PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, MONITORING AND REVIEW

1   INTRODUCTION

References and contact for further information

The following principles and procedures have been developed with particular regard to the following Themes within the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education:
Course Design and Development: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/course-design-and-development
Monitoring and Evaluation: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/monitoring-and-evaluation

The regulations also reflect the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Guidance to Higher Education Institutions on Quality for the period 2017-22:
http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/guidance_sfcgd112017/SFCGD112017-SFC-guidance-HE-institutions-quality.pdf

Further information on this Section, or any other part of the Quality website is available from the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

Overview

This Section details the principles and procedures for the development, modification, monitoring and review of academic programmes. These principles and procedures apply to all programmes leading to awards of the University. For information specifically on collaborative programmes leading to a Queen Margaret University award, please see the Academic Collaborations Section of the Quality website. For information on the development, modification, monitoring and review of Short Programmes, please see paragraph 12.

Exceptionally, and with the approval of the relevant School Academic Board and Senate, programmes may be developed outwith these procedures. Where relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are involved, regulations and procedures may be altered to reflect the needs and requirements of those Bodies.

It is recognised that, exceptionally, an individual programme may be negotiated with a student. This requires the approval of the appropriate School Academic Board.

Staff are encouraged to seek the advice and support of the individuals or groups listed below at the various stages of programme development, modification, monitoring and review, as appropriate. This can be done informally, wherever the need arises, or whenever a draft document needs review.

Within each School:

- Dean of School;
- Head of Division;
- School Manager;
- Other staff with relevant experience of quality assurance and enhancement.

Within Queen Margaret University:

- University Secretary;
- Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement;
- Marketing and Communications (market research);
- Academic Liaison Librarian (early consultation is required to discuss resource needs);
- Recruitment and International Liaison Office (market research; recruitment).

Each School should maintain the following central resources for programme approval, monitoring and review purposes:

- School policies for learning, teaching and assessment;
- Staff development and research policies;
- Definitive Programme Documents;
- Programme Specifications;
- Student Handbooks;
- Current module descriptors;
- Up-to-date staff curricula vitae;
- Response to conditions set at previous validation and review events;
- Annual Programme Monitoring Reports;
- External Examiner reports and responses;
- Programme Committee and Student-Staff Consultative Committee minutes.

Each School must ensure that its programmes are developed and reviewed within the University's policies and the requirements of statutory agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). In preparing for validation or review events, Programme Teams are expected to take into account the following external reference points, as appropriate:

- Learning outcomes set out in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) at the appropriate level;
- The QAA Quality Code for Higher Education[1];
- Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements;
- Subject Benchmark Statements published by the QAA;
- Relevant legislation;
- Government or international reports and publications pertaining to the subject/discipline;
- Good practice guidance published by Advance HE and other external agencies.
- Outputs from current and previous Enhancement Themes.

Internal reference points to be considered include the Student Experience Strategy. Employability Strategy, and QMU Graduate Attributes.

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[1]Note that all QMU regulations, policies and procedures are benchmarked against and aligned with the Core and Common Practices contained in the Quality Code.
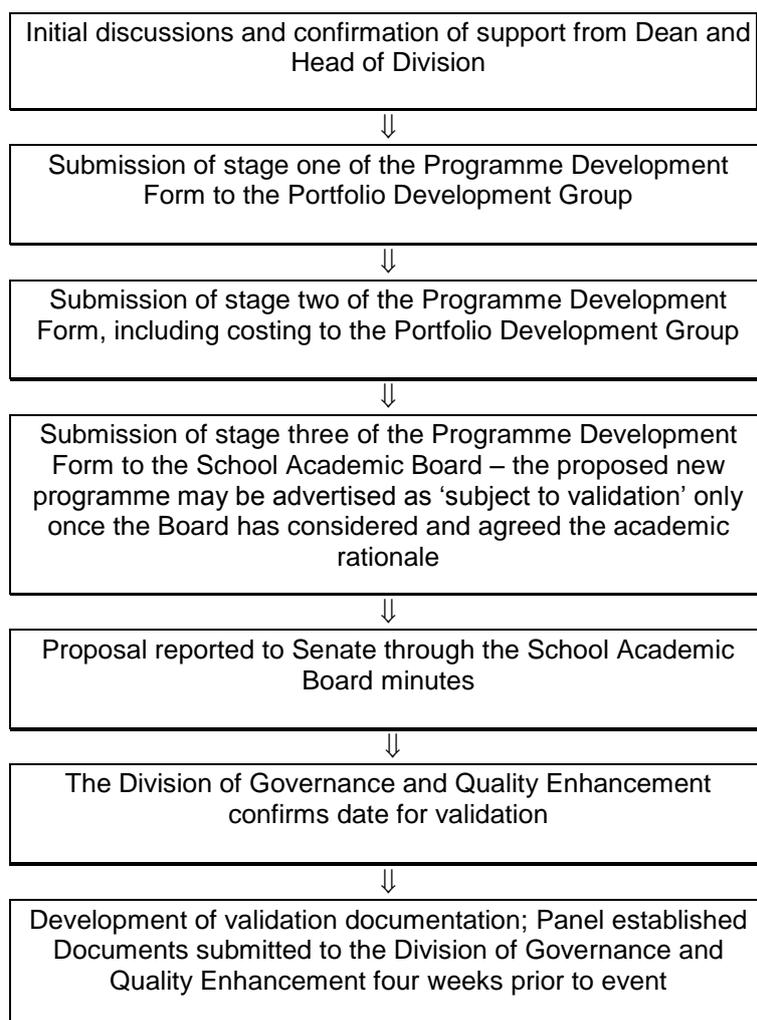
2   DEVELOPING A NEW PROGRAMME

2.1   Suggestions for a new programme can arise from individuals or groups within the University or from external sources. New programme proposals can also arise when suggested changes to an existing programme are considered significant (e.g. changing from a Graduate Diploma to an MSc; changing the curriculum to incorporate an additional field of study).

2.2   If programmes or awards are proposed together, they will be considered independently. Therefore, if one is successful that does not imply that all will be successful.

The diagram below summarises the stages in developing new programmes. For collaborative programmes, please read in conjunction with guidance on Academic Collaborations.

Note that these arrangements apply only to full programmes leading to an award of the University. Separate arrangements apply to Short Programmes leading to the award of credit for CPD purposes, as set out in paragraph 12 below. Provision that does not lead to the award of credit is managed as a consultancy.

Developing a new programme – key stages (see the flowcharts on pp.10-11)

Initial discussions and confirmation of support from Dean and Head of Division

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Submission of stage one of the Programme Development Form to the Portfolio Development Group

⇓

Submission of stage two of the Programme Development Form, including costing to the Portfolio Development Group

⇓

Submission of stage three of the Programme Development Form to the School Academic Board – the proposed new programme may be advertised as 'subject to validation' only once the Board has considered and agreed the academic rationale

⇓

Proposal reported to Senate through the School Academic Board minutes

⇓

The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement confirms date for validation

⇓

Development of validation documentation; Panel established Documents submitted to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement four weeks prior to event

⇓

Validation event

⇓

Recommendations from Panel reported to the Student Experience Committee, which advises Senate on approval. Senate has final authority to approve all new programmes and continuation of programmes presented for review.

Initial proposal support

2.3 Proposals for new programmes are normally progressed through the strategic planning process. It is recommended that this be initiated on a provisional basis at least 18 months prior to the intended start of the programme in line with the normal timeline for University planning.

2.4 The first step is to contact the Dean and Head of Division. The Dean will confirm whether the proposal fits with the University Strategic Plan and School Operational Plan and priority areas for growing student numbers. For in-house programmes, the Dean will also want an indication of whether the programme can be delivered from within the current staff resources of the School. If the Dean and Head of Division are satisfied that the proposal is worth pursuing, they should identify a member of QMU staff to act as provisional Programme Leader. The proposal should be included in the School Operational Plan and reported to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement. No proposal for a new programme may proceed without the support of both the Dean and Head of Division.

Portfolio Development Group consideration (stage one)

2.5 The Programme Leader and Dean must next complete and submit stage one of the Programme Approval Form to the Portfolio Development Group (PDG). Confirmation of support must be indicated from the Head of Division and Dean of School. Normally it will be clear which Division and School will be hosting the programme, but for multi-disciplinary programmes, where responsibility is to be shared between more than one Division and/or School, support must be confirmed from both.

2.6 The purpose of stage one of the Programme Approval Form is to allow the Portfolio Development Group to:

- Gain a first understanding of the proposal and fit with institutional strategy;
- Gain an overview of commercial reasons for the proposal;
- Identify opportunities for inter-professional working;
- Confirm whether the proposal may proceed to the next stage.

The Portfolio Development Group will judge the proposal against the following criteria:

- The programme fulfils a community need and is consistent with the mission and strategic direction of the University;
- The proposed level of qualification and academic rationale appear appropriate;

- There is appropriate academic expertise and sufficient non-academic resource within the University to support the programme's development and delivery;
- The programme does not conflict with other similar provision within the School or University.

The Portfolio Development Group may take one of the following decisions: a) confirm that the proposal can proceed to stage two; b) request further information; or c) reject the proposal. Confirmation that the proposal can proceed to stage two provides opportunity for further more detailed discussion as set out in paragraphs 2.8 to 2.12 below. No guarantee is offered at this stage that the programme will proceed to validation.

2.7 Following consideration of stage one of the Programme Approval Form by the Portfolio Development Group, the Secretary to the Group will notify the following people of the outcome: Dean of School; Head of Division; Programme Leader/Academic Link Person; School Manager.

Portfolio Development Group consideration (stage two)

2.8 Following PDG confirmation that a new programme proposal can proceed to stage two, the Programme Leader/Academic Link Person and Dean must complete and submit stage two paperwork to the Portfolio Development Group together with a detailed costing and pricing (for further details, see paragraph 2.10 below).

2.9 The purpose of stage two of the Programme Approval Form is to allow the Portfolio Development Group to:

- Consider detailed market research on viability;
- Identify any research gaps that may need to be addressed;
- Consider the costing and identified net surplus for the proposed programme;
- Confirm whether the proposal may proceed to the next stage.

