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GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CHAIRS, PANELLISTS, PROGRAMME TEAMS AND RECORDERS: VALIDATION & REVIEW EVENTS

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CHAIRS, PANELLISTS AND PROGRAMME TEAMS : VALIDATION & REVIEW EVENTS

This series of guidance notes covers:

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

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

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: Chiring of Panels

Introduction

The Chair is the key person in an event. 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 panels are nominated by School Senior Management and approved by the Quality Enhancement Directorate.

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;
2. 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;
3. concentrate on main issues;
4. establish the essential purpose of the occasion and its possible outcomes;

5. control, facilitate and guide investigation and discussion to ensure that the conclusions are clearly articulated and understood.

Before the Event

6. 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.
7. The Chair will need to:
 - a) establish the essential purpose and possible outcome of the event;
 - b) clarify the detailed programme for the occasion;
 - c) be familiar with initial responses from panel members and communicate issues thus raised to all panel members and to the Programme Director;
 - d) hold a private meeting of the panel to explain and explore the documentation, to identify problem areas and to develop an agenda for the meeting with the 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.
8. 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 discussion is effective.

During the Event

9. The Chair will set the scene by introducing members of the panel and establishing clearly the purpose and possible outcomes of the occasion. The location of the event 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 & Standards Committee and, where applicable, for the relevant external awarding body.
10. The Chair will confirm an agenda for discussion and indicate that different members of the panel will give a lead on issues. Internal and external

panel members need to be given equal prominence.

11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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; Annual Programme Review reports; 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.

14. 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 lively, open, critical, yet helpful discussion, so that the occasion is seen to be a professionally helpful experience rather than a confrontational burden.
15. At the end of the event, 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 Event

16. The event secretary will send within one week of the event, a list of any commendations, conditions and recommendations arising from the event.
17. Where a recommendation of approval by the Panel is subject to the satisfactory completion of conditions, the programme team will need to submit revised documentation (and/or otherwise satisfy the conditions) 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 Panellists as agreed at the conclusion of the event) for approval purposes.
18. It is the Chair's responsibility to satisfy him/herself that the required changes (etc.) have been completed adequately and to confirm this in writing to the QED. It is helpful for a full report to be provided by the Chair, which indicates what, and where, changes have been made in relation to each condition, and to confirm (or otherwise) that the particular condition has been met.
19. 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 Panel Chair have met one or more conditions satisfactorily. In such instances the Panel Chair should discuss the situation with the Quality Operations Manager and the Chair of Academic Quality & 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.
20. Within 20 working days of the event, the event secretary 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.

21. 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 & Standards Committee
 - b) External Awarding Body (where appropriate)
22. The confirmed report should capture, in a precise and structured form, the essential discussion that had taken place, and clearly record any conditions or recommendations 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

23. The size and composition of the Panel will reflect the nature of the event, the characteristics of the programme(s) concerned and achieve a balance of academic, industrial and professional expertise as appropriate. The Panel should normally consist of the Chair, an external panellist, an internal panellist and a student panellist. Should there be a last minute resignation of an internal member who is not readily replaceable, it will be the Chair's decision (in consultation with the Quality Operations Manager and Chair of Academic Quality & Standards Committee) as to whether or not to proceed, but the Chair should try to do so if at all possible. However, an event will not normally proceed without the external panellist being present (see also Volume 2, Section 01.7 for Contingency Guidelines).
24. Internal Panel members are selected from a list approved by the Chair of Academic Quality & Standards Committee and maintained by the QED. They will provide the crucial expertise and experience to enable the programme to be scrutinised effectively. Internal and external panellists between them will provide experience of subject expertise, validating procedures and practices, programme management and the employment market relevant to the occasion. Student panellists can also provide additional information relating to the student experience (see paragraph 29, below).
25. Panel members are selected for their independence and the relevance of their backgrounds. Internal members will not be directly involved in the programme under scrutiny and will usually be from another School; external members will come from other institutions and/or from professional bodies and the world of work. Panels must contain a balance of members with subject expertise, the employment market relevant to the programme, and knowledge of Cardiff Metropolitan University

quality assurance processes. Wherever possible, at least one of the panel members should have experience relevant to the type of event (e.g. where Cardiff Metropolitan University processes may be combined with a professional body accreditation). No 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 panel members 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 panellists before a lapse of at least three years following the end of their employment with, or programme at, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

