

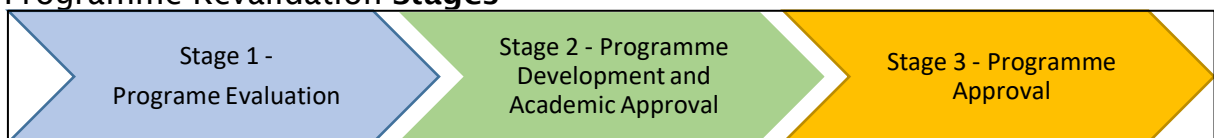
# Programme Revalidation Policy and Procedure

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

## 1. Introduction

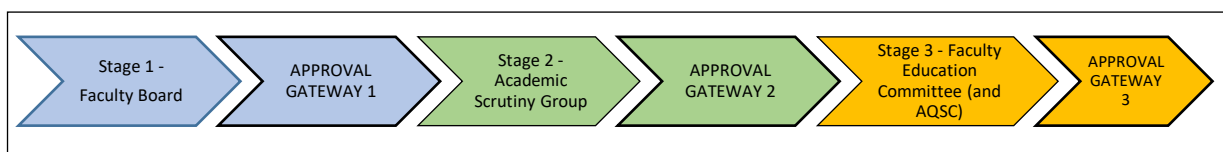
- 1.1 This document describes the policy and procedure for **revalidating** programmes of study and covers;
- Any undergraduate and postgraduate taught programme leading to a University of Southampton award;
  - Research degrees with a taught component e.g. integrated PhD or professional doctorates;
  - Programmes developed with Partner Institutions are subject to the partner approval procedures detailed in the Collaborative Provision Policy;
  - Major changes planned outside of the normal validation cycle or where it multiple changes have been made which, in the opinion of the Deputy Head of School (Education) add up to a major change and therefore a requirement to revalidate.
- 1.2 The programme validation procedure has three stages as detailed below.

