

Programme Validation Policy and Procedure

This is a defined Policy and Procedure that all Schools and Faculties are required to follow.

1. Introduction

1.1 This document details the procedure for validating **new** programmes of study and covers:

- Any undergraduate and postgraduate taught programme leading to a University of Southampton award;
- Research degrees with a taught component e.g. integrated PhD or professional doctorates;
- Programmes developed with Partner Institutions are also subject to the partner approval procedures detailed in the Collaborative Provision Policy.

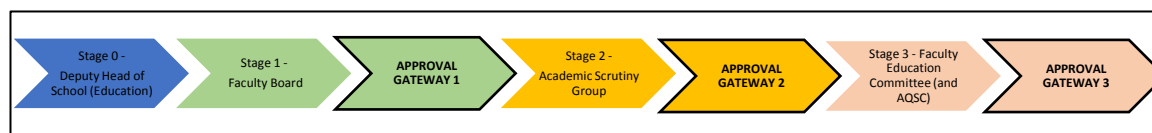
1.2 The programme validation procedure has three stages (preceded by a stage 0) as detailed below.

Programme Validation Stages



1.3 Each stage has a 'gateway' at the end at which a decision is made. The role/group that makes this decision is detailed below for each stage.

Programme Validation Approval Gateways



Curriculum Manager System

1.4 Since April 2018, the Curriculum Manager System has been used to act as the single location of programme and module information and it is expected the all members of staff will engage with the system. The programme and module information has a range of different audiences, with some of the fields in the system used to populate the programme specification for a student audience. Some of the fields (at the module level) will be used to automatically populate the University's webpage for a potential student audience. Other fields will be used to populate other templates used by approval committees in the School, Faculty or University.

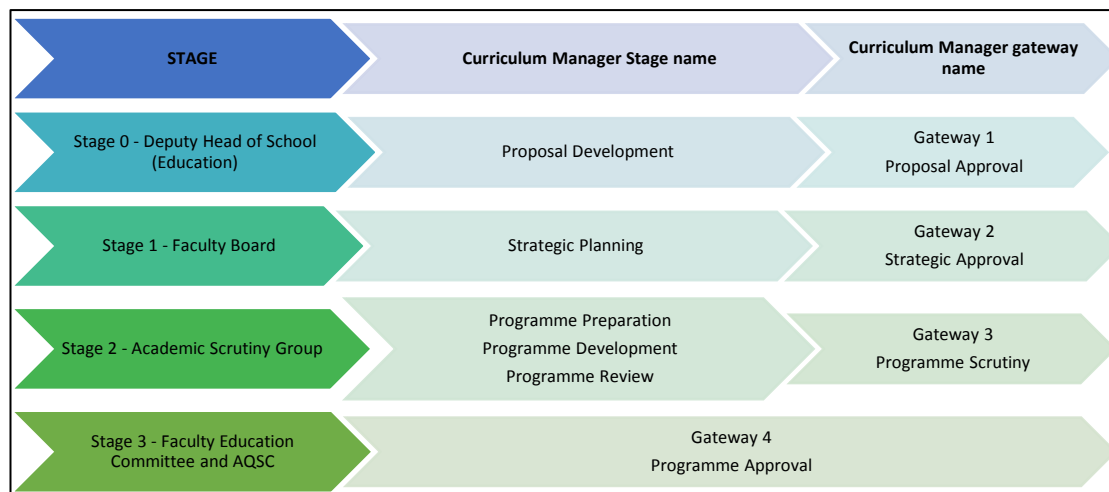
1.5 You can access the Curriculum Manager System via the link below. You will need your University username and password. If you cannot access the system, please submit a request to ServiceLine. <https://soton-curriculum.worktribe.com/>

Traditional paper based method

1.6 A number of paper templates continue to be provided in the Quality Handbook and referred to in the procedure below. Whilst the fields on the templates ARE the same as the Curriculum

Manager System, the Curriculum Manager System has more electronic 'gateways' in the system workflow than 'approval gateways' in the governance process.

- 1.7 Colleagues using the templates therefore risk completing more information earlier in the procedure than those using the Curriculum Manager System; however at the approval gateways, the information provided will be the same.



- 1.8 Colleagues should select to either work in the Curriculum Manager System OR paper based templates to reduce the risk of confusion. It is strongly recommended that the Curriculum Manager System is used to ensure that the programme information is easily accessible. The templates are therefore supplied as reference documents to aid colleagues.

2. Principles

- 2.1 There are four principles that apply to all aspects of programme development and programme validation.

Academic Rigour

- 2.2 The programme validation policy and procedures seek to ensure that the education provision of the University is well-designed, academically coherent and intellectually challenging, and that programmes of study are informed by research and capable of enriching the student experience.

Length of Validation

- 2.3 Programmes are validated for a defined period only (normally a maximum of five years).

Viability and Sustainability

- 2.4 All programme proposals will be judged against the following characteristics:
- a) alignment with University, Faculty strategic plan and business plan and School strategies;
 - b) potential domestic and international markets;
 - c) alignment to institutional research expertise;
 - d) potential to enhance graduate employability;
 - e) global reach;
 - f) potential for module sharing and interdisciplinary connections;
 - g) resource requirements for effective delivery;
 - h) financial viability.