The Portfolio Development Group will judge the proposal against the following criteria:

- The programme has an identified and realistic target market;
- There is sufficient evidence of demand and support for the programme[2] from key stakeholders, including employers and prospective students;
- Analysis of competitor programmes suggests the programme will recruit satisfactorily;
- The programme is financially viable on the basis of expected student numbers and assumed fee (or other) income.

The Portfolio Development Group may take one of the following decisions: a) confirm that the proposal can proceed to stage three; b) request further information; or c) reject the proposal. Confirmation that the proposal can proceed to stage three provides opportunity for School Academic Board consideration and decision as set out in paragraphs 2.13 to 2.17 below. No

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[2] The nature of evidence used to show demand will vary from programme to programme

guarantee is offered at this stage that the programme can proceed to validation.

Following consideration of part two of the Programme Approval Form by the Portfolio Development Group, the Secretary to the Group will notify the following people of the outcome: Dean of School; Head of Division; Programme Leader/Academic Link Person; School Manager; Head of Admissions and Recruitment (except for overseas collaborative programmes). If it is confirmed that the proposal can proceed to stage three, the Head of Division must establish a Programme Team to undertake more detailed curriculum planning and preparation, if they have not already done so.

2.10 For home Programmes, the Head of Finance must be approached for assistance in preparing the costing, which will normally include some or all of the elements listed below. For collaborative programmes, the Partnership Development Manager will provide assistance.

- Academic staff time (for programme development, validation, committees, board of examiners and quality assurance, as well as teaching, marking and supporting students);
- Visiting lecturer time (if required);
- Professional services staff time (School Office, technicians, Student Records, Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, Admissions, Library staff, Hub support);
- Non-staff costs (including External Examiners' fees and expenses, additional library resources, estates costs, equipment and consumables, staff development);
- Any relevant consumables (materials) or anticipated additional spend on marketing.

Typically the costing will cover the development phase and first five years of delivery.

2.11 It is essential that all relevant professional services departments are consulted regarding the possible resource needs of the programme. As a matter of course, the Programme Leader/Academic Link Person should contact the Liaison Services Manager in the Library before finalising costings. Estates and Facilities must be contacted regarding any requirements for specialist teaching space or equipment. The Assistant Secretaries, Registry and Academic Administration, and External Liaison and Student Services, must be consulted at the costing stage to reflect the level of input that will be required from their Divisions. Programme Leaders should also liaise with Marketing and Communications to allow for early planning in relation to website and prospectus entries.

2.12 Constraints affecting the introduction of new programmes may include the following:
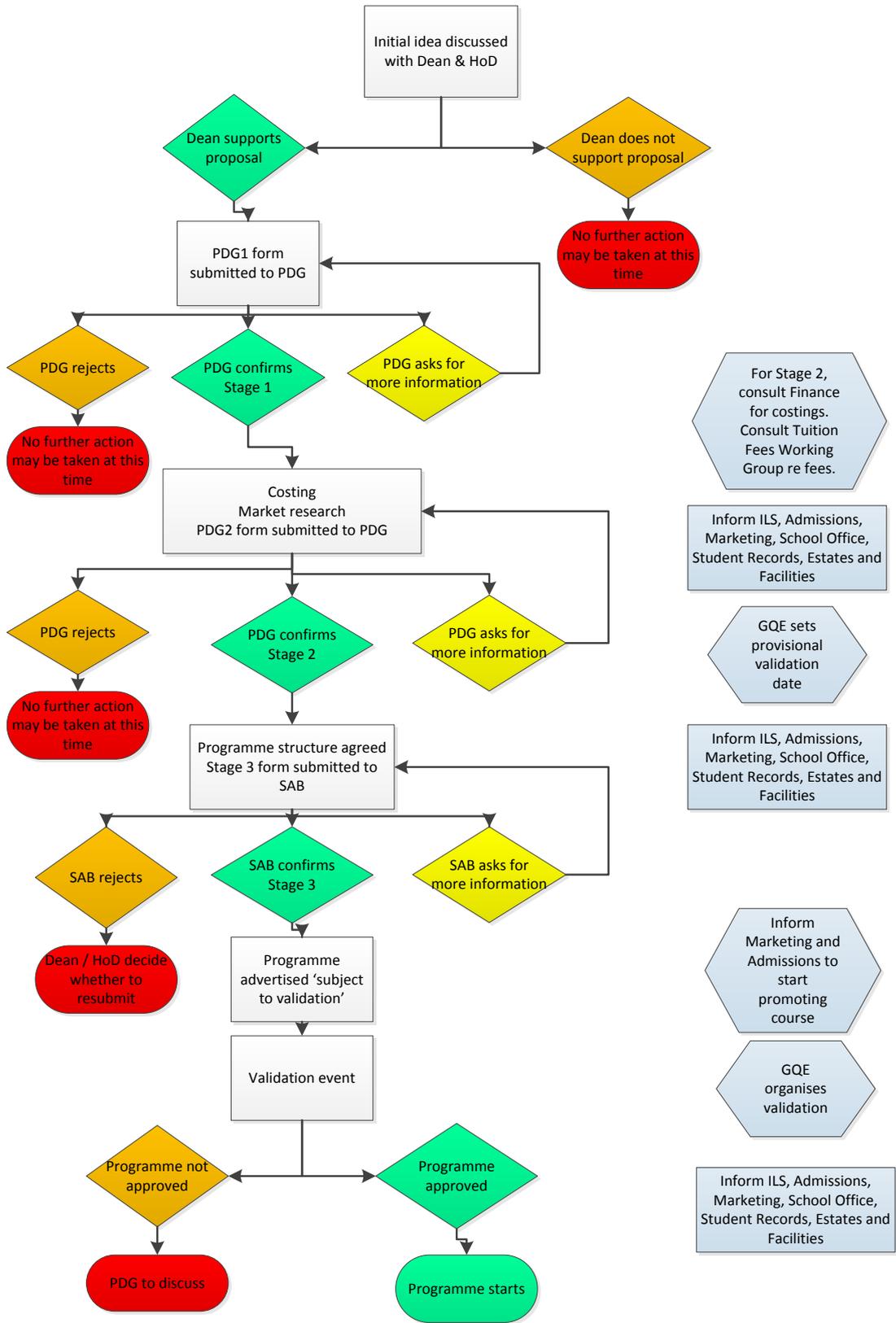
- Consolidation of funded student numbers in each of QMU's subject categories by level (i.e. undergraduate, taught postgraduate, research);
- Availability of appropriate space;
- Availability of teaching staff;
- Evidence of demand.
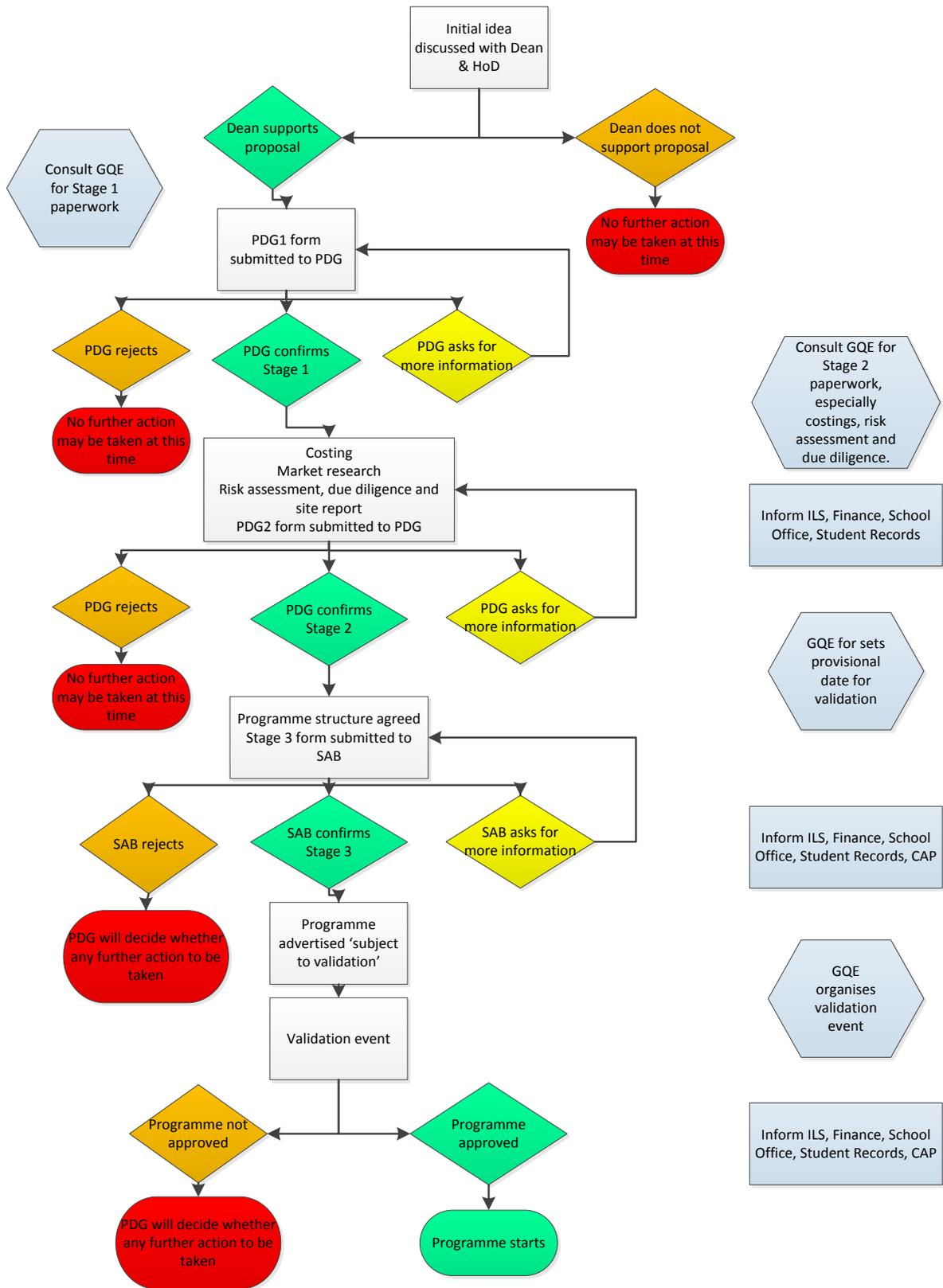
School Academic Board consideration (stage three)

2.13 Following confirmation from the Portfolio Development Group that the proposal can proceed to stage three, the Programme Leader/Academic Link Person must consult with the full Programme Team and complete and submit stage three paperwork to the School Academic Board.