### Programme Revalidation 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 Revalidation Approval Gateways

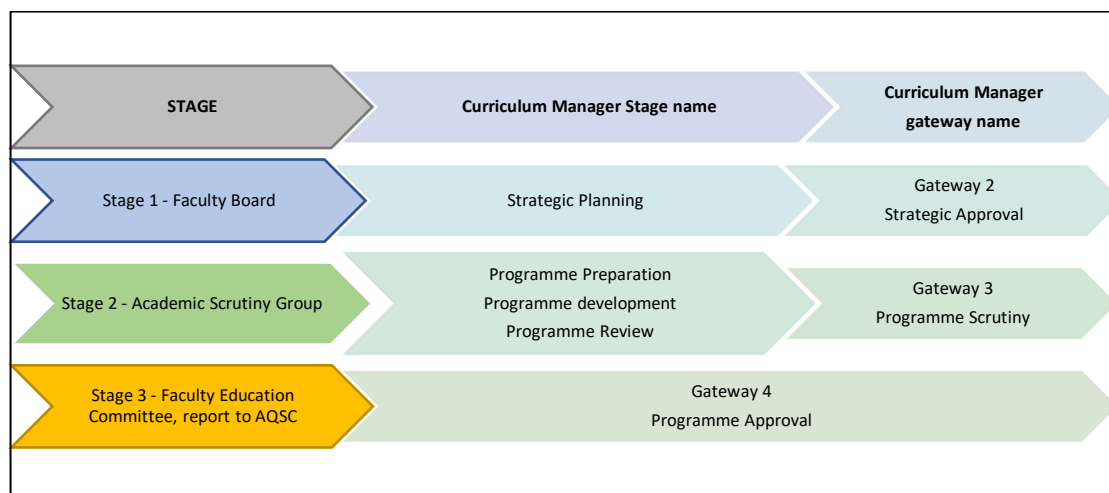


## Curriculum Manager System

- 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

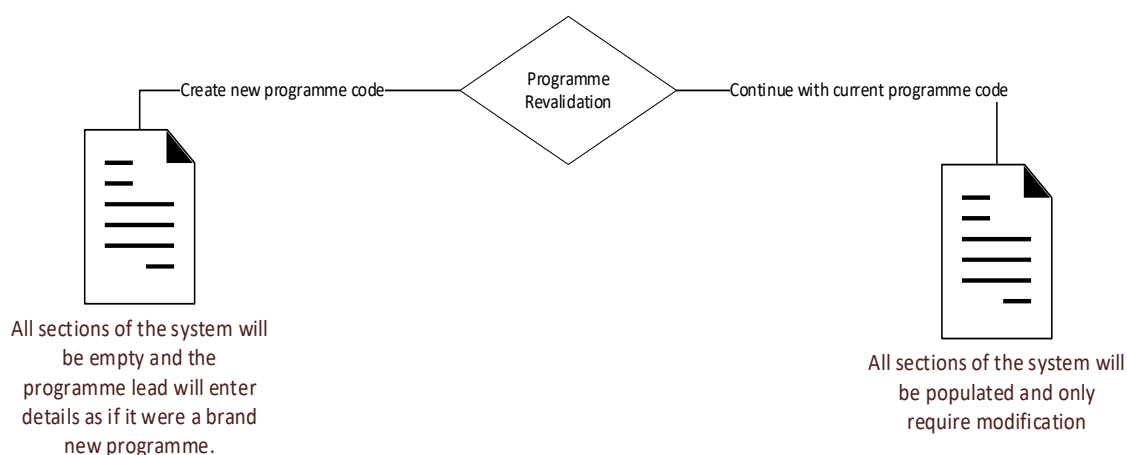
- 1.6 A number of paper templates continue to be provided in the Quality Handbook and referred to in the procedure below. Whilst the fields on the templates ARE the same as the Curriculum Manager System, the Curriculum Manager System has more electronic 'gateways' in the system workflow than 'approval gateways' in the governance process.



- 1.7 Colleagues 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.
- 1.8 The Programme Evaluation template is NOT located on the Curriculum Manager System and at this time remains a paper based exercise. The Programme Evaluation template contains a reflective report and a proposal for changes sections.
- 1.9 When the Stage 1 of the process is complete, colleagues will access the Curriculum Manager System to complete Stages 2 and 3.

## Selection of Curriculum Manager Workflow

- 1.10 The decision as to whether to use the modification workflow or the new programme workflow will depend on the scale of the changes being made. The decision should be made in consultation with the relevant Curriculum and Quality Assurance Team and with colleagues in the Registry. The outcome of the consultation will impact the level of data entry required.



## 2. Principles

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

### Academic Rigour

- 2.2 The programme revalidation 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). In good time before this validation expires, programmes must again undergo revalidation in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.
- 2.4 Where a validation is proposed beyond the five year period of approval, the School must present the rationale for this and request an extension of the period of validation from AQSC. Extensions have been approved in the past due to external delays in the publication of external regulatory standards, or where a programme is closing and the final students experience delayed progression.

### Viability and Sustainability

- 2.5 All programmes will be judged against the following characteristics, and their continued:
- a) alignment with University, Faculty strategic plan and business plan and School strategies;
  - b) reach to 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

- 2.6 Programme revalidation 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.
- 2.7 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 Lead will be considered by the Academic Scrutiny Group.
- 2.8 Proposals to revalidate 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 and Assistance and Governance

#### Sources of Advice and Assistance

- 3.1 The Programme Lead<sup>1</sup> will consult their Faculty Academic Registrar (FAR) for advice on revalidation 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 revalidation 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 revalidated either individually or as cognate groups of programmes. Where programmes are revalidated as a cognate group, separate programme specifications must be created and each programme should have equal time to consider the merits and 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, Constrains and Consultation

- 4.1 All programmes must be revalidated 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 Code of Practice;
  - 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
- 4.2 In addition the characteristics in 2.5 above, the programme (s) continuing validity and relevance will be assessed in the light of:
  - a) the effect of changes, including those which are cumulative and those made over time, to the design and operation of the programme;

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<sup>1</sup> This role may be undertaken by the Programme Lead or the Director of Programmes where the structure of programmes/Schools makes this more suitable.