Peer Review

- 2.5 Programme validation is underpinned by academic and professional peer review by internal and external experts. Internally these experts include representatives from AQSC and the Faculty Education Committee and externally, these may include representatives from professional bodies, employers and industry. In all cases, subject specialists (External Advisers) must be utilised.
- 2.6 External Advisers must report on the proposed programme alignment with external reference points and the coherence of the curriculum. The report from the External Adviser and the response of the programme proposer will be considered by the Academic Scrutiny Group.
- 2.7 Proposals for new programmes will be drawn up with due regard to the external and internal reference points, constraints and consultation as detailed in section 4 below.

3. Advice, Assistance and Governance

Sources of Advice and Assistance

- 3.1 The programme proposer will consult their Faculty Academic Registrar(s) for advice on validation arrangements, the support available and the timescales to be followed.
- 3.2 Operational advice can be obtained from the Faculty based Curriculum and Quality Assurance Team.
- 3.3 Advice regarding the programme validation policy and procedures can be obtained from the [Quality Standards and Accreditation Team](#) or the [Quality Handbook](#).

Governance

- 3.4 AQSC has delegated authority from [Senate](#) to approve new programmes.
- 3.5 Informed by the Faculty business plan, Faculties will report their programme validation and revalidation plans for the coming academic year to the first meeting of AQSC.
- 3.6 The Secretary of AQSC will disseminate this list to Directors of Professional Services for information.
- 3.7 Programmes may be validated either individually or as cognate groups of programmes. Where programmes are validated as a cognate group, separate programme specifications must be created and each programme should have equal time to consider the merits of each programme by the Academic Scrutiny Group. It follows that the scrutiny of a greater number of programmes will take longer than a single programme.

4. Reference Points, Constraints and Consultation

- 4.1 All new programmes must be validated with reference to the following:
 - a) [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#);
 - b) [Subject Benchmark Statement\(s\)](#);
 - c) Requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (where relevant);
 - d) [QAA Quality Code](#);
 - e) [QAA Master's Degree Characteristics](#);
 - f) [QAA Doctoral Degree Characteristics](#);
 - g) [Competition and Markets Authority: Consumer Protection Law](#);
 - h) University requirements set out in the Calendar and the Quality Handbook, including the:
 - [Framework for Taught Programmes](#);

- [Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme](#);
- [Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision](#);
- [Collaborative Provision Policy and Procedure](#);
- [Student Protection Plan](#);
- procedures set out in this document.

4.2 All new programmes **must** be validated with input from internal stakeholders.

4.2.1 Principal internal stakeholders are:

Stakeholder	Consultation Required/Recommended at Stage 0	Consultation Required/Recommended at Stage 1	Consultation Required/Recommended at Stage 2 ¹
School Programmes Committee	Recommended	N/A	N/A
Communications and Marketing	Recommended	Required	Required ²
Finance	Recommended	Required	Required
Careers and Employability	No	No	Required
Students	No	No	Required
Faculty Academic Registrar (or nominee)	Required	Required	Required
Faculty Academic Registrar (or nominee) from any School from which the programme uses a module as a core or compulsory module	Required	Required	Required
Appropriate staff from the partner institution (for collaborative provision arrangements)	No	Required	Required

4.2.2 Other internal stakeholders include (indicative):

Stakeholder	Consultation Required/Recommended at Stage 0	Consultation Required/Recommended at Stage 1	Consultation Required/Recommended at Stage 2
iSolutions (digital learning team)	No	Recommended	Recommended
Library	No	Recommended	Recommended
Institutional Research	No	Recommended	Recommended
Student Services, (Enabling Services and First Support)	No	Recommended	Recommended
Student and Academic Administration (timetabling/visas)	No	Recommended	Recommended
Head of University Admissions	No	Recommended	Recommended

4.3 The scale of the consultation with other internal stakeholders will vary depending on the focus of the programme. Programmes proposing a greater focus on blended learning or engagement with employers, for example, will result in a greater emphasis on one or more stakeholders.

5. Timing

¹ Required only if there has been substantial change to the content of the programme, the external environment or a change to some other aspect reported as part of the programme proposal stage.

² Required as part of the interactive process for the planning and creation of webpages and promotional material.

- 5.1 The Rollover and Publication of Programme and Module Information for students and applicants Policy states that all programme information will go live in week 29³ of the academic year prior to admission of students. This means that all programme specifications need to be approved and published by week 29, which usually falls towards the end of April. This is to meet the requirements of the [Competition and Markets Authority Consumer Protection Law](#).
- 5.2 The timescales for the development of a programme prior to this deadline will be impacted by internal and external drivers. Internally these may relate to its publication of the paper prospectus, or the complexity of the marketing campaign required, externally, it may relate to the publication of standards by a Regulatory body or to meet the requirements of industry.
- 5.3 The timeline for validation of programmes involving educational collaborations (particularly high-risk international partnerships) will take longer, especially if the partnership is new to the University. Please see the [University Collaborative Provision Policy](#) for more information and discuss with the Collaborative Provision Adviser in the Quality Standards and Accreditation Team.
- 5.4 Prior to stage 0 of the procedure, the Faculty Board will have finalised the Faculty business plan for the coming year, which will contain details of the programme validation and revalidation plans.