2.14 The School Academic Board will be responsible for debating and agreeing the academic rationale. This will include consideration of the following:

- Programme title and subsidiary exit points
- Educational philosophy and aims;
- Appropriateness of the proposed SCQF level;
- Outline content;
- Structure and delivery pattern;
- Core and elective modules – core modules must be clearly identified;
- Balance of new and existing modules;
- Opportunities for linkages and efficiencies through collaboration with existing School provision.

2.15 The School Academic Board will receive stage one and two paperwork (minus any redacted content) as background information, but will base its decision on the content of stage three only, since the information included at stages one and two (in particular information on viability, resources and finance) will have been subject to detailed scrutiny and confirmation by the Portfolio Development Group. The School Academic Board may take one of the following decisions: a) confirm that the programme can proceed to validation; b) request further information; or c) reject the proposal.

2.16 Following confirmation by the School Academic Board that the programme can proceed to validation, the proposal will be reported to Senate through the School Academic Board minutes. The Secretary to the Board will notify the following people of the outcome: Dean of School; Head of Division; University Secretary; Head of Finance; Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement; Assistant Secretary, Registry and Academic Administration; Assistant Secretary, External Liaison and Student Services; Director of Marketing and Communications.

2.17 The programme may not be advertised externally until such time as the School Academic Board has confirmed that it may proceed to validation. At this point, the programme may be advertised as 'subject to validation', until such time as the validation process has concluded. Following validation, it is the responsibility of the Secretary to the Panel to notify the following people of the outcome: Dean of School; Head of Division; University Secretary; Head of Finance; Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement; Assistant Secretary, Registry and Academic Administration; Assistant Secretary, External Liaison and Student Services; Director of Marketing and Communications. The Secretary to the Panel is also responsible for notifying the above people of any significant changes that arise through the response to conditions process, for example title change, or removal of core modules.

2.18 The Dean of School is responsible for approving the content of all advertising materials. This responsibility may be delegated, as the Dean considers appropriate. All published information on University programmes must comply with legislation issued by the Competition and Marketing Authority (CMA).

This means that all advertising and other materials must be clear, comprehensive, accurate, and timely, at all stages of the student journey, including the research and application period. No information should be advertised until core modules, content and structure and fees are finalised. Marketing can advise on appropriate content.

Programme Approval Process – QMU delivered programmes

Initial idea discussed with Dean & HoD

Dean supports proposal ← → **Dean does not support proposal**

Dean does not support proposal → **No further action may be taken at this time**

Dean supports proposal → **PDG1 form submitted to PDG**

PDG1 form submitted to PDG

PDG rejects → **No further action may be taken at this time**

PDG confirms Stage 1

PDG asks for more information → (back to PDG1 form submitted to PDG)

PDG confirms Stage 1 → **Costing / Market research / PDG2 form submitted to PDG**

For Stage 2, consult Finance for costings. Consult Tuition Fees Working Group re fees.

Costing / Market research / PDG2 form submitted to PDG

PDG rejects → **No further action may be taken at this time**

PDG confirms Stage 2

PDG asks for more information → (back to Costing / Market research / PDG2 form submitted to PDG)

Inform ILS, Admissions, Marketing, School Office, Student Records, Estates and Facilities

GQE sets provisional validation date

PDG confirms Stage 2 → **Programme structure agreed / Stage 3 form submitted to SAB**

Programme structure agreed Stage 3 form submitted to SAB

SAB rejects → **Dean / HoD decide whether to resubmit**

SAB confirms Stage 3

SAB asks for more information → (back to Programme structure agreed / Stage 3 form submitted to SAB)

Inform ILS, Admissions, Marketing, School Office, Student Records, Estates and Facilities

SAB confirms Stage 3 → **Programme advertised 'subject to validation'**

Inform Marketing and Admissions to start promoting course

Programme advertised 'subject to validation' → **Validation event**

GQE organises validation

Validation event

Programme not approved → **PDG to discuss**

Programme approved → **Programme starts**

Inform ILS, Admissions, Marketing, School Office, Student Records, Estates and Facilities

Programme Approval Process – collaborative programmes

Initial idea discussed with Dean & HoD

Dean supports proposal → Dean does not support proposal

Consult GQE for Stage 1 paperwork

Dean does not support proposal → No further action may be taken at this time

PDG1 form submitted to PDG

PDG rejects → No further action may be taken at this time

PDG confirms Stage 1

PDG asks for more information

Costing
Market research
Risk assessment, due diligence and site report
PDG2 form submitted to PDG

Consult GQE for Stage 2 paperwork, especially costings, risk assessment and due diligence.

Inform ILS, Finance, School Office, Student Records

PDG rejects → No further action may be taken at this time

PDG confirms Stage 2

PDG asks for more information

GQE for sets provisional date for validation

Programme structure agreed
Stage 3 form submitted to SAB

SAB rejects → PDG will decide whether any further action to be taken

SAB confirms Stage 3

SAB asks for more information

Inform ILS, Finance, School Office, Student Records, CAP

Programme advertised 'subject to validation'

GQE organises validation event

Validation event

Programme not approved → PDG will decide whether any further action to be taken

Programme approved → Programme starts

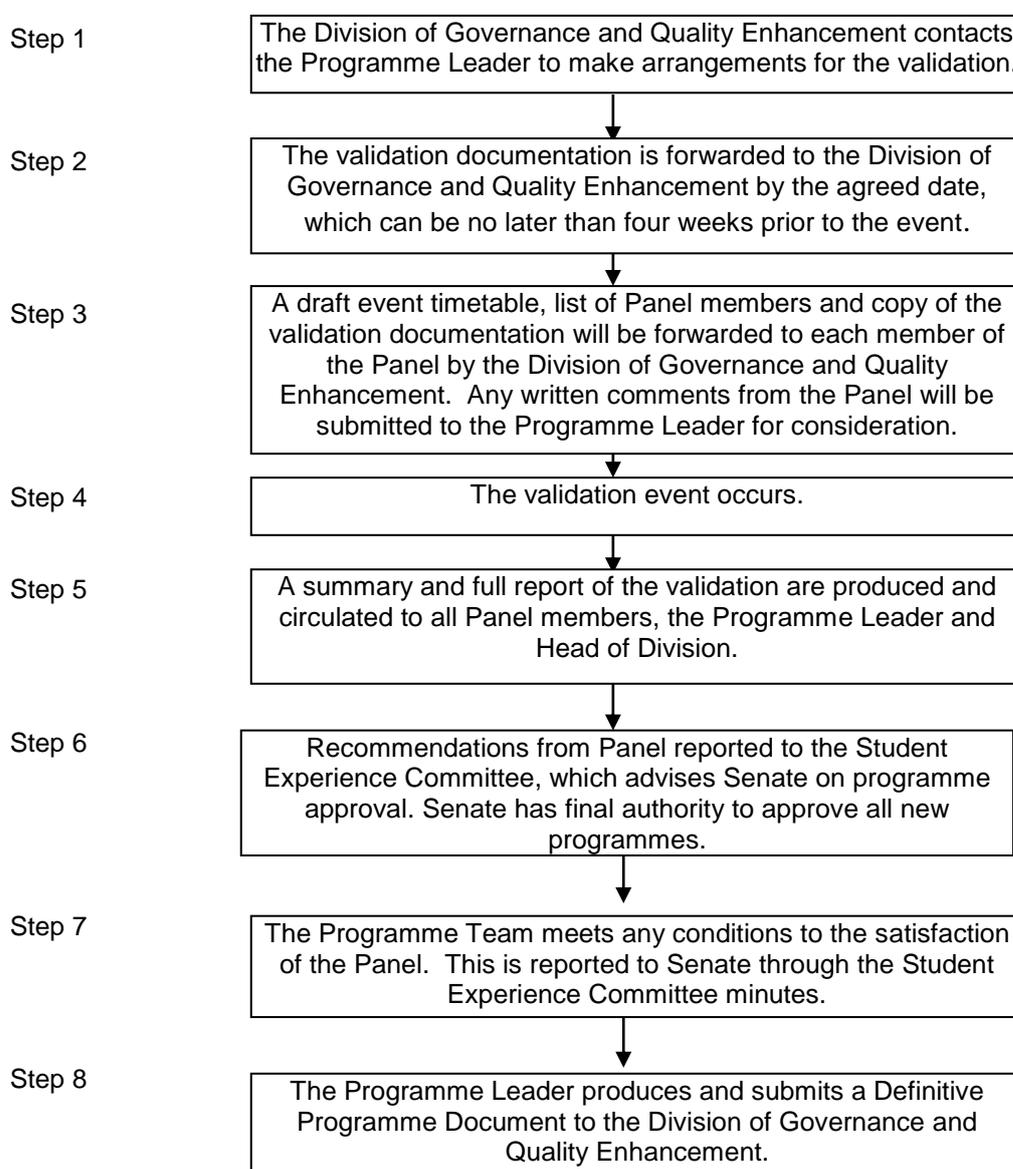Inform ILS, Finance, School Office, Student Records, CAP

3 VALIDATION

Once the approval stage, as set out above is complete, the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will organise a validation event. The diagram below summarises the steps in the validation process. For collaborative programmes please read in conjunction with guidance on Academic Collaborations.

3.1 Validation events normally take place four to eight months prior to the commencement of the programme, allowing time for the validation process to be completed and for the Programme Team to meet conditions if necessary.

3.2 Validation of a new programme must take place within 18 months of approval of the proposal by Senate. This is not flexible. If an extension is sought, the proposal must be referred via the School Academic Board to the Learning and Teaching Panel, which reports to the Student Experience Committee.