- b) the continuing availability of staff and physical resources;
- c) current research and practice in the application of knowledge in the relevant discipline(s), technological advances, and developments in teaching and learning;
- d) changes to external points of reference, such as subject benchmark statements;
- e) relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Boards' (PSRB) requirements;
- f) changes in student demand, employer expectations and employment opportunities;
- g) data relating to student progression and achievement;
- h) student feedback, annual programme and module reports; staff/student liaison committees, focus groups including the National Student Survey (NSS) or other student survey tool relevant to the programme.
- i) stakeholder feedback e.g. external examiner reports; reports from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies; employers; careers practitioners;<sup>2</sup> Employability Exchange; DHLE/LEO outcomes; Faculty Finance Manager (See 6.3 below); Faculty marketing Manager (See 6.4 below)
- j) statistical data<sup>3</sup>

4.3 All programmes **must** be revalidated with input from internal stakeholders, however the scale of this will be determined by the Deputy Head of School (Education) see 7.3.

4.3.1 Principal internal stakeholders include:

Stakeholder	Consultation Required/Recommended at Stage 1	Consultation Required/Recommended at Stage 2 <sup>4</sup>
School Programmes Committee	Recommended	Recommended
Communications and Marketing	Required <sup>5</sup>	Required <sup>6</sup>
Finance	Required <sup>7</sup>	Required
Careers and Employability	No	Required
Students	No	Required
Faculty Academic Registrar (or nominee)	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

4.3.2 Other internal stakeholders include (indicative):

Stakeholder	Stage 1	Stage 2
iSolutions (digital learning team)	Recommended, but as determined by the Deputy Head of School (Education). All stakeholders can expect to be notified. See 7.12 below.	
Library		
Institutional Research		
Student Services, (Enabling Services and First Support)		
Student and Academic Administration (timetabling/visas)		
Head of University Admissions		

<sup>2</sup> Each academic unit has a designated [Careers Practitioner\(s\)](#), who can offer expertise around careers and employability. We would recommend a conversation in preparation to complete this template. The [Employability Exchange](#) provides access to key information including labour market reports and a developing good practice centre.

<sup>3</sup> The Faculty CQA team will extract the relevant information from the [Faculty and Programme Performance](#) Qlikview App.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Unless there are no concerns or substantial changes being made to the programme.

<sup>6</sup> Required as part of the interactive process for the planning and creation of webpages and promotional material.

<sup>7</sup> Unless there are no financial concerns or requests for additional resourcing.

- 4.4 The scale of the interaction with other internal stakeholders will vary depending on the focus of the programme. Programmes proposing to increase their use of blended learning or increased engagement with employers, for example will result in a greater emphasis on one or more stakeholders.

## 5. Timing

- 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 29 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 revalidation/modification of a programme, prior to this deadline will be impacted by internal and external drivers. Internally these may relate to its publication of the 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 revalidation of programmes involving educational collaborations (particularly high-risk international partnerships) will take longer especially if the partner approval is due for renewal. Please see the University Collaborative Provision Policy for more information and discuss with the Collaborative Provision Advisor in the Quality Standards and Accreditation Team.

## 6. Stage 1 – Programme Evaluation

The purpose of Stage 1 is to undertake an evaluation of the programme. The evaluation will consider whether it continues to perform well.

Where concerns are raised during the evaluation process, or where determined by the Deputy Head of School (Education) consultation with internal stakeholders should be undertaken.

**Governance:** approval at this stage is in two parts.

- The Faculty Board considers the programme revalidation proposal.
- The Faculty Board will report their approval of the revalidation proposal to AQSC.