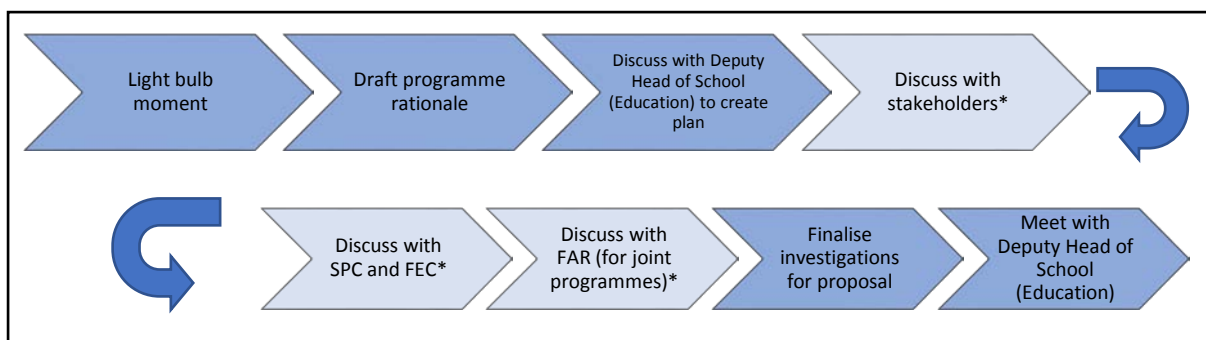
Suggested timeline

- 5.5 The timeline below will give an example of the minimum timescales required for the validation of programmes.

Stage	AQSC	Week
Stage 0	July - September	End of week 0
Stage 1	October	End of week 5
Stage 2	December	End of week 13
Stage 3	February (see 5.1 above)	End of week 27

³ www.l4labs.soton.ac.uk/general/docs/cal.pdf

6. Stage 0 – PERMISSION TO START



The purpose of Stage 0 is for the programme proposer to discuss a proposal to create a programme with the Deputy Head of School (Education) to consider whether the programme concept has been included in the programme portfolio plans in the Faculty business plan.

This stage does not require detailed consultation with stakeholders, but **strongly** encourages colleagues to start the conversation with some principal stakeholders.

Governance: permission to start will be given by the Deputy Head of School (Education).

Documentation: No documentation is required for this stage. However much of the information required will be used to populate sections of the Programme Proposal Template in a later stage.

Curriculum Manager System: If using the electronic system, this section requires completion of the mandatory fields in the Proposal Development and Proposal Approval sections.

(* As required by 6.1 b below)

Initial conversations

- 6.1 The programme proposer will meet with the Deputy Head of School (Education) to plan how the concept will be investigated. This plan will help to:
 - a) ensure that the programme appears in the approved Faculty business plan, or has been supported by the Associate Dean (Education).
 - b) decide the internal stakeholder list to identify any issues that would benefit from their input.
 - c) clarify the expectations relating to evidence of meeting the requirements in 2.4 above.
- 6.2 Following this meeting, the Deputy Head of School (Education) will advise the Associate Dean (Education) that the concept is being explored.

Initial discussions with stakeholders

- 6.3 Subject to the outcome of 6.1 (b) above, the programme proposer will engage with stakeholders (See 4.2 above).
- 6.4 The most effective conversations take place face to face and it is recommended that the programme proposer meets with internal stakeholders to talk through a range of areas. This will facilitate greater understanding of the proposed programme between parties.
- 6.5 The programme proposer may find it useful to refer to the following templates to aid their discussion with internal stakeholders. **At this point, it is NOT necessary for questions asked in these templates to be fully answered.**
 - Market Intelligence and Analysis Template
 - Intake and Resources Template

- Employability Template
 - Information Technology Template
- 6.6 It is considered to be good practice for any internal stakeholder to receive a short synopsis of the programme proposal in advance. This may be little more than a working title and rationale, but must include enough information to enable them to participate in a helpful way to the process.
- 6.7 Once the requirements of the plan made in 6.1 above have been completed, the programme proposer will meet with the Deputy Head of School (Education) again to make their case for the creation of a new programme.
- 6.8 The Deputy Head of School (Education) may wish to undertake further consultation with the School Programmes Committee, Faculty Board or the Faculty Education Committee, particularly if there will be a call on additional resources which will needed to be checked/planned for.
- 6.9 If it appears that the new programme proposal features in the Faculty business plan, and/or has the support of the Associate Dean (Education), has the general support of stakeholders (including the School Programmes Committee and the Faculty Education Committee) and there is robust evidence that it will meet the requirements in 2.4 above, the Deputy Head of School (Education) will approve the programme proposer to proceed to **Stage 1 – programme proposal**.
- 6.10 The Deputy Head of School (Education) will notify the Faculty Associate Dean (Education), Faculty Academic Registrar and the Faculty Curriculum and Quality Assurance team⁴ that permission to start has been granted.