Validation process – key stages

Step	
Step 1	The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement contacts the Programme Leader to make arrangements for the validation.
Step 2	The validation documentation is forwarded to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement by the agreed date, which can be no later than four weeks prior to the event.
Step 3	A draft event timetable, list of Panel members and copy of the validation documentation will be forwarded to each member of the Panel by the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement. Any written comments from the Panel will be submitted to the Programme Leader for consideration.
Step 4	The validation event occurs.
Step 5	A summary and full report of the validation are produced and circulated to all Panel members, the Programme Leader and Head of Division.
Step 6	Recommendations from Panel reported to the Student Experience Committee, which advises Senate on programme approval. Senate has final authority to approve all new programmes.
Step 7	The Programme Team meets any conditions to the satisfaction of the Panel. This is reported to Senate through the Student Experience Committee minutes.
Step 8	The Programme Leader produces and submits a Definitive Programme Document to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

Step 1 – Organising the validation process

3.3   Staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will normally contact the Programme Leader to discuss the validation process after stage two of the proposal has been approved by the Portfolio Development Group.

3.4   Once the proposal has been reported to Senate through the School Academic Board minutes, the Programme Leader and Staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement must confirm a date for the validation event, including the deadline for all documentation to be received by the Secretary.

3.5   The Programme Leader must provide the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement with full details of nominations for external Panel members (see paragraph 9 of this Section for the criteria). The Head of Division (or nominee) will make initial contact with the proposed external Panel member to ascertain their availability. The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will subsequently confirm approval and liaise directly on the event arrangements.

3.6   The Programme Leader should meet with the Secretary and relevant School Manager before submission of documentation. This allows the Secretary to brief the Programme Leader on the detail of the validation process. It also allows the Programme Leader to brief the Secretary on any particular requirements or circumstances such as the involvement of PSRBs, collaboration or a change to established procedures. The School Manager can offer advice and guidance on School policy and regulations.

Step 2 – Preparing the validation documentation

3.7   The validation documentation must be forwarded to the Secretary by the date agreed, which must be not less than four weeks prior to the event. This is not flexible. This is the time required to copy and distribute the documents; allow the Panel to scrutinise them in detail; and secure, collate and circulate feedback prior to the event.

3.8   The documentation for validation must include the following:

- Validation Document;
- Programme Specification;
- Student Handbook;
- Placement Handbook (if appropriate);
- Curriculum vitae of all teaching staff intended for the new programme;

Joint validation events with PSRBs may require additional documents, as determined by the relevant body.

3.9   The documentation should be prepared by a Programme Planning Team. The Team should be led by the Programme Leader and should include staff who will be teaching on the programme (including those from other Divisions). It is good practice to include the following additional members:

- Student and graduate representatives (especially for review and revalidation of an existing programme, but also useful when planning a new programme in a linked area);
- Employer representatives;
- Service users (where possible).

Formal minutes of programme planning meetings are not required, but it is good practice to record action points.

Step 3 – Preparing for the validation event.

3.10 After the validation documentation has been received by the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement in its entirety, the agenda, list of panellists and copy of the documentation will be forwarded to each member of the Panel. This will normally be no later than three weeks prior to the event. Panel members will also be directed to the Validation and Review Briefing Notes for Panel Members' publication. A copy of the agenda and list of panellists will be sent to the Programme Leader.

3.11 It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to invite the following people to the event and circulate the agenda and any other materials they may need (including the validation documentation):

- Programme Team;
- Head of Division;
- Dean of School;
- Student and graduate representatives (for revalidation of an existing programme);
  - Representatives of employers or placement supervisors (if appropriate);
- Service users (if appropriate).

3.12 The Panel will be asked to submit comments on the validation documentation prior to the event, using the University's checklist for validation of new programmes. Comments received will be forwarded to the Panel and the Programme Leader prior to the event, whenever possible. This process allows for the clarification of questions or concerns prior to the event and for the Team to prepare thoroughly, so that the event itself runs as smoothly and effectively as possible.

Step 4 – The validation event

3.13 The primary function of the Panel is to evaluate the rationale and coherence, separately and collectively of:

- Admission requirements;
- Learning outcomes;
- Curriculum and content;
- Teaching/learning methods;
- Assessment methods and regulations;
- Student support;
- Programme management;
- Quality assurance and enhancement.

3.14   The Panel will also evaluate:

- Employer and student demand;
- The accessibility of the award for all students. Teams are expected to pay due regard to relevant legislation and, where appropriate, to promote equality in respect of the protected characteristics, as defined under the Equality Act 2010. The nine protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation[3].;
- Commitment to widening access and retention, including through contextualised admissions;
- Staff support, including quality and experience of academic staff;
- Adherence to QMU or PSRB policies and regulations;
- Articulation with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework;
- Adherence to Benchmark Statements and other external reference points;
- Alignment with QMU's mission, strategies, Graduate Attributes and other internal reference points.

3.15   Following scrutiny of the documentation, the Panel may agree that certain issues are clear and do not require further discussion. This will be recorded in the report of the event.

3.16   The Panel should adopt a peer group approach to provide a constructive and collegiate setting, while at the same time conducting a rigorous evaluation of the merits of the submission.

3.17   Having scrutinised the proposal, the Panel may recommend to the Student Experience Committee and Senate that:

- The programme be validated subject to conditions (all conditions must be satisfied before the programme can be considered validated);
- The programme be validated (with further advisory recommendations, as appropriate);
- The programme be not validated.

3.18   Conditions of validation relate to issues that, if not satisfactorily addressed, would prevent the programme from running. Panels are therefore expected to maintain a clear distinction between mandatory conditions, and recommendations, which are advisory in nature. Where the Panel imposes a significant number of conditions, this may bring into question the validity of the programme. The maximum number of conditions applied should normally not exceed five. In cases where more than five conditions are set by the Panel, the programme will not normally be validated. Conditions and recommendations should be stated in clear and unambiguous terms. Any bullet points or sub headings attached to conditions must relate directly to the condition.

3.19   Panels are not permitted to set resource related conditions, as these will have been addressed prior to the event progressing. However, if a Panel has any concerns, these may be discussed with the Team at the event, or on request through a separate meeting with the Dean and/or Head of Division. Where the

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[3] See https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics and http://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/equality-legislation/.

Panel feels unable to validate the programme on the basis of unresolved resource issues, this should be referred to the School Academic Board for consideration and response.

3.20   If the programme is validated, or validated, subject to conditions, then the Panel must also set the date for review. This is usually five years, based on the nature of the programme, including discipline, mode of delivery and duration.

3.21   Normally all proposals must undergo a validation event by May of the preceding academic session at the latest if they are to be offered in the following academic session. Extensions beyond 31 May require the approval of the Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement, who will take advice from the University Secretary, as appropriate.

3.22   The Panel will identify aspects of the programme worthy of noting, commendation and wider dissemination. Such commendations relating to areas of innovation and exceptional practice will be detailed in the event report and summary.

Step 5 – The validation report

3.23   A summary report of the validation event will normally be produced within 48 working hours and circulated to all Panel members for comment and to the Programme Leader for accuracy and to Head of Division and Dean of School for information

3.24   A full report will normally be produced within 20 working days and circulated for comment to all Panel members and for the accuracy to the Programme Leader. The relevant Head of Division and Dean will receive a copy of the report for information. Any responses to the report must be received by the date specified.

Step 6 – Approval

3.25   The report and Panel's overall recommendation will be considered on behalf of Senate by the Student Experience Committee. This should normally happen no later than the final meeting of the Student Experience Committee each session for a programme due to start in the next academic year. Senate has ultimate authority to approve Panel recommendations, acting on advice from the Student Experience Committee.

3.26   The Learning and Teaching Panel, which reports to the Student Experience Committee, is responsible for evaluating the consistency of implementation and effectiveness of procedures governing validation (and review) through its annual consideration of all validation and review reports. The Panel can make recommendations to the Student Experience Committee on the development of procedures, based on its review of the full set of reports each academic year.

3.2.7   The School Academic Board will receive a copy of the validation report for information and to share practice.

Step 7 – Conditions

3.28 The Team's response to conditions of validation must be submitted, in writing, to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, no later than the date specified at the event. The Secretary to the event will forward the response to conditions to the Panel. Panel members will each be asked to confirm by a specified date that the response is satisfactory. This will be reported to the Student Experience Committee and Senate. If the Panel is not satisfied with the response, this will normally be resolved by negotiation with the Programme Team. The Panel may delegate authority to the Convener to resolve outstanding issues. Exceptionally, the matter may be referred to the School Academic Board for consideration.

Step 8 – The Definitive Programme Document

3.29 The Programme Leader must produce a Definitive Programme Document and submit it to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement once the response to conditions has been approved by the Panel and no later than one month prior to the start of the programme.

3.30 The Definitive Programme Document must incorporate any changes required by the Panel. It should be marked as 'definitive' and the date amended to distinguish it from previous versions. It should be submitted electronically to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement. Governance and Quality Enhancement staff will file the institutional archive copy and pass a copy to Student Records and the School Office.

3.31 The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will maintain a full set of all Definitive Programme Documents and will be responsible for communicating formally with PSRBs.

4 VALIDATION BY CORRESPONDENCE

4.1 A face-to-face meeting of the Panel may not be required for a major programme change (see below), for example leading to a distance learning outcome, or the addition of a new named strand. In such cases, it may be possible for approval to be given by correspondence. The Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement will determine the most appropriate approval process, taking advice from the University Secretary and Dean, as appropriate.

4.2 If a programme is presented for validation by correspondence, normally the Panel from the most recent validation will be re-appointed. Where one or more of the panellists is not available, alternative participants with appropriate prior experience of validation and review will be sought.

4.3 Each member of the Panel must respond in writing with any questions or concerns within two weeks of receiving the documentation. The Programme Team will be asked to respond to the questions and concerns, also in writing, within a timeframe to be determined in consultation with the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement. The Panel will subsequently review the Programme Team's comments and provide their opinion on approval. All Panel members must be in agreement. If not, then further comment will be required of the Programme Team.

