

AIDE-MEMOIRE FOR EVALUATION AND REVALIDATION (PARTNER INSTITUTIONS)

This Aide-Memoire consists of questions and prompts to assist both course/subject teams in their preparation of course/subject documentation, and panel members in their consideration of the appropriateness of the course or undergraduate honours subject strand(s), or provision within a subject revalidation unit, to the University's objectives, viability of provision, and the standards for the award(s).

The questions and prompts are set out in the order of presentation of validation documentation. They supplement the topics identified in the Guidelines for evaluation and revalidation panels. **They are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.** Some questions are those used by QAA academic reviewers and commended to institutions in the QAA Code of Practice on Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review. Certain questions will be more valuable to external subject experts, others to internal University members conversant with University policies and processes. All will assist course/subject teams in preparing their documentation.

Strengths, good practice, innovation and other aspects for commendation should be emphasised.

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION		
A	INTRODUCTION	This section is essentially contextual. Academic Planning Sub-Committee has already considered questions of demand and viability before permitting the proposal to proceed, and monitoring of the Academic Plan should ensure that only viable courses are presented for revalidation. Do you have a clear view of why the course(s) are provided? Do the subject/course aims and objectives fit with the University's strategic aims and objectives? Does it satisfy the general criteria identified in 4 of the Guidelines? If a course is only available full-time, why has part-time mode been discounted?
COMMENTS		
SECTION B: COURSE/SUBJECT PROVISION		
B1	Programme Specification(s)	Are these clearly and fully presented? Is there a clear relationship between the intended learning outcomes and the aims of the course/subject strand (including for any proposed pre-final exit awards)? Do the teaching, learning and assessment methods relate to the outcomes. Are the programme learning outcomes written at the final level of the award. Are they correctly mapped in the matrix? (Detailed comments on the specific outcomes, assessment methods and criteria should be made under B2 and B4.) Is the summary information on course structure consistent with that in the rest of the documentation? Are the summary statements about student support, admissions and the regulation of standards consistent with University policy and practice and with regard to regulations in the course regulations in section B3? (Exemplars available at: www.ulster.ac.uk/staffdev/resource_list.phtml)
COMMENTS		
B2	Commentaries	
B2.1	REVALIDATION - recent and proposed changes	Have recent changes to the course/subject strand been clearly explained and justified? Is the rationale for proposed changes clear and are the changes appropriate?
B2.2	Progression, Coherence Choice (within the programme) Structure diagrams	Is there coherence within the course/strand? Are the choice of modules and their level and the sequence in which taken appropriate? Is academic progression and integration between and within levels in the programme evident? Is there sufficient underpinning? Are adequate and meaningful opportunities for choice provided? Are the expectations for any exit points adequately addressed? Do they represent coherent programmes of study? Are modules located in the appropriate semester and year? Are modules correctly designated as compulsory or optional and condonable or non-condonable? Is it clear that modules with core programme learning outcomes are non-condonable? Does the study load,

		<p>by mode, meet the University's norms? Taking account of module sizes, is the overall structure and workload balanced and reasonable?</p> <p>How flexible is the part-time mode? Are the modules shared with other programmes?</p>
COMMENTS		
B2.3	Transfer (to and from other programmes of study and opportunities for progression to further study)	<p>Are adequate and meaningful opportunities for transfer to and from other programmes of study provided?</p> <p>Has the articulation been clearly addressed?</p>
COMMENTS		
B2.4	Work-based learning, supervised work experience (placement) (See also placement modules and Employability.)	<p>Are there appropriate opportunities for meaningful work-based learning, related to the objectives of the course and any professional or regulatory requirements? Is the placement assessed at its assigned level? Is there adequate preparation for, and monitoring of, placement in accordance with the University's Guide to Good Practice? Are the learning outcomes further developed in subsequent study? What are the arrangements for moderation and external examining? How are the specific requirements of students with disabilities addressed?</p>
COMMENTS		
B2.5	<p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment (including support for students)</p> <p><u>Teaching and Learning</u></p>	<p>Does this section provide an analytical overview of approaches which would demonstrate the effectiveness of strategies in promoting student learning?</p> <p>Is there evidence of compliance with University, Faculty and School policies in relation to teaching and learning in particular the Teaching and Learning Strategy, the guidance principles therein and the guidelines for first year teaching?</p> <p>Are the strategies effective in promoting student learning and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes?</p> <p>Are the teaching and learning methods varied? In undergraduate courses are they responsive to the range of entry qualifications? Do the induction and transition processes meet the expectations of the University's Guidelines for the former and policy on the latter? How are issues of retention addressed? Are the arrangements for induction effective?</p> <p>Does the attendance policy support student learning, particularly in year 1 of undergraduate courses, where attendance is a key requirement for success. How is attendance monitored? Is it effective? How are HE study, writing and referencing skills developed? How does induction and the first year curriculum support transition?</p> <p>Is the first year undergraduate curriculum relevant to the vocational aspirations of new students?</p> <p>What approaches are adopted for large groups, small groups, practical sessions? How is student participation achieved? Are there opportunities for students to reflect on and take responsibility for their own learning? Is there evidence of compliance with University policy on Personal Development Planning? Is use made of group-work and e-learning? If not, would they be beneficial? Are issues in the University's e-learning standards framework adequately addressed?</p> <p>Can all learning outcomes be met by all students independent of any disabilities or impairments? Guidance is available from (www.equality.ulster.ac.uk/staff_guidance.html)</p> <p>For undergraduate healthcare and social work courses, are the DHSSPS guidelines (2007) for Safe, High Quality Health and Social Care in Curricula addressed?</p>