⁴ An automatic notification will be sent via the Curriculum Manager System when the approval to progress to stage 1 gateway is actioned.

7. Stage 1 – Programme Proposal

The purpose of Stage 1 is to collect data and information which will evidence the business case and strategic argument in support of the programme.

Governance: approval at this stage is in two parts;

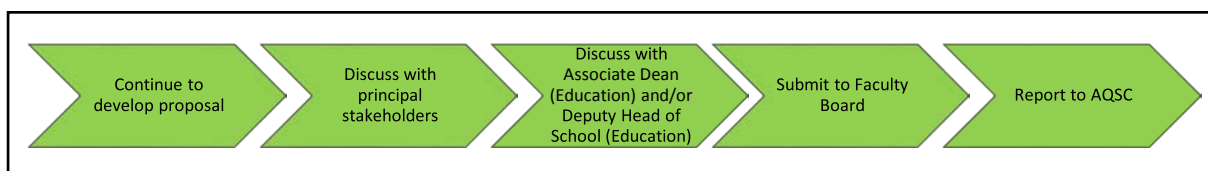
1. The Faculty Board considers the business case for the programme proposal.
2. The Faculty Board will report their approval of the business case to AQSC.

Documentation: The following documentation is required for this stage;

- Programme Proposal Template
- Market Intelligence and Analysis Template
- Intake and Resources Template
- Draft programme specification to include a programme structure and a list of all modules required for delivery of the proposed programme.

Curriculum Manager System: If using the electronic system, this section requires completion of the mandatory fields in the Strategic Planning section.

Following approval by Faculty Board the programme proposer can proceed to **Stage 2 - programme development and academic approval.**



Consultation with Principal Stakeholders

- 7.1 The programme proposer will start to complete the Programme Proposal Template (or continue to populate – where the template was used in Stage 0). The Market Intelligence and Analysis template and the Intake and Resources template will be completed in partnership with the relevant stakeholders (see 4.2 above).^{5,6,7,8}
- 7.2 These conversations will supersede any discussion that took place in **Stage 0 – Permission to Start** and will be based on refreshed evidence if there have been any changes to the programme proposal template.
- 7.3 Consultation must take place with any other Schools/Faculties involved in the delivery of the programme (via the Faculty Academic Registrar) (see 4.2 above).
- 7.4 Once finalised, the resultant business case⁹ (including the programme proposer response to feedback from stakeholders) will be further reviewed by the Deputy Head of School (Education).
- 7.5 If the Deputy Head of School (Education) continues to support the proposal and the business case, they will discuss the proposal with the Associate Dean (Education). The Associate Dean (Education) will act as the programme proposal sponsor at the Faculty Board.

Faculty Board

- 7.6 Faculty Board will use the business case and any associated evidence to consider whether the programme proposal meets the characteristics detailed in paragraph 2.4.

⁵ Communications and Marketing will coordinate the collection of information from the International Office where there are considered to be new/potential international markets.

⁶ Much of the information provided by Marketing will be obtained from the Qlikview app developed by Institutional Research.

⁷ The Faculty Finance Manager will assist in the completion of the Intake and Resources Template.

⁸ Those using the Curriculum Management System can download the information they need to provide to stakeholders.

⁹ Business case is the collation of the programme proposal and templates detailed in 7.1 above.

- 7.7 Where the proposal fails to provide evidence to the Faculty Board that characteristics detailed in paragraph 2.4 will be achieved or fails to provide adequate justification and/or where there is minimal evidence of consultation with stakeholders, the proposal should be rejected or the programme proposer will be asked to undertake additional investigation.

Outcomes

- 7.8 Following consideration of the business case Faculty Board will make one of the following decisions:
- Accept the business case for the programme proposal.
 - Require the programme proposer to undertake additional investigation and resubmit for acceptance by Chair's Action.
 - Require the programme proposer to undertake additional investigation and resubmit.
 - Reject proposal.
- 7.9 Where additional investigation is required this will be completed and approved by Faculty Board.
- 7.10 The Secretary to Faculty Board, in liaison with Faculty CQA team will inform the Deputy Head of School (Education), Faculty Academic Registrar, programme proposer and Faculty Curriculum and Quality Assurance team of the outcome.
- 7.11 If the programme is being developed with a new collaborative partner institution, Stage 1 of the partner approval process must be completed and the documentation as set out in the [University's Collaborative Provision Policy](#) must also be submitted to the Faculty Board for consideration.
- 7.12 Acceptance of the Business Case by Faculty Board means that the programme can be promoted externally as 'subject to validation'.
- 7.13 Approval of the business case for a new programme is granted for one academic year. After one year, but before two years has passed, and where there has been **no** substantial change to the landscape or the University regulatory/quality framework and the reasoning behind the original proposal is still valid the business case must be reconsidered by the Faculty Board, but it can remain in its original state.
- 7.14 After two years, stage 1 must be repeated and an updated business case must be submitted to Faculty Board as if for the first time.
- 7.15 When accepted by Faculty Board, the Faculty CQA team will submit the programme proposal template to the Secretary of AQSC for report.
- 7.16 Following acceptance of the Business Case by Faculty Board the programme proposer can proceed to **Stage 2 - programme development and academic approval**. If a programme involves a new collaborative partner institution, the proposal will also move to Stage 2 of the partner approval process as set out in the [University's Collaborative Provision Policy](#).