**Documentation:** The following documentation is required for this stage;

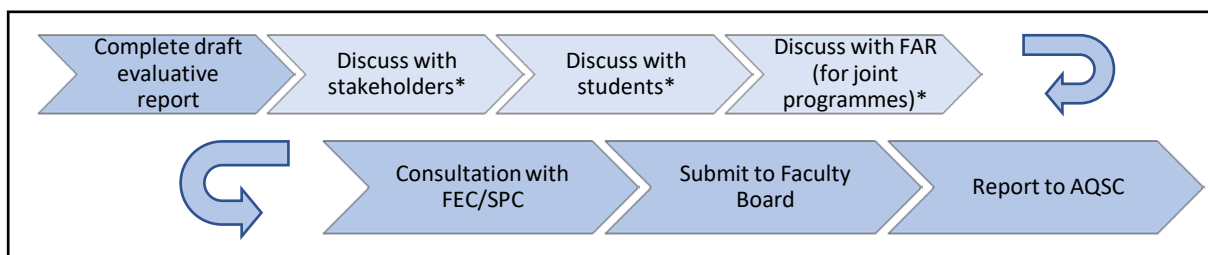
*For revalidation:*

- Evaluative Report
- Draft Programme Specification.

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

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

(\* As required by 6.1-6.5 below)



- 6.1 The Programme Lead will complete the Programme Evaluation template which will evaluate the operation of the programme since the last validation.
- 6.2 The report will reflect on the performance and operation of the programme(s) over the validation period.
- 6.3 For joint programmes including joint delivery with other parts of the University, the report will reflect upon the partnership with any other Schools/Faculties involved in the delivery of the programme (via the FAR) (see 4.3 above).
- 6.4 For collaborative programmes the report will reflect upon how the partnership has managed to deliver of the programme.
- 6.5 The report will reflect on student feedback over the validation period as described in 4.2 above.

**If the evaluative report raises no concerns, there is no requirement to consult with internal stakeholders.**

### Consultation with Principal Stakeholders

- 6.6 Input from Finance and Marketing is considered to be good practice and the programme lead should consider the sorts of questions detailed in paragraphs 6.8 and 6.10 below.
- 6.7 As a further example of the benefits of engaging with internal stakeholders, programmes wishing to introduce a greater focus on blended learning or engagement with employers may wish to have a conversation with colleagues from the Digital Learning Team or Careers and Employability Team.

- 6.8 The Programme Lead may find it helpful to refer to the questions asked in the Intake and Resources Template (used during validation and accessible in the Quality Handbook). If this identifies any questions, the Programme Lead should consult with the Faculty Finance Manager directly. Areas worthy of further investigation may include;
- the student numbers on the programme by year and how these compare to the original targets;
  - the factors that may limit capacity on the programme;
  - whether there are any anticipated specific learning resource requirements, placements or software arising from any change to the programme.
  - Feedback from students on the learning support arrangements
- 6.9 The Programme Lead may find it helpful to refer to the questions asked in the Market Intelligence and Analysis Template (used during validation and accessible in the Quality Handbook). If this and the reflection in the evaluation report identifies any marketing aspects that are not performing as expected, the Programme Lead should consult with the with the Faculty Marketing Manager to undertake further analysis.
- 6.10 Examples of concerns worthy of further investigation may include;
- target numbers not being achieved/declining over the last 3 years;
  - entry requirements not being met;
  - number of applications dropping;
  - quality of applications dropping (lots of applications, few offers);
  - unexpected change in mix of UK/EU/IO students;
  - low conversion rate of applicants;
  - programme title is not relevant/understood across audiences;
  - programme awareness/understanding is low;
  - for postgraduate programmes – the pricing is not in line with competitor group.
- 6.11 If the Programme Lead identifies other aspects that they would like advice or support the following list of internal stakeholders may be a useful starting point.

Stakeholder	Contact details
iSolutions (digital learning team)	<a href="mailto:Digital-Learning@soton.ac.uk">Digital-Learning@soton.ac.uk</a>
Library	<a href="mailto:Libengs@soton.ac.uk">Libengs@soton.ac.uk</a> Each faculty/discipline has their own librarian.
Institutional Research	<a href="mailto:inres@soton.ac.uk">inres@soton.ac.uk</a>
International Office	
Student Services, (Enabling Services and First Support)	<a href="mailto:studserv@soton.ac.uk">studserv@soton.ac.uk</a>
Student and Academic Administration (timetabling/visas)	<a href="mailto:curriculum@soton.ac.uk">curriculum@soton.ac.uk</a> , <a href="mailto:saavisa@southampton.ac.uk">saavisa@southampton.ac.uk</a>
Assistant Director SAA (Head of University Admissions).	<a href="mailto:admissions.hub@southampton.ac.uk">admissions.hub@southampton.ac.uk</a>