4.4 A report will be prepared and provided to the Student Experience Committee, Senate and School Academic Board as set out in paragraphs 3.25 to 3.27 above.

5 PROGRAMME MODIFICATION

For collaborative programmes, please read in conjunction with the guidance on Academic Collaborations.

5.1 Suggested change(s) to a programme may be proposed by a Programme Committee, individual or group from within the University. Changes may arise from student or other feedback, or as a result of changes to the external environment. In all cases, proposed changes must be evidence based. Programme changes may take the form of major programme changes requiring peer scrutiny validation (either face-to-face or by correspondence), or minor modifications at the module level.

Major programme change

5.2 Major programme changes involve substantial revision and reformulation of a programme, or part of a programme. Changes may include those that significantly affect the programme's awards, philosophy, aims and objectives, learning, teaching and assessment strategy, overall structure or its management. A major change is determined by the nature and impact of the proposed revision and not by the number of modules or credit value involved. Examples of major change might include:

- Significant change to the overall programme aims and/or learning outcomes that impact on curriculum, assessment and other aspects of the student experience;
- Any significant change resulting from professional body requirements or other changes in the external environment, for example requirement to embed additional material in the curriculum across a number of core modules;
- Change to the assessment pattern for a number of modules where these collectively significantly alter the overall student workload, underpinning learning experience or variety of assessment components;
- Change to the structure of the programme which results in the student experience being significantly altered, for example merging a number of modules, adding a number of new modules or addition of an extended placement.

Note that a change from face-to-face to distance learning delivery will normally be via the major change route rather than full review. This does not apply for collaborative programmes, which require a full review event for a change in the mode of delivery.

5.3 Programme Leaders putting forward changes that affect the programme as a whole, or a number of modules contributing to the programme, are required to consult with the Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement, who can advise on whether a major change event is required. Advice must also be sought on the process to follow in the event of a requested programme title change.

5.4 Major programme changes are usually implemented at the start of an academic session and normally addressed at review events. However, they may also occur between reviews, and if so, should follow the steps detailed below.

Step 1 – Approval from Dean of School and notification to Governance and Quality Enhancement

5.5 The Dean of School should approve the Team's request to proceed with the major change. Once approved, the Programme Leader should notify staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement so a date can be agreed.

Step 2 – The major change process

5.6 After the proposal has been approved by the Dean of School and a date has been agreed with staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, the major programme change will go forward for validation. A full event may not be necessary for a major programme change between reviews. However, peer scrutiny of the proposed changes will be required. In such cases, it may be possible for approval to be given by correspondence. If a full event is deemed necessary, all procedures as detailed in paragraph 8 below will apply, with the following modifications:

5.7 As a minimum, the Panel will include two internal staff, where possible from different Schools, one of whom meets the criteria for Convener and one of whom meets the criteria for internal panellist. There will also be one external with a professional and academic background. Where possible, panellists will be those involved in the original validation or most recent review.

5.8 The documentary requirements are as follows:

- A summary of proposed changes, including the rationale for presenting major changes between review events;
- Evidence of consultation with students and other stakeholders;
- A statement on transitional arrangements for continuing students;
- Other supporting documentation as appropriate and advised by staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, for example module descriptors;

Step 3 – Final approval

5.9 A report will be prepared and provided to the Student Experience Committee, Senate and School Academic Board as set out in paragraphs 3.25 to 3.27 above.

5.10 The Programme Leader must submit a revised Definitive Programme Document and Programme Specification to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement to replace the previous versions.

Minor Modifications

5.11 Minor programme modification may include:

- Adding, or replacing modules with **new modules**, defined as modules not

previously validated within the University;

- Adding, or replacing modules with **imported modules**, defined as instances where a module validated by another Division is proposed as a core or elective within another programme;
- **Withdrawing** a module without replacement;
- **Changing** a module, which can include changes to the module title, content, teaching practices, modes of delivery, or nature of assessments.

However, if a number of module descriptors are being changed in such a way as to affect the structure, aims or overall assessment philosophy of the programme then it may be considered a major programme change and paragraphs 5.2 – 5.10 will apply.

5.12 PSRBs will typically need to approve any changes to programmes leading to accreditation or registration. Early consultation with the relevant PSRB is necessary to determine the sequence of events, in particular whether QMU or PSRB approval should be sought first, or whether these processes happen in parallel.

5.13 The views of students affected by major change(s) or minor modification(s) must normally be sought prior to introducing any changes to the regulations for the assessment or progression of students. Programme Teams are also encouraged to consult the External Examiner whenever possible about any changes to modules and programmes.

Adding/replacing with a new module

5.14 To add a new module to a validated programme, the Programme Committee should submit the relevant module descriptor and a module change form to the relevant School Academic Board, or sub-committee, for approval. If the new module is replacing an existing module, that module descriptor should also be attached.

5.15 The School Academic Board has the authority to refer new modules back to the relevant Programme Committee where it feels that:

- Insufficient information is included on the module descriptor, or insufficient explanation provided of the reasons for the change;
- Discussion has not involved all key stakeholders;
- The proposal constitutes a major change as defined above;
- The number of changes proposed within a particular programme requires to be considered collectively as a major change.

Adding/replacing with an imported module

5.16 Imported modules do not normally require re-validation but their function in the programme under consideration must be approved. Where an imported module is presented as part of the curriculum for the validation of a new programme, the validation Panel should consider only the appropriateness of the module within the context of the named award. It is not necessary to re-validate the module, except where it has to be modified to fit the new award.

5.17 Imported modules from within the University should follow the same procedures as those in paragraphs 5.14 and 5.15 above.

5.18   Modules may occasionally be imported from other institutions, following the same procedures as those in paragraph 5.14 and 5.15 above. However, the general academic validity of modules from Scottish Higher Education Institutions should be accepted and only the appropriateness of the module within the context of the named award should be considered.

5.18   Normally, if individual students wish to use credit from certificated learning at another institution this will be dealt with through the University's procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning. Details, including a module descriptor and transcript should be provided for consideration by the relevant Board of Examiners.

Withdrawing a module

5.20   To withdraw a module without replacing it, the Programme Committee must submit the module change form and a copy of the module descriptor to the relevant School Academic Board, or sub-committee, for approval. The School Academic Board will need confirmation that all programmes and students accessing the module have been informed and that alternative arrangements can be put in place.

Module change

5.21   Most module changes can be approved by the Programme Committee and reported to the School Academic Board. For collaborative programmes, this responsibility rests with the Joint Board of Studies.

5.22   A summary of types of module change and the usual route for approval is provided below. The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement can provide guidance on the examples below, and other types of module change not listed in the table.

5.2.3   Minor changes must be reported to the School Academic Board through the minutes of the Programme Committee or Joint Board of Studies and highlighted on a cover sheet. In most cases the School Academic Board would merely note the changes without discussion. If a proposed change has an impact on another programme that accesses the module as an elective, the notification to the School Academic Board should allow enough time for this to be highlighted and problems resolved before the next iteration of the module.

5.24   If a module change needs to come to the School Academic Board, the Programme Committee must submit the old and new module descriptors along with the module change form for approval.

5.25   If the Programme Committee or School Academic Board recommends approval of the module change then it will be reported to Student Records and the School Office by the Secretary to the Committee or Board.

5.26   Normally any module changes will take effect in the next academic year. The Programme Team is responsible for ensuring that all students are informed of the change(s).

5.27   The Programme Leader is responsible for incorporating any approved changes into the Definitive Programme Document held in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

Type of change	Programme Committee	School Academic Board
Module Co-ordinator name	For noting	N/A
Member of teaching team	-	N/A
Texts/reading list	Notify library only	N/A
Pre-requisites/co-requisites	Yes	N/A
Formative assessments[4]	Yes	N/A
Minor changes / clarifications to wording of learning outcomes	Yes	N/A
Minor changes to delivery pattern and learning experiences	Yes	N/A
Major change to pattern of delivery – e.g. from classroom to distance learning, weekly to week block	Yes	Yes
A change in assessment weighting of no more than 10% (e.g. from 80/20 to 60/40)	Yes	For noting
A change to word length of an assignment or duration of an exam of no more than 25% (e.g. from 2 hours to 2.5)	Yes	For noting
Change to semester of delivery	Yes	For noting
Module Title	Yes	For noting
Addition or removal of learning outcomes	Yes	Yes
Change to assessment format or pattern	Yes	Yes
A change in assessment weighting of greater than 10% (eg from 80/20 to 50/50)	Yes	Yes
Significant change to word length or exam duration (more than 25%) (e.g. from 2 hours to 3)	Yes	Yes
Addition or removal of assessment component	Yes	Yes
Change in credit value	Yes	Yes
New module	Yes	Yes
Module withdrawal	Yes	Yes

Other modifications

5.28   Any other types of programme changes, such as changes to programme regulations, should be submitted, with a rationale, to the relevant School Academic Board, or sub committee, for approval.

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[4] The University does not require teams to specify formative assessments on module descriptors. This allows for flexibility. However, there may be some cases where the formative task is an important part of the learning experience and therefore worth specifying on the descriptor. This is especially the case where the formative task leads on to the summative assessment.

6   PROGRAMME WITHDRAWAL

6.1   It may be desirable or necessary to withdraw certain programmes from the University's portfolio of provision. Such withdrawals should be properly planned and all relevant students and staff fully informed and consulted. Arrangements to support existing students must be considered. It is therefore required that programme withdrawals be approved by the following procedure.

6.2   The proposed withdrawal must be confirmed by the Dean of School, to assure alignment with the School Operational Plan. Normally, withdrawals will be discussed as part of the development of the School Operational Plan. The Dean will inform the Marketing and Communications Office and Admissions and Recruitment.

6.3   The Head of Admissions and Recruitment must be consulted regarding information to be provided to current or future applicants. It is essential that full information is provided to any applicants holding offers for the withdrawn programme.

