, Internationalisation, research-informed teaching, EDGE); programme aims and rationale; marketing, recruitment and admissions; entry requirements; programme structure and content; assessment and feedback; academic standards (alignment with external reference points such as QAA subject benchmark statements and PSRB requirements); learning and teaching; external examining; resources; staffing; work-based learning; PDP and personal tutoring; programme management, etc. such confidence might come as a result of scrutiny of the submission or out of subsequent discussion;

for review the continued quality, quality enhancement, and standards of the programme through exploration of areas

such as: continued compatibility with University goals and mission; changes to the programme and resulting updated documentation; programme contention, enrolment, progression and completion/success rates; comparability of standards; continued alignment with external reference points; external examiner and other reports and action taken; Programme Enhancement Plans; the Programme Committee records; student comment; the effectiveness of the external examiner arrangements; staffing and staff development; resources; PDP and personal tutoring; work-based learning.

16. The Chair should ensure that the discussion is thoroughly professional and positively critical, that there is a genuine exchange of viewpoints, and that adequate attention is given to the teaching and learning experiences of students. It is the Chair's duty to establish an atmosphere of open, critical, yet helpful discussion, so that the occasion is seen to be a professionally helpful experience rather than a confrontational burden.
17. At the end of the meeting, the Chair, following private discussion with the Panel, will report verbally to Programme/School leadership the Panel's conclusions and the time required for responding to any action necessary. The programme leadership should be in no doubt as to where they stand in consequence.

### **After the Standing Panel Meeting**

18. The Servicing Officer will send within one week of the meeting, a list of any required Post Standing Panel Actions, indicating where these are time sensitive and any commendations, arising from the meeting.
19. Where a recommendation of approval by the Panel is subject to the satisfactory completion of time sensitive Post Standing Panel Action, the programme team will need to submit revised documentation (and/or otherwise satisfy the requirements as set out in the Post Standing Panel Action Plan) to the QED within prescribed timescales indicating what and where the changes have been made in relation to each condition. The QED will send such documentation to the Chair (and in some instances to other Panel members as agreed at the conclusion of the meeting) for approval purposes.
20. It is the Chair's responsibility to satisfy themselves that the required changes (etc.) have been addressed satisfactorily and to confirm this in writing to the QED. It is helpful for a completed Action Plan to be provided by the Chair, which indicates what, and where, changes have been made in relation to each required Action, and to confirm (or otherwise) that the particular requirement has been met.
21. In some instances, the Programme Team might, for good reason, request

an extension to the deadline for submission or may not in the view of the Standing Panel Chair have met one or more actions satisfactorily. In such instances, the Standing Panel Chair should discuss the situation with the Head of Quality Enhancement and the Chair of Academic Quality and Standards Committee with a view to finding a way forward. Following discussion/advice, it is the responsibility of the Chair to approve an extension, but this should be regarded as exceptional practice and the extension should be as short as possible.

22. Within 20 working days of the meeting, the servicing officer will submit a draft report to the Chair and Panel members for scrutiny. The draft report will be circulated to the Dean of School, School Deputy/Associate Dean and Programme Director.
23. After receiving observations, the report will be adjusted as necessary before being circulated as the confirmed report by the QED to:
  - a) Chair of Academic Quality and Standards Committee
  - b) External Awarding Body (where appropriate)
24. The confirmed report should capture, in a precise and structured form, the essential discussion that had taken place, and clearly record any Post Standing Panel Actions made and the time required for their implementation. The Chair of the Panel must approve changes required to programme documents as a result of review.

### **Guidance Note: Panel Members**

#### **Membership**

25. The Standing Panel will comprise a Chair and at least two Standing Panel Members, at least one of whom will be a senior academic, and a person who represents the Cardiff Metropolitan student population. In addition, other members may be included because of their specific expertise (e.g., experience of wholly distance delivery or majority online delivery mode). Should there be a last-minute non-availability of a Standing Panel member who is not readily replaceable, it will be the Chair's decision (in consultation with the Head of Quality Enhancement and Chair of Academic Quality and Standards Committee) on how to proceed. However, a meeting will not normally proceed unless there are two Standing Panel members, in addition to the Standing Panel Chair, being present (see also Volume 2, Section 01.7 for Contingency Guidelines).
26. External Academic Advisor (EAA), Industry Advisor (IA) and Student Reviewer (SR) input will be provided in the development stage of a new programme or periodic/elective review. The EAA, IA and SR will not, normally, attend the meeting itself but it would be possible, if deemed essential, for the External Academic Advisor or other external advisors to attend the Standing Panel meeting.

