***Transforming Programmes***

***Guidance for the Chair on University Validation Panels***

On behalf of the University, thank you for agreeing to act as Chair of a University Validation Panel.

## ***Aims and Purpose of Programme Validation:***

Programme validation is the method by which new programmes are introduced into the university’s offer to students. It is an opportunity for new programmes to be scrutinised before their introduction, both to assure their standards and to enhance the quality of the proposal. As part of the validation process the programme teams and panels will consider:

* The rationale for introducing the new programme;
* How the new programme fits with other programmes on offer and how the academic portfolio is reflective of their mission and strategic objectives The awards offered and the curriculum – its design, content, delivery and assessment;
* The appropriateness of the standards set for the level of the award;
* The appropriateness and application of programme competencies. The University of Hull Competence Framework will provide a useful guide for panel chairs. This can be accessed via the following self-enrol Canvas page [**https://canvas.hull.ac.uk/enroll/GF8AAK**](https://canvas.hull.ac.uk/enroll/GF8AAK)
* The suitability of human and physical resources to support the new programme
* The suitability of other learning and knowledge resources to support the new programme. Has due regard been given to the [Knowledge Management Framework](https://libguides.hull.ac.uk/knowledgemanagement/home), particularly the questions under [Key considerations for course design](https://libguides.hull.ac.uk/knowledgemanagement/framework) (applicable for on-campus and Hull Online provision)?[[1]](#footnote-1)
* The student experience offered by the new programme, including opportunities for employment and further study for its graduates;
* The way in which the programme facilitates the widest possible access to ensure that all students can maximise their potential.

At a general level, the panel as a whole provides a “confidence judgement” that:

* A range of internal and external consultation has informed the development of the programme;
* There is a strong rationale for the proposal and information about likely demand and student entry profiles;
* The standards set for students are appropriate, reference national qualification frameworks and match with the title of award;
* There are appropriate facilities, learning and knowledge resources, and student support services resource to deliver a high-quality academic experience;
* The curriculum - its design, content, assessment and delivery – and the associated student experience has been fully considered and is appropriate and meets the principles of transforming programmes.

## ***The validation process:***

The relevant documentation is circulated to the panel approximately 2 weeks prior to the meeting, depending on the availability of paperwork. Panel members are asked to review the documentation and, bearing in mind the aims and purpose of transforming programmes and programme validation, feedback their comments at the meeting, identifying points on which they would like additional clarification and areas that they would wish to pursue further with the programme team during the meeting. Minor issues may be resolved by the provision of additional documentation or a brief explanation. The meeting provides the opportunity for the panel to discuss specific points with the programme team and other representatives from the faculty.

## ***The programme validation meeting:***

The meeting begins with introductions and a private meeting of the panel members to agree priorities for discussion. There may also be an initial presentation by the programme team to provide an overview of the new programme proposal.

During the meeting, the panel meets with senior staff and the programme team. If the meeting is to enhance an existing programme, the views of students on the programme will be sought. The panel may also be given a tour of resources. The meeting will conclude with feedback from the panel on whether the programme may successfully be validated, and what else, if anything, the programme team needs to do to improve the programme or address issues prior to students arriving. The panel may set the following:

1. **Conditions** – action points to address issues of a serious nature, which must be resolved prior to the start of the new programme;
2. **Required technical corrections** – action points to address minor issues, such as typographical errors, which must be resolved prior to the start of the new programme;
3. **Recommendations** – points for the programme team to think about in terms of the future development and improvement of the programme;
4. **Observations** – any other points which the panel wishes to convey to the programme team, including commendations and recognition of good practice.

Following the review a report will be drafted for the approval of the Chair before circulation to the programme/faculty team and to the others within the university.

## ***Roles and responsibilities of the Chair:***

At the most general level, the Chair is responsible for ensuring that in its process and its outcomes, the approval meets the requirements of University policy. More specifically:

### Before the Panel Meeting the Chair should:

* Become familiar with the requirements of the process, including the criteria for approval;
* Scrutinise documents submitted by the proposing team.

### During the Panel Meeting the Chair should:

* Remind all panel members of the need to create a positive and collegial atmosphere in which the proposal is considered;
* Ensure programme approval criteria and external reference points are covered;
* Facilitate a challenging academic debate;
* Welcome and introduce panel members and team members, to set the context of the meeting and its purpose;
* Draw panel members' attention to the briefing papers and submission document(s);
* Invite each panel member to report their initial views about the submission documentation and to compile an agreed and specific agenda of items for discussion with the Team;
* Raise any issues of concern that other panel members have not identified;
* Invite the team to make an opening statement about the context of the programme;
* Organise the conduct of the discussions between the panel and the team in the spirit of peer group appraisal, to ensure that full consideration is given to the range of items on the agenda;
* Ensure all panel members’ (especially externals and students) views are considered and discussed with the proposing team;
* Invite the proposing team to return for the concluding discussions;
* Ensure in the concluding discussions that the panel arrives at a consensus regarding the decision to be made on the proposal, and any further action to be undertaken by the programme team;
* Ensure that the panel's conclusions include, where appropriate, conditions (deficiencies which need to be addressed before the programme can run/continue to run) or recommendations (that the team is required to consider during the operation of the programme), and that these are clearly reported to the team, in the oral feedback.

### After the Panel Meeting the Chair Should:

* Work with the Secretary to ensure the panel report provides a clear and accurate account of discussions and conclusions;
* If conditions are set, the Chair reviews and approves any resubmitted documentation;
* Submit recommendation for approval to Education Planning Committee (EPC).

Notes:

1. Panel Chairs are encouraged to identify ‘lead responsibilities’ for internal panel members in their consideration of documentation.
2. **Conditions** will only normally be set:
   1. if any regulatory issues are likely to endanger the standards of provision;
   2. where there is a clear omission of required information;
   3. where aspects of the provision may cause serious concern for students;
   4. where there are PSRB requirements to be met.
3. **Recommendations** will normally include issues and advice not related to standards.

1. The Knowledge Management Framework connects the development of knowledge management competencies with the information and knowledge resources available through the University Library. Whilst focused on on-campus and Hull Online provision, the principles can be applied in the context of other information resource provision as appropriate. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)