	<u>Assessment</u>	<p>Is there evidence of compliance with the University/Faculty/School policies in relation to assessment?</p> <p>Is there a range of assessment methods? Is the range appropriate and the load equitable across the provision? Are they appropriate to the learning outcomes? Will they be effective in judging achievement? Do the assessment criteria enable examiners to distinguish between different categories of achievement (mark bands) for the level of the module and the award?</p> <p>Does the assessment strategy have an adequate formative function in developing student abilities? Does the assessment strategy in year 1 of undergraduate courses explicitly promote the effective adoption of tertiary learning habits and standards? Does it include early and regular evaluation of student performance?</p> <p>Are the deadlines for submission of assignments across the course manageable for students?</p> <p>What feedback arrangements are in place? Are they prompt, meaningful and effective?</p> <p>Does the assessment strategy give confidence that achievement of the intended learning outcomes will be tested and measured?</p> <p>Does the strategy provide adequate safeguards of validity and reliability and fairness?</p> <p>Is best practice, as referenced in the University's Assessment Handbook, adopted? What approaches are taken to such matters as moderation (including for placement), double marking and anonymous marking of coursework?</p> <p>Do the assessment criteria meet the University's generic level criteria as stated in the Assessment Handbook?</p> <p>How are the requirements of students with disabilities and others with particular needs, as recognised under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order, addressed?</p>
COMMENTS		
B2.6	Standards	<p>What has the team's approach been to fulfilling the relevant generic benchmark standards? Are these met?</p> <p>Does each course meet the criteria for its associated award as defined in the University's qualifications and credit framework, reflecting the specification in the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications?</p> <p>Are the relevant PSRB requirements addressed? If applicable, is fitness to practise achieved?</p> <p>Have any concerns raised by external examiners been addressed?</p> <p>If necessary, have the reasons for particular entry standards, requirements or competences been explained? (see also B3 regulations).</p>
COMMENTS		
B2.7	Employability	Has the team adequately addressed the points in the University statement on Employability in relation to the following: (B2.7.1 – 6).
COMMENTS		
B2.7.1	Graduate Qualities	Are graduate qualities appropriate to employment prospects of students identified? Are these integrated into both teaching and learning and assessment procedures?
COMMENTS		