6.4   An application for programme withdrawal must be submitted on the programme withdrawal form to the School Academic Board, which reports to Senate. On this form, the Division must clarify the reasons for the proposed withdrawal and the arrangements to be made for students still on the programme. Senate has final authority to approve the withdrawal of programmes from the University portfolio.

6.5   If a programme is about to be withdrawn but has reached the end of its review period, an interim review may be required in order to ensure those students still completing the programme continue to receive an appropriate quality of learning experience. The Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement, in consultation with the University Secretary, will determine the review format on receipt and consideration of the programme withdrawal form.

6.6   Once the withdrawal has been approved, the Division must liaise with all affected support areas, especially Admissions, to ensure they are updated. Any implications for the Learning Resource Centre should be discussed with the Academic Liaison Librarian.

7 ANNUAL MONITORING

7.1 Annual monitoring helps ensure the continued quality of the student experience, the appropriateness of learning aims and outcomes, and the effectiveness of curriculum and assessment strategies. It provides an important opportunity for:

- Staff to evaluate, critically, the programmes for which they are responsible;
- Staff and students to engage in dialogue around the student experience;
- Each School Academic Board to understand fully the entire range of programmes for which it is responsible;
- Each School Academic Board, on behalf of the Senate, to exercise its responsibility for ensuring the academic standard of programmes offered in the name of Queen Margaret University;
- Identifying actions that will enhance the student experience;
- The sharing of good practice across the School and the University;
- Identifying areas requiring remedial action, where necessary;
- Staff to report on action taken in response to any recommendations from External Examiners and other stakeholders.

Annual monitoring reports also contribute to the evidence base for periodic internal subject review and external review processes, including Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) and, for some programmes, PSRB review.

7.2 Report authors draw on a wide evidence base to inform actions for the following academic session. It is expected that report authors will consider qualitative and quantitative datasets, including, but not limited to:

- Data on admissions, progression and retention;
- Graduate destinations;
- Survey results, including National Student Survey (for eligible programmes) and QMU Student Survey results;
- Module evaluation results;
- Programme Committee and Student-Staff Consultative Committee minutes;
- External Examiner reports and feedback from other stakeholders, e.g. employers, service users and PSRBs.

Report authors are encouraged to consider evidence that becomes available through formal and informal channels. The latter might include staff and student conversations and email correspondence that do not directly feed into the standard documented quality procedures listed above.

7.3 Identified actions are clearly recorded within the annual monitoring template together with a clear indication of timescales and responsibilities for implementing the agreed changes.

Programme report

7.4 Each Programme Team must produce an annual monitoring report for each academic session. A report template and guidance notes are available on QMU's Quality website. The diagram on the following page illustrates the key stages and responsibilities.

7.5 In some cases it may be appropriate for a single report to cover a number of related programmes. The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement can advise on the format of reports and appropriateness of combining two or more programmes within a single report form.

7.6 Programme annual monitoring reports are completed in two stages. Stage one should normally be submitted to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement no later than 30 June. This timing coincides with the end of semester two and allows for timely identification of actions to be put in place before or during the coming academic session.

7.7 The stage two report should normally be submitted to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement no later than 31 October. Stage two provides the opportunity to amend the report content to reflect additional matters arising from consideration of evidence that becomes available after 30 June. Most obviously this includes progression and retention data and National Student Survey results (typically provided in July).

7.8 The main audience for the report is the Programme Committee, which should meet to discuss and approve the report and action plan. It is important that the views of students and all staff are represented at these meetings.

7.9 The Programme Committee will consider the report at the semester one meeting. If any changes to the report are agreed at this meeting, an updated template will be submitted to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement after the meeting.

7.10 It is expected that the Programme Committee will consider progress towards actions at the semester two meeting. The Programme Committee may also with to discuss other matters arising through the report at this meeting, for example further development of good practice.

7.11 Reports should be made available to the wider student population, either on the Hub, or through another agreed mechanism. It is suggested that annual monitoring and External Examiner reports be co-located on the Hub to facilitate student access.

7.12 Exceptionally, a report may contain information which is it not appropriate to share beyond the immediate audience of staff in the Division. Any such information should be captured in the final section of the reporting pro forma. The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will discuss with the Head of Division whether a report can be published in full. Reports will only be published in full with explicit agreement from the Head of Division.

7.13 The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will provide each Head of Division and Dean of School with a copy of all programme level Annual Monitoring Reports from their Division/School shortly after the deadline for receipt of such reports.

7.14   Heads of Division are responsible for providing feedback to Teams on the content of reports. This will include an indication of any actions planned to address matters that cannot be resolved directly by the Team. Often, but not always, such matters relate to resourcing.

Programme annual monitoring report stages

Stage and deadline	Responsible	Key audience(s) and purpose
Stage one Programme report to GQE by **30 June**	**Programme Leader**	**Programme Team** Reflection on the evidence base available by 30 June; early action planning for coming year
Stage two Programme report to GQE by **31 October**	**Programme Leader**	**Programme Team** Opportunity to amend stage one report following reflection on additional evidence since 30 June.
Stage 2 Programme Reports to Heads of Division by **15 November**	**GQE**	**Head of Division** Oversight of all programmes in Division; supports preparation of School report
Programme Committee consideration; publication of report on the Hub **Semester one**	**Programme Leader**	**Programme Committee/Class Reps/ wider student population** Facilitates engagement with programme development/actions.
On-going consideration through Programme Committee or other mechanism(s) **Full academic year**	**Programme Leader**	**Programme Committee/Class reps/wider student population** On-going engagement with actions/projects; outcomes from AMR remain visible and

School composite report

7.15   The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, in collaboration with the School Manager and Dean, will be responsible for producing a composite summary report on behalf of each School. Normally, this report will be available by 15 December.

7.16   Heads of Division will support the preparation of the composite School Reports by identifying key themes for their Division to highlight within the report.

7.17   The composite School Reports will be considered and approved at the subsequent meeting of the School Academic Board.
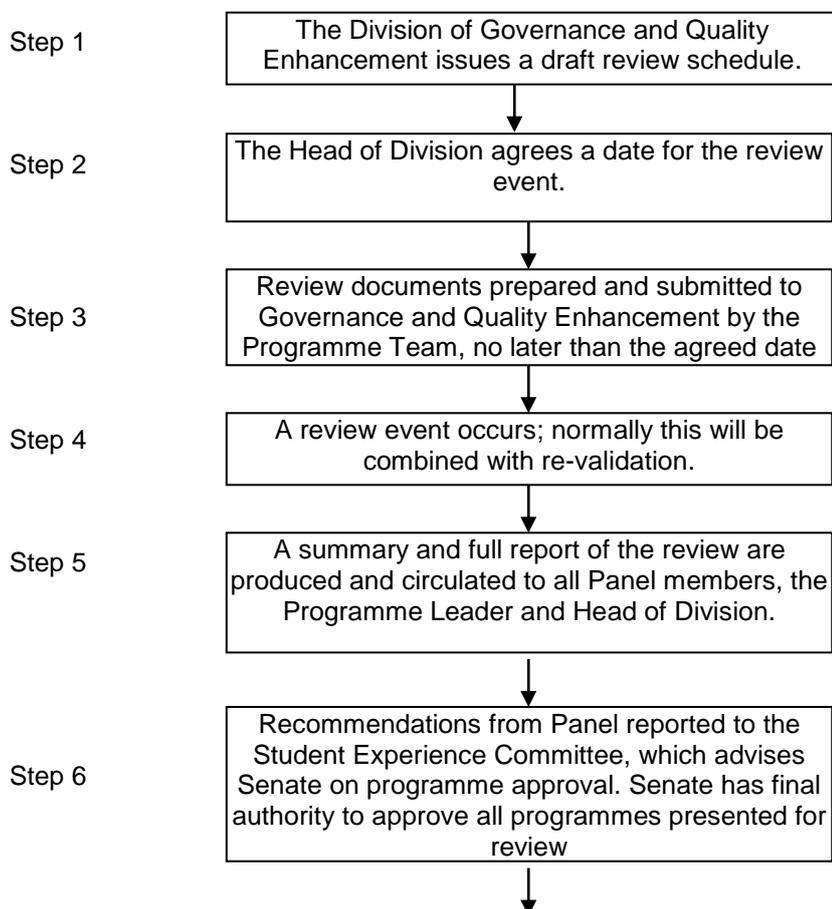
7.18   It is expected that the School Academic Board will maintain oversight of progress towards actions at subsequent meetings. The Board may also with to discuss other matters arising through the report at subsequent meetings, for example further development of good practice.

7.19   The School reports will also be considered by the Student Experience Committee, which reserves the right to remit items back to the School Academic Board.

7.20   The Student Experience Committee will track progress against actions that have been identified for the attention on an institution-level. The mechanism for this will depend on the number and nature of actions identified, but typically, the Committee will receive one or more progress reports at subsequent meeting(s).

7.21   School Reports will be made available to all staff on the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement Intranet site.
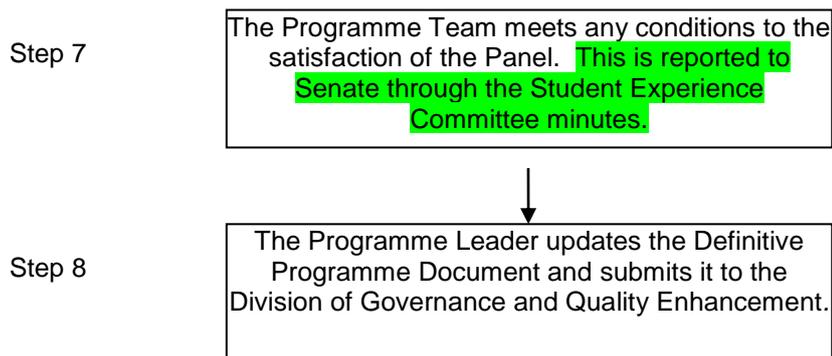
8   PROGRAMME REVIEW

8.1   Programmes are validated for a maximum period of five years, whereupon they are subject to review. This is also an opportunity to present for approval any major changes to the programme.

The diagram below summarises the programme review process.