27. Panel members are selected from a list approved by the Chair of Academic Quality and Standards Committee and maintained by the QED. They will provide the crucial expertise and experience to enable the programme/s to be scrutinised effectively. Standing Panel members provide experience, knowledge of quality assurance processes including approval procedures and practices, programme management and best practice in learning teaching and assessment. The External Academic Advisor and Industry Advisor between them provide expertise relating to the subject employment market relevant to the programme under consideration. Student Reviewers provide additional information relating to the student experience during the development stage. Normally, the Standing Panel Member representing students will pose any questions relating to the student experience (see paragraph 30, below).
28. Standing Panel members are selected for their independence and the relevance of their backgrounds. Panel members will not be directly involved in the programme/s under scrutiny and will usually be from another School; The External Academic Advisors and Industry Advisors will be sourced from other Higher Education institutions and/or from professional bodies and the world of work. Wherever possible, at least one of the Standing Panel members should have experience relevant to the type of business to be conducted (e.g., where Cardiff Metropolitan University processes may be combined with a professional body accreditation). No Standing Panel member can have a close association with the programme, for example, as current external examiner, programme adviser or management role, or former member of teaching staff of the School in which the programme is being reviewed. External Academic Advisors due to commence an external examining role would however be eligible to be involved in the review of the said programme. It is not acceptable for former members of University staff, former students of the University or former external examiners of the University to be invited to become External Academic Advisors before a lapse of at least three years following the end of their employment with, or programme at, Cardiff Metropolitan University.
29. Student Reviewers are selected members of the Student Insight Team matched appropriately according to the level of the programme/s they will be asked to review. They will not be directly involved in the programme/s under scrutiny and may be from another School. In each case the Student Reviewer will be asked to confirm that there is no conflict of interest. QED will arrange and conduct both general and bespoke training sessions for Student Reviewers.
30. A member of the QED (normally a Quality Enhancement Officer) will attend the meeting as Servicing Officer.
31. Where additional staff are invited to attend as observers, at the discretion of the Chair they may contribute to Panel discussions.

## **32 Role of the Student Reviewer**

The Student Reviewer makes a valuable contribution to the judgements of the Panel. Areas that Student Reviewers are encouraged to focus on include:

- the quality of learning opportunities;
- student representation: programme committee, support for student representatives, effectiveness of staff-student liaison committee;
- student feedback: National Student Survey, module evaluation, responsiveness to feedback, feedback to students on action taken (including use of VLE, intranet, social media);
- student support: personal tutors; first year experience e.g. induction and transition to Higher Education;
- personal development planning;
- careers and employability;
- specialist support, for example, disabled students, students who have additional learning needs, and international student support;
- assessment feedback: timeliness and quality;
- whether staff value and actively seek contributions from students?
- how the programme team utilise student feedback in annual reporting.

If the meeting is a review, then a good place to start the scrutiny of the submission documentation is the self-evaluation document; for a validation, then the rationale. Both of these documents should be able to contextualise the programme under scrutiny and, if well written, will include cross-references to the supporting documentation, which will include for both validation and review meetings, a programme specification, a set of module descriptors, the CVs of the programme team and the student programme handbook. The documentation for a review will include a wealth of evidence about how the programme has performed over the review period, including the annual programme review report, the external examiner reports, programme committee minutes and, if the programme is accredited, the report of the accrediting body.

The Panel will pay particular attention to the Student Reviewer's report and with the agreement of the Chair pose questions that have not been fully addressed by the Programme Team response to scrutiny.

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## **Purpose**

33. For validation meetings, the essential purpose of the Panel is to ensure that the programme will attain threshold requirements in terms of academic standards and quality.
34. For review meetings, the essential purpose of the Panel is to ensure that the programme continues to meet the standards set at the introduction of the programme and that quality enhancement has taken place.
35. As individual members of a chosen group, the panel and its members need to make collective judgements on quality and standards. To do so they will need to be conversant with all the documentation and enter into critical dialogue with the programme leaders and its members on key issues, and to meet with students and sample their work wherever possible and relevant. It is important that the dialogue is critical, balanced and constructive.