- 6.12 At any time, and outside of the programme level evaluation, the School Programmes Committee, Faculty Board or AQSC may also ask for input and advice from internal stakeholders.
- 6.13 When finalised, the evaluative report will be reviewed by the Deputy Head of School (Education) who will present the proposal to revalidate to Faculty Board.



## Faculty Board

- 6.14 The Faculty Board will use the documentation provided to it to consider whether the programme continues to meet the characteristics detailed in paragraph 2.5 above. In addition the Faculty Board will undertake more detailed consideration as to whether;
- there is a continued academic rationale for the programme;
  - the programme continues to be consistent with the University, Faculty and School research and education strategies;
  - there is a realistic estimate of continued student numbers and evidence of sustainable market demand;
  - the Faculty continues to have the appropriate resources to support the delivery of the programme and to provide a high quality student experience;
  - the proposal to revalidate is likely to secure the support of all groups within the Faculty and where applicable, outside the Faculty which will contribute to the delivery of the programme;
  - progression and outcomes data is satisfactory;
  - the programme is delivering a good student experience as measured by internal surveys and the National Student Survey;
  - the programme is delivering good employability outcomes, as measured in the DLHE.
- 6.15 If the Evaluative Report fails to provide evidence to the Faculty Board that the items above will be achieved, fails to provide adequate justification or where there is minimal evidence of consultation with stakeholders, the proposal to revalidate should be rejected or the Programme Lead should be asked to undertake additional evaluation and investigation.

## Outcomes

- 6.16 Faculty Board will make one of the following decisions:
- a) Accept the programme proposal to revalidate.
  - b) Require the Programme Lead to undertake additional investigation and resubmit for acceptance by Chair's Action.
  - c) Require the Programme Lead to undertake additional investigation and resubmit.
  - d) Reject proposal to revalidate and recommend programme for closure.
- 6.17 Where conditions are set and/or additional investigation is required, this will be completed and approved by Faculty Board.
- 6.18 The Secretary to Faculty Board, in liaison with Faculty CQA team will inform the Deputy Head of School (Education), Faculty Academic Registrar, Programme Lead and Faculty Curriculum and Quality Assurance team of its decision.
- 6.19 When endorsed by the Faculty Board the Secretary to Faculty Board, in liaison with Faculty CQA team will submit the programme evaluation report and decision of Faculty Board to the Secretary of AQSC for report.
- 6.20 Strategic Approval 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 to revalidate is still valid the proposal to revalidate (e.g. the evaluative report) must be resubmitted to Faculty Board, but it can remain in its original state.
- 6.21 Following strategic approval by Faculty Board, the Programme Lead 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.

## 7. 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 Lead 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:** approval at this stage has 2 parts.

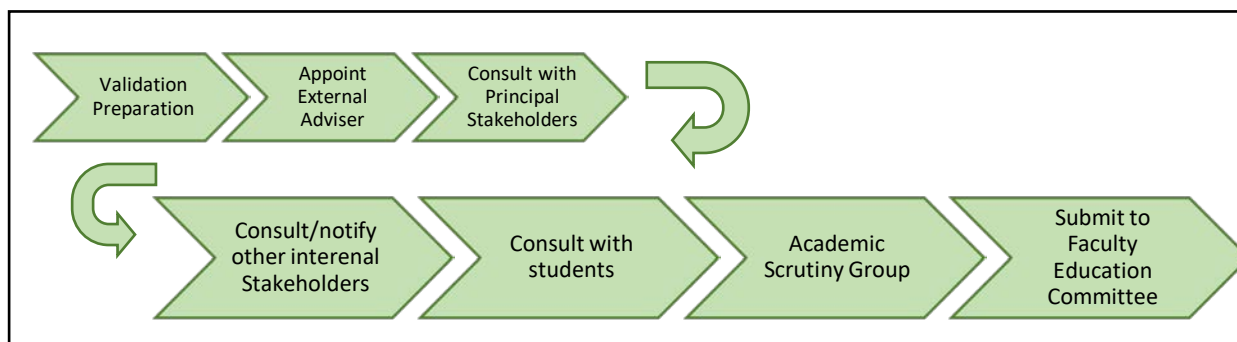
1. The Academic Scrutiny Group considers the programme revalidation proposal and makes a recommendation to Faculty Education Committee