Review process- key stages

Step 1	The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement issues a draft review schedule.
Step 2	The Head of Division agrees a date for the review event.
Step 3	Review documents prepared and submitted to Governance and Quality Enhancement by the Programme Team, no later than the agreed date
Step 4	A review event occurs; normally this will be combined with re-validation.
Step 5	A summary and full report of the review are produced and circulated to all Panel members, the Programme Leader and Head of Division.
Step 6	Recommendations from Panel reported to the Student Experience Committee, which advises Senate on programme approval. Senate has final authority to approve all programmes presented for review

Step 7	The Programme Team meets any conditions to the satisfaction of the Panel. This is reported to Senate through the Student Experience Committee minutes.
Step 8	The Programme Leader updates the Definitive Programme Document and submits it to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

Step 1 – Draft schedule

8.2 The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will issue a draft review schedule to Deans and Heads of Division approximately 18 months prior to the start of the new approval period.

Step 2 – Schedule approval

8.3 The Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement, in consultation with the Deans and Heads of Division will be responsible for finalising the schedule and confirming dates for individual review and re-validation events.

Step 3 – Review documentation

8.4 Complete details on the content and format of the review documentation to be prepared by the Programme Team are outlined in the Validation and Review Guidance Notes (available on the Quality website). The documentation must be submitted to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement no later than four weeks prior to the review event. Normally, the review event will be combined with a revalidation, in which case validation documentation should also be submitted as outlined in paragraph 3 above.

The process for planning and validating the revised programme is as set out in paragraph 3. However, a review event takes, as its starting point, the evidence of how the programme has operated in the previous period of approval.

Step 4 – Review event

8.5 A review event normally takes place six to nine months prior to the end of the approved validation period, allowing time for the review process and for the Programme Team to meet conditions, if necessary.

8.6 The purpose of the review is to re-evaluate the validity of the aims and learning outcomes and to ascertain;

- How the programme has been operated and managed;
- How standards have been maintained and how this has been recognised;
- The ways in which the programme has met the needs of students, employers and the wider community as represented by feedback and performance against KPIs;

- The extent to which all the previously expressed aspirations and ambitions have been fulfilled;
- That the curriculum is properly aligned with external points of reference including the SCQF, QAA codes of practice and Subject Benchmarks
- The extent to which the institution has been able to provide an environment in which the programme can flourish.

8.7 The review focuses on the academic health of the Programme, its relationship with the community and planned future developments. The Panel and the Programme Team discuss how the programme might develop in the future in order to meet its aims, learning outcomes, benchmark statements and the demands of the community more fully and to ensure the ongoing maintenance of its standards.

8.8 The Panel will carry out a critical appraisal of the programme, engaging in discussion, as appropriate, with the Programme Leader, Programme Team, Heads of contributing Divisions, students, and other stakeholders, as deemed necessary.

8.9 The Panel will focus on evaluating:

- The academic health and standard of the programme;
- Progress and changes in the programme since its validation or previous review;
- The continuing need for the programme, including the scale of student applications and intake, and its effectiveness and efficiency in staff and resource terms;
- The academic validity of proposed changes in the programme.

8.10 The Panel will consider these issues and will make comments and recommendations to the Programme Team and, if necessary, conditions to be met for the continued approval of the programme. The Panel will normally recommend the continuation of approval of an established programme for a further five years, unless there are good grounds to recommend that the student intake be modified or that the programme no longer be offered.

8.11 The Panel may recommend to the Student Experience Committee and to Senate that:

- The programme continue in approval without conditions;
- The programme continue in approval subject to specified conditions being met;
- The programme not continue in approval.

8.12 The Panel shall additionally specify the date of the next programme review and may identify particular issues to be addressed by that review or in the annual monitoring reports.

Step 5 – Review report

8.13 A summary report of the review event will normally be produced within 48 working hours of the review and circulated to all Panel members for comment, to the Programme Leader for accuracy and to Head of Division and Dean of School for information.

8.14   A full report will normally be produced within 20 working days and circulated for comment to all Panel members and for accuracy to the Programme Leader. The relevant Head of Division and Dean will receive a copy of the report for information. Any responses to the report must be received by the date specified.

Step 6 – Approval

8.15   The report and Panel's overall recommendation will be considered on behalf of Senate by the Student Experience Committee. This should normally happen no later than the final meeting of the Student Experience Committee each session for a revalidated programme due to start in the next academic year. Senate has ultimate authority to approve Panel recommendations, acting on advice from the Student Experience Committee.

8.16   The review report will also be received by the School Academic Board for information.

Step 7 – Conditions

8.17   The Team's response to conditions of review must be submitted, in writing, to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, no later than the date specified at the event. The Secretary to the event will forward the response to conditions to the Panel. Panel members will each be asked to confirm by a specified date that the response is satisfactory. This will be reported to the Student Experience Committee and Senate. If the Panel is not satisfied with the response, this will normally be resolved by negotiation with the Programme Team. The Panel may delegate authority to the Convener to resolve outstanding issues. Exceptionally, the matter may be referred to the School Academic Board for consideration.

Step 8 – Definitive Programme Document

8.18   The Programme Leader must produce an updated Definitive Programme Document and submit it to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement once the response to conditions has been approved by the Panel and at least one month prior to the start of the programme.

8.19   The Definitive Programme Document must incorporate any changes required by the Panel. It should be marked as 'definitive' and the date amended to distinguish it from previous versions. It should be submitted electronically to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement. Governance and Quality Enhancement staff will file the institutional archive copy and pass a copy to Student Records.

8.20   The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will maintain a full set of all Definitive Programme Documents and will be responsible for communicating formally with PSRBs.

9.0   PANEL MEMBERSHIP & SELECTION VALIDATION AND REVIEW

9.1   The volume of validations and reviews in any one academic session can be very high, and the availability of suggested Panel members is always a

complicating factor. Nonetheless every attempt will be made to establish a Panel at least two months prior to the event.

9.2 The Deputy Principal, University Secretary and Head of the host Division must approve all Panel members.

9.3 The overall aim of the validation and review process is to secure for the students of Queen Margaret University a high quality educational experience. The most important function is to assess the quality and standard of programmes. As such, it is critical that Panels established for validation and review purposes are composed of individuals with sufficient relevant experience to make such judgements.

9.4 However, to promote the development of staff without experience in validation and review, Panels should normally include one inexperienced internal member. To facilitate this, Deans of School and Heads of Division will be asked to identify suitable staff to the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement at the start of each session.

9.5 To ensure that appropriate members are selected for Panels, consideration will be given to the need for specific skills, for example, experience of clinical placements.

9.6 Panels for postgraduate events should normally include a majority of panellists who have experience of teaching at postgraduate level. Panels for approval of collaborative programmes should normally include at least one member with experience of collaborative arrangements at the University.

9.7 To ensure continuity, it can be helpful for a review Panel to include individuals drawn from the original validation or previous review event. However, it is recognised that this is not always practical or possible.

Structure

9.8. The size of the Panel will vary depending on the nature of the event, but as a minimum guide the following will normally apply:

- A Convener, drawn from the School other than that which hosts the programme under consideration (where this is not possible, the Convener may be drawn from another Division within the same School);
- A member from the School which houses the programme under consideration, and who is not directly involved with it;
- At least one member of staff from a School other than that which houses the programme under consideration (an academic peer from another discipline within the institution);
- At least one external advisor who meets all of the criteria in paragraph 9.10 below. If one person can not be found to meet all of the criteria, then additional external people may be added until all the criteria have been met;
- Members of PSRB if applicable.
- A student member appointed by the Students' Union and Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement from a Division other than that which houses the programme under consideration.

A member of staff from the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement will act as Secretary to the Panel.

Convener criteria

9.9 The criteria for a Convener include:

- Head of Division (or equivalent), Programme Leader (or equivalent), Senior Lecturer or Lecturer with experience of acting as Convener; or
- Lecturer without experience of convening, who has nonetheless participated in a minimum of three events and has other relevant experience.

9.10 In the case of a joint validation or review event with a PSRB, a member of QM staff will usually chair the meeting.

9.11 In the case of a review, it can be helpful to appoint the same Convener as the most recent validation or review. However, it is recognised that this is not always practical or possible.

External member criteria

9.12 The criteria for external Panel members include:

- Experience in academia in an appropriate subject or discipline; *and*
- Experience in professional practice of that subject, in the employment of graduates, or industry; *and*
- Experience of the validation and/or review process.

In normal circumstances, the University will ensure that:

- There are no existing links between the proposed external Panel member and the programme/Division;
- Former University students, members of staff, governors, External Examiners of the programme presented for approval or a related Queen Margaret University programme will not be appointed.

Internal member criteria

9.13 The internal Panel members are selected on the basis of their experience in a number of areas for example:

- As an External Examiner within the previous five years;
- Teaching on, or running a programme similar to that being validated: by mode of study, level, or subject area;
- Relevant disciplinary expertise gained in related subject areas, other institutions or professional practice;
- Assessment of a programme through validation or professional accreditation events;
- Academic understanding, in the sense that most members of academic staff have taught and managed learning, and are therefore able to understand the issues of running and teaching a programme, albeit not in their discipline;

- Research expertise, especially for Honours degrees and postgraduate programmes.

10   APPROVAL OF DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMMES

10.1   Distance learning is defined as a method of providing Higher Education that involves the transmission to the student's location of the materials that form the main basis of study, rather than the student moving to the location of the resources or provider.

10.2   Queen Margaret University is responsible for managing the delivery of each distance learning programme in a manner that safeguards the academic standards of the award.

10.3   The University is responsible for ensuring that the distance learning award is consistent with other relevant University awards and any relevant benchmark information within the UK.

10.4   The University shall ensure that each distance learning programme is delivered in a manner that provides, in practice, a learning opportunity that gives students a fair and reasonable chance of achieving the academic standards required for successful completion.

10.5   This means that all distance learning programmes must be validated and reviewed according to University procedures. If a distance learning programme is evolving from an existing programme, a validation event will be required for the distance learning element. However, this may be conducted as a major change, as explained in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.10 above.

10.6   The development, validation and review of a distance learning programme follows the procedures detailed earlier in this Section, except that the documentation must include additional information noted in the Section of the Governance and Regulations dealing with Quality Assurance and Enhancement Documents.