## **Before the Standing Panel Meeting**

36. Panel members need to prepare themselves thoroughly and acquire a detailed understanding of the documentation provided. They will refer to the Programme team response to scrutiny and consider whether in their view the Programme Team has addressed the scrutiny satisfactorily.
37. Panel members should identify:
  - a) any apparent weaknesses and strengths;
  - b) any irregularities regarding procedural matters;
  - c) for review meetings, any issues raised through external or internal reports and how they have, or have not, been addressed;
  - d) for review meetings, any indications in regard to the standards achieved by the students;
  - e) for review meetings, the effectiveness of the external examiner arrangements.
38. Non subject specialists can usefully concentrate on quality enhancement issues, documentation (e.g., rationale or self-evaluation document; programme specification; module descriptors), structure, assessment, compliance with academic regulations, etc.
39. Panel members are asked to reflect on QED scrutiny and submit their own scrutiny comments in a timely fashion as guided by QED. The scrutiny comments provide by QED and Panel members will be passed to the Standing Panel Chair, who will make a decision regarding whether the

scrutiny comments suggest that the Programme Team will be able to address the scrutiny and provide a detailed response (on the form provided) together with revised documentation in a timeframe whereby the Standing Panel can go ahead as planned. The Chair reserves the right to require additional work and revise the planned Standing Panel date in consultation with QED.

### **During the Meeting**

40. The individual Panel member is a crucial contributor in creating an atmosphere for dialogue in which praise is as necessary as challenge, in which development is as important as criticism. Panel members should be critical, but courteous, persistent in questioning when necessary but should avoid excessive personal bias. Above all, Panel members must be seen to be consistent and fair. As a team member, it is essential to stick to the agreed agenda and not digress unnecessarily.
41. In particular, Standing Panel members will need to:
  - a) explore discrepancies between what is written and what is said;
  - b) seek clarification and confirmation when required;
  - c) listen as well as ask;
  - d) offer suggestions if, and when, appropriate;
  - e) concentrate on major, rather than minor, issues;
  - f) participate in a collaborative manner.
42. Panel members are part of a scrutinising team and at the end of the meeting will be required to help the Chair to arrive at an agreed conclusion.

### **After the Meeting**

43. Panel members will need to:
  - a) check and agree the report of the review (if required);
  - b) be available, where possible and if required, to Programme Team members for further discussion;
  - c) complete evaluations of the meeting as requested by QED.

## **Guidance Note: Programme Team Members**

### **Before the Meeting**

44. The submission documentation is crucial to the Panel being able to understand the programme.
45. The School should ensure that the quality and scope of what is being submitted by the programme team is acceptable. In particular, the School Deputy/Associate Dean will ensure that the documentation satisfies the guidelines of the Academic Handbook. The Programme Director will need to have an early preliminary meeting with the QED in preparation for the meeting, and later with designated Chair of the Panel to clarify issues and practices and with the QED to agree the programmes under consideration by the Panel and to make appropriate arrangements.
46. The Programme Director should engage with the QED in the design/re-design of the programme (refer to the [Curriculum Design Guide](#)). Schools should also consult employers, students and, if appropriate, PSRBs during programme design/re-design. The Panel, with the student experience the focus of their scrutiny, has the right to expect that the School Management and Planning Team has ensured thorough preparation of both the submission documentation and the Programme Team, including peer review of the draft submission to inform the DD's release of the document to the Panel. The QED can assist with the School quality assurance stage of the review procedure.
47. For Review (Periodic or Elective) activity, the documentation should include information about changes that have been made since validation or last review, any changes proposed, how the Programme Team operates and what external peers think about the programme. The Programme Team should ensure that all required documents are available in their most up-to-date and complete form. Note that past changes to the programme, whether minor or substantial (through approved mechanisms) must be incorporated into the programme document; the review Panel has the right to expect this. It is recommended that document updating is a frequent process rather than being prompted by a Review.

### **During the Meeting**

48. The quality of the staff and the impression it conveys to the Panel is important to a successful meeting. Staff need to act as a genuine team in which its members are confident, open rather than defensive, articulate and able to respond to questions simply, yet developing an answer fully where required. Programme Team members need to clarify, exemplify and illuminate their programme fully so that the documentation comes to life and the teaching and learning capacity is of obvious quality. Opportunities to illustrate teaching and learning should be readily taken and demonstrated.