8. Stage 2 - Programme Development and Academic Approval

The purpose of Stage 2 is to facilitate the development of the programme specification and module profiles. This will be undertaken in partnership with internal stakeholders. This stage also requires the programme proposer to collect feedback from the External Adviser(s).

- When the programme and module documents are nearing completion, these will be sent to the External Adviser for comment.
- The outcome of all consultation/feedback will be presented to the Academic Scrutiny Group for consideration.

Governance: The Academic Scrutiny Group considers the programme proposal and makes a recommendation to Faculty Education Committee.

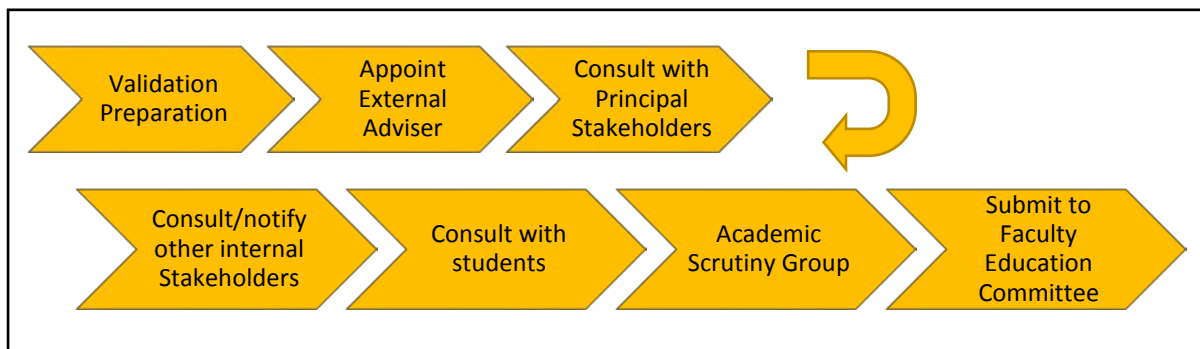
Documentation: The following documentation is required for Academic Scrutiny;

- Programme Proposal Form (fully complete)
- Programme Specification (final draft version)
- Module profiles for all new modules
- Module profiles for all core and compulsory modules that have already been approved via the programme validation process (approved optional modules do not need to be provided)
- External Adviser report and response
- Stakeholder feedback and responses (internal and external as appropriate)

Curriculum Manager System: If using the electronic system, this section requires completion of the mandatory fields in the Programme Development and Programme Approval sections

Following consideration by the Academic Scrutiny Group, the programme proposer can proceed to stage 3 - programme approval.

- 8.1 This stage of the procedure engages expertise from outside of the School to comment on the programme proposal. Once the programme documentation is finalised, the programme proposer will request input from stakeholders.



Validation Preparation

- 8.2 In consultation with the Associate Dean (Education)¹⁰ and/or Deputy Head of School (Education), the programme proposer and the Faculty Academic Registrar will agree the timeline for the rest of the validation process, including the timescales for consultation and the academic scrutiny of the programme proposal by the Academic Scrutiny Group.

- 8.3 In consultation with the Deputy Head of School (Education), the programme proposer and the Faculty Academic Registrar will agree the scale of the stakeholder consultation. This will vary in size or intensity according to the nature of the programme, but **MUST** include the External Adviser and the Principal Stakeholders. The decision about which additional stakeholders to consult will be made by the Deputy Head of School (Education).

¹⁰ The Associate Dean (Education) may have a specific aspect that requires further investigation that will have been discussed by Faculty Board.

Appointment of External Adviser

- 8.4 The Programme proposer, in consultation with relevant academic colleagues, will nominate an External Adviser to participate in the validation of the programme.
- 8.5 The [External Adviser Policy](#), including the criteria for nomination, can be found in the Quality Handbook. The nomination must be approved by the Deputy Head of School (Education) and/or Director of Programmes.
- 8.6 Where a single External Adviser would be unable to comment in an expert manner on all the disciplines involved in the programme, it is expected that additional External Advisers will be appointed. Similarly, for joint honours or multi-disciplinary programmes there may be a requirement for more than one External Adviser so that the necessary expertise in all major disciplines is covered.

Principal Stakeholders

- 8.7 Consultation will not repeat previous investigations that may have taken place during Stage 1, but the focus of the investigations may change. For example, at this stage, there will be a greater focus on the detailed resource requirements for the programme and/or any specific issues and needs. Where this is identified as an issue, there needs to be clear evidence that there will be (at least) adequate resources in place to run the programme, and respond to any specific issues and needs. Where this cannot be evidenced, the proposal will describe what measures will be adopted to provide adequate resource.