26. Student panel members are selected from a list approved by the Chair of Academic Quality & Standards Committee and maintained by the QED. They will not be directly involved in the programme under scrutiny and will be from another School. QED will arrange 2-3 student panellist training sessions per academic year, depending on demand.
27. A member of the QED (normally the event secretary) will attend the event as recorder.
28. Where additional staff are invited to attend as observers, at the discretion of the Chair they may contribute to panel discussions.
29. Role of the Student Panellist

The student panellist makes a valuable contribution to the judgements of the Panel. Areas that student panellists 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;
- do staff value and actively seek contributions from students?
- how does the programme team utilize feedback in annual reporting?

If the event 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 events, 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.

Purpose

30. For validation events, the essential purpose of the Panel is to ensure that the programme will attain threshold requirements in terms of academic standards and quality.
31. For review events, 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.
32. 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 Event

33. Panel members need to prepare themselves thoroughly and acquire a detailed understanding of the documentation provided.
34. Panel members should identify:
 - a) any apparent weaknesses and strengths;
 - b) any irregularities regarding procedural matters;

- c) for review events, any issues raised through external or internal reports and how they have, or have not, been addressed;
 - d) for review events, any indications in regard to the standards achieved by the students;
 - e) for review events, the effectiveness of the external examiner arrangements.
35. Panel members who are subject specialists should, particularly, examine in detail syllabi, their content, how they are taught and the capacity of the staff to do so. Non subject specialists can usefully concentrate on quality enhancement issues, documentation (e.g. rationale or self- evaluation document; programme specification; module descriptors), structure, assessment, regulation, etc.
36. Panel members should submit no later than one week prior to the event, a summary of key issues, which they have identified for consideration, as requested by the QER.

During the Event

37. 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 have to be seen to be consistent and fair. As a team member, it is essential to stick to the agreed agenda and not digress unnecessarily.
38. In particular, 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.
39. Panel members are part of a scrutinising team and at the end of the event will need to help the Chair to arrive at an agreed conclusion.

After the Event

40. 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 event.

Guidance Note: Programme Team Members

Before the Event

41. The submission documentation is crucial to the panel being able to understand the programme.
42. 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 event, and later with designated Chair of the panel to clarify issues and practices and with the QED to agree the programme for the event and appropriate arrangements.
43. The Programme Director should engage with the QED in the design/re-design of the programme (the link to the programme design process is <https://tsr.cardiffmet.ac.uk/units/ltdu/Pages/default.aspx>). 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.
44. For review events, 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 event.

During the Event

45. The quality of the staff and the impression it conveys to the panel is important to a successful event. 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.
46. 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.
47. 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 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.
48. For review events, the participation of students and former students is essential and so the Programme Director should encourage and organise their involvement. This may take on a variety of forms and imaginative approaches to their fuller involvement should be considered and introduced.

After the Event

49. The Programme Director will ensure that the programme team fully understand the conclusions of the event 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 Events

50. 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 in regard to what the event is about so that they can contribute to the review in an informed manner.
51. 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 Events

52. These reports are crucial documents that enable the Academic Quality & Standards Committee to take important decisions about approval of new programmes and the future of existing programmes.
53. Event reports should be clear and accurate, succinct yet comprehensive enough to enable the results of the events to be implemented. It would benefit the recorder to familiarise themselves with the following documentation prior to the event:
- .1 for validation events: the Rationale (and approved PEG application);
 - .2 for review events: the SED;
 - .3 for all events: the Programme Specification, module descriptors and CVs.
54. The following sections provide a model for reports.

a) Heading

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

b) Introduction

This should deal with:

- i) the purpose of the event (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 saw facilities and student work;
- v) if a review event, 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) Commendations, Conditions and Recommendations

The concluding section of reports 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 conditions of approval (with dates by which the conditions should be met). Finally, any recommendations should be set out.

e) If changes were proposed as part of a review submission, the concluding section of the report should clearly indicate whether or not the changes were approved.

f) Appendices

Appendices should include a list of the regulatory and procedural framework forming the context for the event and a list of the formal names of the programmes involved.