49. The Programme Team will need to be able to demonstrate, rather than assert, in response to questioning, using the reports, etc., which form part of the documentation.
50. The Programme Director will have particular responsibility for orchestrating the responses of the Programme Team to questions raised in the formal meeting. The Programme Director needs to be substantially involved in the discussion, but a continuous dialogue between her/him and the Standing Panel Chair should be avoided. It is essential that the opportunity be provided for a wide range of staff teaching on the programme to participate in discussion.
51. For Review meetings, the participation of students and former students is essential and so the Programme Director should encourage and organise their involvement. This may take a variety of forms and imaginative approaches to their fuller involvement should be considered and introduced. QED will advise on this aspect of consultation when requested and provide guidance on the minimum level of student and industry involvement required.

#### **After the Standing Panel Meeting**

52. The Programme Director will ensure that the Programme Team fully understand the conclusions of the Standing Panel meeting and that any changes required to the programme and/or its documentation take place in the time specified. The School Deputy/Associate Dean will need to report developments to the School, the QED and the Academic Registry.

#### **Guidance Note: Student Involvement in Review Meetings**

53. It is helpful for Review Panels to be able to meet with existing students on the programme, and where possible past students. The Programme Director should ensure that a representative selection of students is available and that they are briefed regarding what the meeting is about so that they can contribute to the review in an informed manner.
54. Students should be encouraged to discuss the programme frankly and honestly in the spirit of a genuine attempt to identify strengths and weaknesses so that the programme can be improved.

#### **Guidance Notes: Reports of Validation and Review**

55. Standing Panel reports are crucial documents that enable the Academic Quality and Standards Committee to take important decisions about approval of new programmes and the future of existing programmes.
56. Standing Panel reports should be clear and accurate, succinct yet comprehensive enough to enable the results of the meetings to be

implemented. It would benefit the Servicing Officer to familiarise themselves with the following documentation prior to the Standing Panel meeting:

- .1 for validation Standing Panel meetings: the Rationale;
- .2 for review Standing Panel meetings: the SED;
- .3 for all meetings: the Programme Specification, module descriptors and CVs;
- .4 The scrutiny/response to scrutiny document (QED PDA 021).

57. The following sections provide a model for reports.

a) Heading

The heading for a Standing Panel report should include, name of institution, award, title, mode of attendance, date of meeting and a list of those present, with an indication of their posts and places of work. (Accuracy is paramount, and the servicing office should refer to the programme specification for programme/award information.)

b) Introduction

This should deal with:

- i) the purpose of the meeting (this should include reference to any incorporated PSRB involvement);
- ii) pre-validation/validation history and summary of issues raised in earlier stages in the validation/review process;
- iii) programme characteristics: overall structure, target/average intake and target group, innovative or other salient features of the programme that might be of interest to the wider community;
- iv) a brief outline of the range of meetings held and the extent to which the Panel were made aware of facilities and student work;
- v) if a review, a brief summary of any proposed changes (these can be located in the Self-Evaluation Document); if extensive, these should be listed in appendices.

c) Main Body of Report

The report should be organised thematically, rather than as a chronological record of discussions, under such headings as: institutional issues, aims, learning outcomes, programme structure,

programme content, assessment, entry requirements, research and staff development, perceived comparability of academic standards with similar programmes elsewhere and external views/observations. Each section should include a report of the issues raised and an indication of whether the Panel was satisfied with the dialogue or whether it retained reservations. Evidence for the basis of the judgements that were reached should be included.

d) Recommended Post Standing Panel Actions and Commendations

The Standing Panel report should provide an outline of the strengths of, and reservations about, the programme, which must be capable of being justified by points made in the body of the report. It must state whether or not the programme was recommended for approval and required Post Standing Panel Actions (with dates by which the actions should be completed). Post Standing Panel Actions should be clearly set out in a Post Standing Panel Action Plan. This will be shared with the team and a definitive version held centrally for sign off by the Chair. Commendation should also be set out in the Standing Panel meeting report.

- e) If changes were proposed as part of a review submission, the report should clearly indicate whether the changes were approved.
- f) The full titles of the programmes and pathways and all default/ exit awards should be clear in the Standing Panel report.