Other internal stakeholders

- 8.8 The list in paragraphs 4.2.2 suggests other internal stakeholders who may have valid input into the programme proposal.
- 8.9 If it is determined by the Deputy Head of School (Education) that formal consultation is required, then specific requests and questions should be addressed to the relevant stakeholder. It is not appropriate for undefined and unbounded questions to be asked.
- 8.10 If it is determined by the Deputy Head of School (Education) that formal consultation is **NOT** required with these stakeholders, then all those listed in 4.2.2 should at least be **notified** of the programme proposal, and should have the opportunity to comment. If any raise concerns, they should receive a response from the programme proposer.
- 8.11 Stakeholders who are being notified will be given access to all programme documentation (even if not yet finalised) at least ten working days before the deadline for responses. Stakeholders will review the programme documentation and will return their comments to the programme proposer. It is not necessary for programme proposers to draw any attention to any specific areas of the documentation.
- 8.12 After notification has been sent the internal stakeholders should be given ten working days to respond. A non-response will not delay the process beyond the ten working days.
- 8.13 Feedback from the internal stakeholders group cannot prevent a programme from progressing to academic scrutiny. However, the Academic Scrutiny Group is expected to consider their comments and the response made by the programme proposer when discussing the proposal with the programme team. Failure to respond to the feedback from a principal stakeholder may result in a decision not to endorse a proposal.

Consultation with Students

- 8.14 The programme proposer **MUST** obtain the views of students during programme development. There is no defined method of achieving this, however discussion at a Staff Student Liaison Committee, or a specially organised Student Forum are good examples. Evidence of student engagement and feedback will be provided to the Academic Scrutiny Group. See 8.18 below for more information about the use of students as part of the Academic Scrutiny Group.

Collaborative Provision

- 8.15 If the programme is being developed with a new collaborative partner institution, the meeting of Academic Scrutiny Group and the Collaboration Approval Panel (Stage 3 of the Partner Approval Process) may take place at the proposed partner location. It may be possible to run a combined panel for some arrangements depending on the expertise of individual panel members, however, the two processes will remain distinct and result in two separate reports, one focussed on the programme and one focussed on the partner.

Academic Scrutiny Group

- 8.16 The Academic Scrutiny Group will undertake in-depth academic scrutiny of the programme proposal to ensure that there is evidence that the proposed programme meets the required quality and standards of the University. The Academic Scrutiny Group will report to the Faculty Education Committee.
- 8.17 The Academic Scrutiny Group will meet with the programme team. The composition of the programme team will be such that there would be suitable representation from all disciplines involved in the teaching, learning and support of the programme. Attention should be paid to appropriate subject representation for joint programmes across disciplines, Schools or Faculties. It is recommended that representation should be a minimum of 3 members of the proposed programme team **in addition** to the programme proposer (e.g. Module Leads, Year Coordinators, Admissions Tutor, Specialisation representatives) and the Director of Programmes. A larger programme team would be expected for proposed joint honours programmes.
- 8.18 It is strongly recommended and good practice for the Academic Scrutiny Group to meet with students. It is recognised that it is less practicable to discuss the programme proposal with students where the programme is in a new discipline area. However where the proposed programme is similar to current provision and students would have a view as to whether they would have been interested in undertaking the programme, the Academic Scrutiny Group would be expected to either meet with students, or consider evidence presented to it.

Membership of the Academic Scrutiny Group

- 8.19 The Chair of the Academic Scrutiny Group is appointed by AQSC following nomination by the School. The Academic Scrutiny Group includes membership from outside of the School and Faculty. It is good practice to include a student as a member of the Academic Scrutiny Group. If a student is not able to attend the meeting of the Academic Scrutiny Group, they should be encouraged to give views on the programme in writing¹¹. Student views will be considered by the Academic Scrutiny Group.
- 8.20 The membership of the Academic Scrutiny Group must include as a minimum:
- A representative of AQSC from outside the School, nominated by the Faculty and approved by AQSC (Chair)
 - A member of the Faculty Education Committee (or nominee)
 - Senior academic from the School
 - Faculty Academic Registrar (or nominee)
 - Member of staff with requisite expertise (compulsory for on-line programmes and recommended for other aspects of learning and teaching innovation)¹²
 - Student representative (normally from the same School as the location of the programme, but may be a representative from the Students' Union where necessary)
 - External Adviser(s) (written report permissible if unable to attend)

¹¹ Where it is possible to facilitate a Skype interaction, this will supersede the need for a written submission.

¹² For programmes considering substantial innovation in the use of digital resources or work based learning, a member of University staff with requisite expertise is required. These staff will usually be located in the Professional Services, however it is recognised that expertise will be located across all members of the University community.

- 8.21 Other members of staff with relevant expertise may be invited to become a member of the Academic Scrutiny Group, including those from professional services and the partner institution (for collaborative arrangements).
- 8.22 Where appropriate, representatives from PSRBs may also be invited to participate in the Academic Scrutiny Group, to enable both PSRB and University validation to take place simultaneously. In such cases, there may be requirements for additional documentation and/or additional representative from the programme team as part of the procedure.
- 8.23 The Chair will act as sponsor for the programme proposal when considered by Faculty Education Committee and provide reassurance to AQSC that the Academic Scrutiny Group was conducted correctly.
- 8.24 The member of the Faculty Education Committee (or nominee) will ensure that the programme validation process has been undertaken and the stakeholders have been consulted appropriately. Where the member of the Faculty Education Committee (or nominee) has concerns they will raise these to the attention of the Associate Dean (Education).
- 8.25 The senior member from the School will be an active member of the Scrutiny Group and will have a current understanding of curriculum design, but will also help the Chair to understand the particular needs of a subject area.
- 8.26 The Faculty Academic Registrar will ensure that the policy and procedure has been followed and that the reporting and documentation process is complete.
- 8.27 The member of staff with requisite expertise may be from the Professional Services or elsewhere in the Faculty, but will have the necessary expertise and be able to reassure Faculty Education Committee that the innovative learning and teaching or assessment methods are well planned.