B2.7.2	Widening Participation	What support is provided to all students, including non-traditional entrants, to maximise their career potential?
COMMENTS		
B2.7.3	Work-based Learning	How does this help students improve their employability skills?
COMMENTS		
B2.7.4	Personal Development Planning	How does Personal Development Planning support the development of key qualities for employability and career development, as well as supporting subject-related learning?
COMMENTS		
B2.7.5	Entrepreneurship Training	Are the level 2/M entrepreneurship module(s) used? If not, has the team identified clearly its approach to how students will be able to achieve the specified learning outcomes? Are the skills associated with entrepreneurship closely aligned with employability?
COMMENTS		
B2.7.6	Career Opportunities, Development and Progression	Are student and employer needs (regionally, nationally and internationally) and, as appropriate, government policy on skills adequately reflected? How do students gain the self-promotional and career management skills aspects of employability critical for graduates securing and maintaining employment? Is there evidence that relevant and worthwhile careers will be available to new graduates? Will the course support the career progression of students currently in employment? Will there be sufficient opportunities for the projected cohort? Are there opportunities for further studies, within or outside the University? Has there been adequate consultation with employers, the professions and other interested bodies?
COMMENTS		
B3	Regulations	<p>Do course regulations accord with the requirements of the University's award regulations? (www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice under Regulations)</p> <p>Are any departures from regulations proposed?</p> <p>In undergraduate courses is the proposed initial offer standard appropriate to anticipated demand (and in postgraduate courses if higher than the norm)?</p> <p>Are there any specific admissions requirements (academic, experience, age or competence)? Are they justifiable? (For age or non-academic competence, take account of Employment Equality (Age) Regulation (NI) Order 2006 and SENDO.)</p> <p>Do qualifications proposed for accreditation of prior learning/exemption match the content and level of the modules in question?</p> <p>Are there modules in which failure may not be condoned? Is this reasonable, eg core modules?</p> <p>Where applicable, is the choice of modules which must contribute to a final classification appropriate?</p>
COMMENTS		
B4	Modules (For each module)	<p>Do the credit points accord with the notional student effort hours (10 hours = 1 credit point)? Do the hours give an adequate breakdown between the different forms of teaching used?</p> <p>Is there a clear relationship between the module rationale, aims and course related learning outcomes and assessment?</p> <p>Is the design and organisation of the curriculum effective in promoting student learning and achievement of the intended learning outcomes?</p>

		<p>Is the first year undergraduate curriculum relevant to the development of an appropriate skills set and to the vocational aspirations of students?</p> <p>Are the teaching and learning methods appropriate to the intended learning outcomes at the level of the module?</p> <p>Is the syllabus content appropriate for the objectives of the module and course? Will it encourage the achievement of the knowledge, understanding, skills and other qualities identified? Is it current and relevant? Is it informed by current research and scholarship (including the research interests of staff), the subject benchmarks, and any changes in the relevant occupational or professional requirements?</p> <p>In an Honours degree, is there a sustained project or dissertation module proposed? If not are the expectations of such study met elsewhere? Are the arrangements for project/dissertation supervision adequate? Is the suggested word-length appropriate?</p> <p>Is the assessment weighting between coursework and examination appropriate? Is the rationale for different assessment weightings between modules sound?</p> <p>Is sufficient information provided about the forms of assessment (eg duration and format of examination, length of assignment)? Are they appropriate for their diagnostic, formative and/or summative purposes?</p> <p>Are the reading lists and other sources of information appropriate? Are the texts current editions? Are they available in the Library? Are the texts appropriately identified as required or recommended reading? Is the amount of reading realistic?</p>
COMMENTS		
SECTION C: COURSE AND SUBJECT MANAGEMENT*		
C1	<p>Equality of Opportunity</p> <p>Admissions Policy</p> <p>Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005</p> <p>Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006</p>	<p>Are Faculty-institution policies provided? Do they accord with University policy? Do they ensure fair and equitable treatment for all students, taking account of equality matters, including the requirements of disabled students and others with particular needs and various entry qualifications? Has the University's policy statement relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order been addressed? Has guidance been sought from Staff Development? Are there adequate safeguards against intentional or unintentional bias in admissions and assessment?</p> <p>Has the programme team demonstrated that the teaching, learning and support elements of programmes are accessible to students with disabilities and others with particular needs as recognised under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order? How are the ways in which the curriculum is particularly accessible or inaccessible made known to potential students with a range of impairments?</p> <p>If age or experience requirements are stipulated are they justified?</p>
COMMENTS		
C2	Course Management	<p>Has adequate information been given about the adoption of University policies and procedures? Has this information been tailored to the local context of the course/subject?</p> <p>Are there adequate arrangements for course/subject committees to meet and to keep the curriculum under review and to consider other matters within their terms of reference? Is there a reasonable distribution of responsibilities among members of the course/subject team?</p> <p>How is personal development planning supported and monitored?</p>

* Not a requirement for institutions which have completed the University's new Institutional Recognition or Re-approval process.