10.7   Those distance learning programmes involving the appointment of a Local Support Centre or a partner institution will be subject to the provisions of the University's procedures for Academic Collaboration.

10.8   Where distance learning is to be made available to students in other countries, the University, through the Programme Leader, must ensure that all legal requirements concerning approval for programmes in that country are met, including any requirements under local law which might affect the programme such as consumer protection, copyright, employment, packaging and postal dispatch.

10.9   When providing distance learning programmes to students whose first language is not English, the Programme Team must ensure that the academic terminology used to describe the programme is readily accessible.

10.10 All students on distance learning programmes must be provided with clear information about the expectations of them in their programme of study. They must also be clear on the relationship between achievement and assessment, and between academic progress and accumulation of credit. The students

should also be aware of the system of learning and how they can interact with it as well as the means of student representation at the University.

10.11 The University will, through its validation and review processes, monitor the effectiveness of the information provided to students.

11   GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

11.1 A Graduate Certificate is defined as a programme incorporating a minimum of 60 credits at SCQF Level 9 or above.

11.2 The validation process for a new Graduate Certificates broadly follows the process outlined above in paragraph 3. However, given the small scale of provision, events may be conducted by correspondence instead of face-to-face.

11.3 Criteria to be applied in determining the conduct of the event are as set out below:

A face-to-face validation event will be held where one or more of the following criteria apply:

- The proposed award is delivered by a new collaborative partner of the University.
- The proposed award is **not** aligned with an existing suite of awards (such as a Graduate Certificate Framework).
- The proposed award is aligned with an existing suite of related awards but has a very specialist curriculum not currently delivered within that suite. Under these circumstances a face-to-face event will allow for appropriate scrutiny with specialist external input.
- The proposed award is aligned with an existing suite of related awards, but key staff members (e.g. Programme Leader and module co-ordinators) do not have previous experience of delivery within that suite.
- The proposed award is aligned with an existing suite of related awards, but would deliver a markedly different student experience, because of major changes to common approaches across that suite. Such changes might be in respect of the overall programme structure; placement learning; delivery mode; learning, teaching and assessment strategy; or programme management.
- There is a PSRB requirement for a face-to-face event.

A validation by correspondence will be held where all of the following criteria apply:

- The proposed award is aligned with an existing suite of related awards and has a curriculum which is broadly aligned with that suite. Typically some of the modules will be shared with existing validated awards.
- Key staff members (e.g. Programme Leader and module co-ordinators) have previous experience of delivery within that suite.
- The proposed award is aligned with an existing suite of related awards, and would deliver an equivalent student experience, because of an approach consistent with that suite. This would be in respect of aspects such as the overall programme structure; placement learning; delivery

mode; learning, teaching and assessment strategy; and programme management.

11.4 The Panel for the validation of a Graduate Certificate will be determined on a case-by case basis. As a minimum it will include a Convener (not recruited from the host School), one internal and one external Panel member.

12   SHORT PROGRAMMES

12.1 A Short Programme is defined as a module, or group of modules, that may be taken separately without leading towards an award of the University. Short Programmes typically comprise one or more modules at SCQF level seven or above, usually up to a maximum of 60 credits. Although in some cases credit from Short Programmes may be used towards another QMU award, these programmes normally stand outside validated programmes and are taken by students as a self-contained package of learning for their own personal or professional development.

12.2 Short Programmes are validated for a maximum period of five years, whereupon they are subject to review. Short Programmes are approved by the School Academic Board, or a sub-group thereof. Exceptionally, where a large number of Short Programmes are presented together, for example a number of modules offered by the same partner organisation, a separate event may be arranged. Guidance will be provided by the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

12.3 The documentation required for Short Programme approval mirrors that for full programme developments, but the abbreviated form for Short Programmes should be used. In all cases a costing should be undertaken and information about the costs and likely income must be included in the paperwork. Note that proposals for Short Programmes to be delivered by a new collaborative partner must be considered by the Portfolio Development Group before coming to the School Academic Board. The Portfolio Development Group is responsible for approving the partner organisation, assessing institutional risk and receiving a site visit report if appropriate.

For individual modules:

- Short Programme approval form
- Module descriptor

For groups of modules:

- Short Programme approval form
- Programme Specification, where appropriate – guidance is available from the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement
- Module descriptors

For collaborative individual modules

- Short Programme approval form
- Risk assessment
- Statement on arrangements for the management of the collaboration
- CVs of teaching staff

- Module descriptor

For collaborative groups of modules:

- Short Programme approval form
- Risk assessment
- Statement on arrangements for the management of the collaboration
- CVs of teaching staff
- Programme Specification, where appropriate – guidance is available from the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement
- Module descriptors

In all cases the School Academic Board may request additional supporting materials for students or staff (including placement providers), as appropriate to the type of provision.

For Short Programmes that require PSRB approval it may be necessary to hold an approval event. Where a joint approval event is to be conducted, at least two QMU panellists will participate in any such event to undertake the approval process on behalf of the University. In such cases, no further scrutiny of the Short Programme will be necessary by the School Academic Board.

12.4 Staff of the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement are responsible for maintaining a record of Short Programmes and review dates. Details of Short Programmes due for review will be communicated to academic staff and the Secretaries to the School Academic Boards in good time at the beginning of the academic session.

Short Programme Review

12.5 Short Programmes are typically reviewed by the School Academic Board, or a sub-group thereof, three to four months prior to the end of the approved validation period, allowing time for the review process and for the Programme Team to meet conditions if necessary. In some cases, where a Short Programme is linked to another full programme, it may be appropriate to review the programmes together through the University's review process (section 8 above). Staff of the Governance and Quality Enhancement Unit will advise.

12.6 The purpose of the review is to re-evaluate the validity of the aims and learning outcomes and to ascertain;

- How the Short Programme has been operated and managed;
- How standards have been attained and how this has been recognised;
- The ways in which the Short Programme has met the needs of the community;
- The extent to which all the previously expressed aspirations and ambitions have been fulfilled;
- That the curriculum is properly aligned with external points of reference including the SCQF, QAA codes of practice and Subject Benchmarks;
- The extent to which the institution has been able to provide an environment in which the Short Programme can flourish.

12.7   The review focuses on the academic health of the Short Programme, its relationship with the community and planned future developments. The School Academic Board considers how the Short Programme might develop in the future in order to meet its aims, learning outcomes, benchmark statements and the demands of the community more fully and to ensure the ongoing maintenance of its standards.

12.8   The School Academic Board will carry out a critical appraisal of the Short Programme.

12.9   Typically the Programme Leader or Academic Link Person will be invited to the meeting where the Short Programme is considered. The School Academic Board may also wish to consult with the Programme Team, students, and other stakeholders as deemed necessary.

12.10   The School Academic Board will focus on evaluating:

- The academic health and standard of the Short Programme;
- Progress and changes in the Short Programme since its validation or last review;
- The continuing need for the Short Programme, including the scale of student intake, and its effectiveness and efficiency in staff and resource terms;
- The academic validity of proposed changes in the Short Programme, and an assessment of the associated resource requirements.

12.10   The School Academic Board will make comments and recommendations to the Programme Team and, if necessary, conditions to be met for the continued approval of the Short Programme. The School Academic Board will normally recommend the continuation of approval, unless there are good grounds to recommend that the student intake be modified, or that the Short Programme no longer be offered. The School Academic Board shall additionally specify the date of the next Short Programme review and may identify particular issues to be addressed by that review or in the annual monitoring reports.

12.11   The outcome of the review will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the review documentation was considered. The minutes will detail any conditions, recommendations and commendations, and the date by which conditions are to be met.

12.12   The documentary requirements for a Short Programme review are submission of a concise Review Document (four to five pages excluding appendices), including as a minimum:

- A short statement on conditions and recommendations from the previous validation or review event and the Team's response;
- A statement on the overall operation of the Short Programme during the most recent period of validation, including the extent to which it has met its aims and objectives;
- Annual monitoring reports for the previous two academic sessions;
- External Examiners' reports and the Programme Team's response for the previous two academic sessions;

- A statement on feedback from staff, employers, service users and other stakeholders and the Programme Team's response;
- A statement on mechanisms for gathering student feedback, any issues raised by students during the previous two years and the Programme Team's response;
- A clear statement of proposed changes to the Short Programme.

Whilst these requirements are similar to those for a full programme review, the level of detail required will typically be far less. For example, it is expected that there will be some consultation with stakeholders, but the full extent of this will be determined individually depending on the type of Short Programme and volume of credit. It is not expected in all cases that student feedback will be gathered through a formal Student-Staff Consultative Committee. However, the Programme Team should be able to provide evidence of consultation with students and their response to student feedback.

Additionally, the Programme Team should supply:

- Updated module descriptor(s);
- Any materials provided to students (a full student handbook will not normally be required);
- If appropriate, materials provided for placement providers.

Short programme approval process

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                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │ Is the programme to be   │
                    │ delivered all or partly  │
                    │ by a collaborative       │
                    │ partner?                 │
                    └──────────────────────────┘
          ┌────────────┘                  └────────────┐
      ╱ Yes ╲                                      ╱ No ╲

   ┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────┐
   │ Is it a new or   │                    │ Will the         │
   │ existing partner?│                    │ programme        │
   └──────────────────┘                    │ require PSB      │
    ┌──────┘   └──────┐                     │ approval?        │
 ╱ New ╲         ╱ Existing ╲              └──────────────────┘
                                        ┌────┘        └────┐
                                     ╱ Yes ╲          ╱ No ╲
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Submit the following documents to PDG:
Short Programme Approval Form, risk assessment, site visit report, summary of due dligence

Will the programme require PSB approval?

Yes

No

Discuss with GQE whether a joint approval event should be organised

Submit the following documents to SAB:
Short Programme Approval Form, module descriptor(s), programme specification (if for more than one module)

Discuss with GQE whether a joint approval event should be organised

Submit the following documents to SAB:
Short Programme Approval Form, risk assessment, module descriptor(s), programme specification (if for more than one module), CVs.