Role of the Academic Scrutiny Group

- 8.28 The role of Academic Scrutiny Group is to confirm that:
- information is complete and correct (includes module profiles and programme specifications as required and that necessary documents are included);
 - the proposal is academically sound and fits with School and Faculty plans and meets threshold academic standards;
 - all stages of the validation procedure have been completed appropriately;
 - any conditions set and/or amendments required by Faculty Board have been met;
 - the comments of the external adviser, students and other stakeholders have been considered and addressed;
 - the proposal is appropriate to submit to Faculty Education Committee.
- 8.29 The Academic Scrutiny Group will use the Questions for Scrutiny Groups to gain a full and rounded understanding of the programme being proposed.
- 8.30 The Academic Scrutiny Group will draw general conclusions and can set conditions and/or make recommendations/commendations. Any conditions will be monitored by the Deputy Head of School (Education).
- 8.31 Conditions may be set in order to rectify limitations identified in the proposed programme. These may include:
- failure to align to the approved Faculty business plan;
 - failure to fulfil the programme characteristics detailed in paragraph 2.5 without clear and thorough justification;
 - failure to adhere to the Framework for Taught Programmes: Code of Practice;
 - failure to engage with other external reference point, including, but not limited to those listed in section 4;

- failure to undertake meaningful consultation with principal stakeholders, or other stakeholders if the programme gives the impression of introducing new and/or innovative learning, teaching or assessment techniques;
- failure to undertake appropriate consultation with Faculties outside of the 'home' Faculty or School;
- failure to provide evidence that the Faculty/School has the appropriate resources to support the delivery of the programme and to provide a high quality student experience;
- a clear overlap in the educational outcomes of the proposed programme with one that is already in existence in the School or other Faculty.

8.32 The Academic Scrutiny Group will agree the outcome of the academic scrutiny.

Outcomes

8.33 If the Academic Scrutiny Group is **satisfied** the academic case for the validation of the programme is sound, it will recommend that Faculty Education Committee either:

- a) Accept the proposal to validate the programme, or
- b) Accept the proposal to validate the programme with conditions.

8.34 If the Academic Scrutiny Group is **not satisfied** with the academic case for the validation of the programme will make one of the recommendations below:

- a) Require further work to the programme documentation and resubmit proposal to validate the programme to Academic Scrutiny Group. The group is required to reconvene to consider the documentation.
- b) Require further work to the programme documentation and resubmit proposal to validate the programme to Academic Scrutiny Group. The group is NOT required to reconvene to consider the documentation.
- c) Reject proposal

8.35 If further work is required, the programme proposer will undertake this as necessary and revise the programme documentation to address any issues raised by the Academic Scrutiny Group. If required they will submit this for further scrutiny and the Academic Scrutiny Group may or may not reconvene depending on the outcome allocated (see 8.34 above).

8.36 The Academic Scrutiny Group will identify any general issues emerging from the discussion, including examples of good practice, which will be drawn to the attention of the School Programmes Committee and the Faculty Education Committee.

Support by Faculty Board

8.37 Where the resource requirements for the final version of the programme differ significantly from the Stage 1 proposal, further consultation with the Faculty Board should be undertaken. If Faculty Board is satisfied with the resources required for the programme's delivery, a statement of support from Faculty Board will be added to the documentation for Faculty Education Committee consideration.

9. Stage 3 – Programme Approval

The purpose of stage 3 is to submit the recommendation of the Academic Scrutiny Group to Faculty Education Committee and then complete the administrative aspects of programme set up.

Governance:

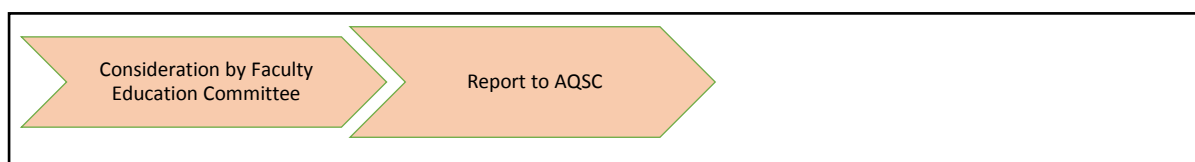
- Faculty Education Committee will receive and consider the recommendation of the Academic Scrutiny Group.
- The Faculty Education Committee will report their approval of the Academic Scrutiny to AQSC.
- AQSC will offer final approval.

Documentation: The following documentation is required for Programme Approval:

- Minutes of the Academic Scrutiny Group
- Programme Specification (final version)
- Statement of support from Faculty Board (where necessary)

Curriculum Manager System: If using the electronic system, this section requires completion of the mandatory fields in the Validated section.