**Documentation:** The following documentation is required for Academic Scrutiny;

- Evaluative report and overview of any proposed changes to the programmes
- Amended Programme Specification (final draft version)
- Module profiles for all new modules
- Module profiles for all core and compulsory modules that have already been approved (approved optional modules do not need to be provided). (final version)
- 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 Lead can proceed to stage 3 - programme approval.



- 7.1 This stage of the procedure engages staff from outside of the School to comment on the programme. Once the programme documentation is finalised, the Programme Lead will request input from stakeholders.

### Validation Preparation

- 7.2 In consultation with the Association Dean (Education)<sup>8</sup> and/or Deputy Head of School (Education) the Programme Lead and the Faculty Academic Registrar will agree the timeline for the rest of the revalidation process, including the timescales for consultation and the academic scrutiny of the programme by the Academic Scrutiny Group.
- 7.3 In consultation with the Deputy Head of School (Education), the Programme Lead 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

<sup>8</sup> The Associate Dean (Education) may have a specific aspect that requires further investigation that will have been discussed by Faculty Board.

the Principal Stakeholders. The decision about which additional stakeholders to consult will be made by the Deputy Head of School (Education).

## Appointment of External Adviser

- 7.4 The Programme Lead, in consultation with academic colleagues, should nominate an External Adviser) to participate in the revalidation of the programme(s).
- 7.5 The External Adviser Policy, including the criteria for nomination is available from the Quality Handbook. The nomination must be approved by the Deputy Head of School (Education) and/or Director of Programmes.
- 7.6 The External Adviser must complete a report using the template available from the Quality Handbook. The comments and feedback from of the External Adviser must be recorded and presented to the Academic Scrutiny Group. The External Adviser will receive a response to their comments.
- 7.7 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.
- 7.8 Colleagues are reminded that externality is one of the pillars upon which the quality of the programme can be maintained as detailed in paragraph 2.7 of this document.

## Principle Stakeholders

- 7.9 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

- 7.10 The list in paragraphs 4.3.2 suggests other internal stakeholders who may have valid input into the programme.
- 7.11 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.
- 7.12 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 4.3.2 should at least be notified of the proposal to revalidate, and should have the opportunity to comment. If any raise concerns, they should receive a response from the Programme Lead.
- 7.13 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 Lead. It is not necessary for Programme Lead to draw any attention to any specific areas of the documentation.
- 7.14 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.
- 7.15 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 Lead when discussing the proposal to revalidate with the programme team. Failure to respond to the feedback from a principal stakeholder may result in a decision not to approve a programme.

## Consultation with Students

7.16 The Programme Lead MUST obtain the views of students during the revalidation. 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 7.20 below for more information about the use of students as part of the Academic Scrutiny Group.

## Collaborative Provision

7.17 If the programme involves a partner institution that is due for re-approval, the meeting of Academic Scrutiny Group and the Collaboration Approval Panel (Stage 3 of the Partner Renewal Process) may meet at the partner institution. 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

7.18 The Academic Scrutiny Group will undertake in-depth academic scrutiny of the programme 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

7.19 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 Lead (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.

7.20 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

7.21 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 writing<sup>9</sup>. Student views will be considered by the Academic Scrutiny Group.

7.22 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)

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<sup>9</sup> Where it is possible to facilitate a Skype interaction, this will supersede the need for a written submission.