Following acceptance by Faculty Education Committee and final approval by AQSC the programme can be considered validated.



Validation

- 9.1 The Faculty Education Committee will receive the minutes of the Academic Scrutiny Group and the Programme Specification.
- 9.2 The Chair of the Academic Scrutiny Group will present an overview of the process and the recommendation being presented.

Faculty Education Committee

- 9.3 The Faculty Education Committee will use the documentation provided, and the recommendation of the Academic Scrutiny Group to reassure itself that:
 - the programme proposal meets the characteristics detailed in paragraph 2.4.
 - appropriate consultation has been undertaken with stakeholders.
 - the proposal has been supported by the School and, for joint programmes, there is evidence of cross-faculty consultation.
 - the programme proposal has (where necessary) received support from Faculty Board confirming that the resources required for the programme's delivery are sufficient to ensure the quality of the provision.

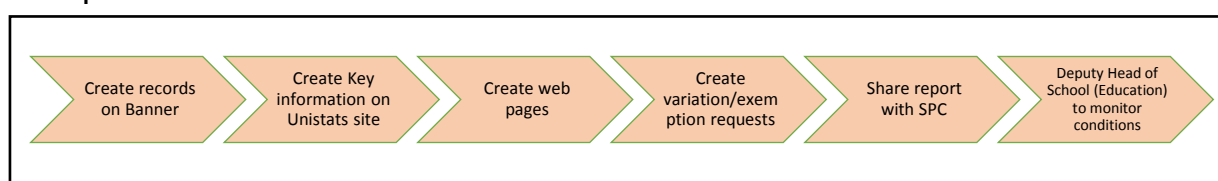
Outcomes

- 9.4 If the Faculty Education Committee **is satisfied** with the work undertaken by the Academic Scrutiny Group and supports its recommendation, it will accept the programme.
- 9.5 If the Faculty Education Committee **has concerns** about any aspect of the programme validation process, it will:
 - Reject the recommendation of Academic Scrutiny Group and require the School to undertake additional work and resubmit to the Academic Scrutiny Group;

- Reject the recommendation of Academic Scrutiny Group and require the School to undertake additional work and resubmit to the Academic Scrutiny Group for approval by Chairs Action;
- Reject the recommendation of Academic Scrutiny Group, require the School to undertake additional consultation with the Faculty Board.
- Reject the recommendation of Academic Scrutiny Group.

- 9.6 If the Faculty Education Committee has concerns, which means that they are unable to support the recommendation to accept the programme proposal, this will be reported to the Faculty Associate Dean (Education), Deputy Head of School (Education), programme proposer and Faculty Academic Registrar.
- 9.7 If after the concerns have been addressed, Faculty Education Committee continues to be concerned about a programme, this will be escalated to the Chair of Faculty Education Committee who will bring together the relevant parties for discussion.

Post Acceptance



- 9.8 The validation procedure is complete after Faculty Education Committee has accepted the programme validation and it has been reported to AQSC for final approval.
- 9.9 The Faculty Curriculum and Quality Assurance team is responsible for ensuring that all necessary action is taken to create programme(s) and associated modules within Banner.
- 9.10 The Curriculum and Timetabling Team is responsible for the creation of programme and module codes.
- 9.11 The Faculty Academic Registrar, in conjunction with relevant Student and Academic Administration Teams, will ensure that the programme has an accurate Key Information Set (KIS) (undergraduate programmes only) for the Unistats webpages.
- 9.12 The programme proposer will consult with colleagues in Communications and Marketing to build/amend the programme pages on the web.
- 9.13 The Faculty Academic Registrar, in conjunction with relevant Student and Academic Administration Teams, will ensure that any new exemptions or variations to University Regulations are submitted to Quality Standards and Accreditation Team for inclusion in the University Calendar.
- 9.14 The Secretary of AQSC will inform the Directors of Professional Services of the new programmes that have been approved by AQSC.
- 9.15 The report from the Academic Scrutiny Group should be submitted to the School Programmes Committee for note.

Document Information	
Author	Quality Standards and Accreditation Team
Owner (committee)	AQSC
Approved Date	September 2016, July 2018
Last Revision	December 2018, June 2022 (logo update)
Type of Document	Policy and Procedure

10. Appendix 1 – Documentation

Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Programme Proposal Template completed with minor information to aid initial conversation.	<p>Programme Proposal Template</p> <p>Market Intelligence and Analysis Template</p> <p>Intake and Resources Template</p> <p>Draft programme specification to include a programme structure and a list of all modules required for delivery of the proposed programme.</p>	<p>Programme Proposal Template (fully complete)</p> <p>Programme Specification (final draft version)</p> <p>Module profiles for all new modules</p> <p>Module profiles for all core and compulsory modules that have already been approved via the programme validation process (approved optional modules do not need to be provided).</p> <p>External Adviser report and response</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback and responses (internal and external as appropriate)</p>	<p>Minutes of the Academic Scrutiny Group</p> <p>Programme Specification (final version)</p> <p>Responses to any actions taken since ASG</p> <p>Support from Faculty Board</p> <p>Any revised documentation.</p>