- Member of staff with requisite expertise (compulsory for on-line programmes and recommended for other aspects of learning and teaching innovation)<sup>10</sup>
  - 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)
- 7.23 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).
- 7.24 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.
- 7.25 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.
- 7.26 The member of the Faculty Education Committee (or nominee) will ensure that the programme revalidation 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).
- 7.27 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.
- 7.28 The Faculty Academic Registrar will ensure that the policy and procedure has been followed and that the reporting and documentation process is complete.
- 7.29 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

- 7.30 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 programme 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 programme is appropriate to submit to Faculty Education Committee
- 7.31 The Academic Scrutiny Group will use the Questions for Scrutiny Groups to gain a full and rounded understanding of the programme being proposed.
- 7.32 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).

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<sup>10</sup> 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.

7.33 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.

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

## Outcomes

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

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

7.36 If the Academic Scrutiny Group **is not satisfied** with the academic case for the revalidation 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

7.37 If further work is required, the Programme Lead 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 7.36 above).

7.38 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

7.39 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.

7.40 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.

## 8. 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 acceptance of the Faculty Education Committee will be reported to AQSC for 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

- 8.1 Faculty Education Committee will receive the minutes of the Academic Scrutiny Group, the Programme Specification and (where necessary) the Statement of support from Faculty Board.
- 8.2 The Chair of the Academic Scrutiny Group will present an overview of the process and the recommendation being presented.

### Faculty Education Committee

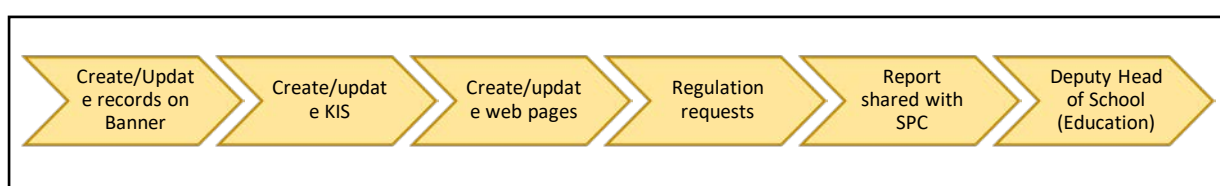
- 8.3 The Faculty Education Committee will use the documentation provided, and the recommendation of the Academic Scrutiny Group to reassure itself that:
  - the programme continues to meet the characteristics detailed in paragraph 2.5.
  - appropriate consultation has been undertaken with stakeholders.
  - the programmes continues to be supported by the School and, for joint programmes, there is evidence of cross-faculty consultation.
  - the programme has received (where necessary) support from the Faculty Board confirming that the resources required for the programme's delivery can continue to be provided to ensure the quality of the provision

### Outcomes

- 8.4 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.
- 8.5 If the Faculty Education Committee **has concerns** about any aspect of the programme revalidation 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.
- 8.6 If the Faculty Education Committee has concerns, which means that they are unable to support the recommendation to accept the programme, this will be reported to the Faculty Associate Dean (Education), Deputy Head of School (Education), Programme Lead and Faculty Academic Registrar.
- 8.7 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



- 8.8 The revalidation process is complete after Faculty Education Committee has accepted the programme revalidation and it has been reported to AQSC for final approval.
- 8.9 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.
- 8.10 The Curriculum and Timetabling Team is responsible for the creation of programme and module codes.
- 8.11 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.
- 8.12 The Programme Lead will consult with colleagues in Communications and Marketing to amend the programme pages on the web.
- 8.13 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.
- 8.14 The Secretary of AQSC will inform the Heads of Professional Services of the programmes that have been approved by AQSC.
- 8.15 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, September 2018, December 2018
Last Revision	November 2021 – removal of reference to Programme Change Form for programmes undergoing revalidation, June 2022 (logo update).
Type of Document	Policy and Procedure



## 9. Appendix 1 – Documentation

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<p><i>For revalidation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluative Report</li> <li>• Draft Programme Specification.</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluative report and overview of any proposed changes to the programmes</p> <p>Amended 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 (approved optional modules do not need to be provided). (final version)</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>Statement of support from Faculty Board (where necessary)</p> <p>Any revised documentation.</p>