		<p>Do the arrangements for support of placement and study abroad meet the expectations of the University's Code of Practice and Protocol respectively? Is there an effective system for managing and approving placement? Is there adequate consultation with placement providers?</p> <p>For a joint course or course which is delivered in a network of partners, how effective are the arrangements for its operation? Consider such matters as curriculum development, meetings of network members, staff development, assessment arrangements. Good practice includes forward planning with annual meetings including course directors and lead module coordinators built into a calendar of events; identification of lead module coordinators; possible meeting of module teams; common external examiner(s); internal cross moderation; common timing for shared examinations; common examination board as permitted by University; coordination of revisions; consideration of student views across all partners; common template for course handbook.</p>
COMMENTS		
C3	Student Support and Guidance	<p>Do the induction and transition processes reflect the expectations of the University's Guidelines for the former and policy on the latter? How are issues of retention addressed? Are the arrangements for induction effective? Does the attendance policy support student learning, particularly in year 1 of undergraduate courses, where attendance is a key requirement for success. How is attendance monitored? Is it effective? How are HE study, writing and referencing skills developed? How do induction and the first year curriculum support transition? Is the first year undergraduate curriculum relevant to the vocational aspirations of new students? Is it flexible in response to a diverse student intake?</p> <p>Do the arrangements for studies advice meet the expectations of the University's Code of Practice? Is there effective guidance to develop independent study?</p> <p>Is the role of the professional support services clearly understood? Is there adequate support for students with disabilities, including dyslexia? Is adequate consideration given to the requirements of Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order?</p> <p>Are the circumstances of distance and e-learning students addressed?</p> <p>Do the formal arrangements for staff/student consultation meet the University's expectations? Are they effective? What is the role of students?</p>
COMMENTS		
C4	Quality Assurance	<p>Does this statement give confidence that issues of concern will be addressed promptly and effectively, and that there is a culture of continuous improvement? How does the team review and enhance standards, and disseminate good practice? (See also Staff Development.)</p> <p>For revalidation, is there an external examiner associated with each module?</p>
COMMENTS		
SECTION D: RESOURCES		
D1	Physical	<p>Are the physical resources (general and specialist accommodation, laboratory equipment, library, IT) available sufficient to ensure the successful delivery of the course(s), for the cohort size?</p> <p>Is there a renewal/updating policy for equipment?</p> <p>Comment on the general appearance/condition of buildings and classrooms. Are there adequate study facilities for students?</p>

		<p>Are the book and periodical stocks appropriate and accessible (opening hours; borrowing entitlements; electronic and remote access)? (Note in partner institutions, the University's central service departments will have made reports to the University as part of the initial approval of course planning; Library Services will also make detailed reports on partner institution proposals in accordance with a detailed checklist.)</p>
COMMENTS		
D2	Staff and Staff Development	<p>Are the staff sufficiently qualified and experienced to deliver the course successfully at its qualification level? Are the staff numbers adequate? What is the balance between full-time and part-time staff? Will part-time contracts allow sufficient time to undertake expected duties? Is adequate support provided for postgraduate teaching assistants, demonstrators and part-time lecturers and recognised teachers and their integration into the team? What arrangements are there for induction and mentoring of new staff?</p> <p>Have all recently appointed teaching staff received academic induction in line with University policy? www.ulster.ac.uk/staffdev/staffinduction.phtml Is there sound leadership in the course/subject and module teams? Are you confident that the staff can work together as an effective team?</p> <p>Is there adequate technical, administrative and other support staff?</p> <p>Is there a staff development plan? Will it contribute to the enhancement of teaching? What use is made of Peer Observation? How many staff have undertaken the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice (or its predecessor), or are otherwise qualified in teaching in higher education? Is there evidence of participation in curriculum development (eg Higher Education Academy Subject Centre projects)?</p> <p>For courses in partner institutions, is the role of the Faculty Head of Collaborative Courses understood? Is there adequate liaison with the Faculty? Is any joint staff development with University staff to take place?</p>
COMMENTS		
INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATION		
	For Proposals from Partner Institutions	<p>Do you have confidence in the institution's ability to provide high quality administrative and student support services? Are the arrangements for reporting and addressing issues raised by students adequate at all levels? Are there adequate complaints and appeals procedures?</p>
COMMENTS		
	DOCUMENTATION	<p>Is the documentation clearly presented and easy to follow? Is it generally free from typographical errors and spelling mistakes? Is the pagination and indexing accurate? Are relevant sections cross-referenced? Have the relevant University templates been used?</p>
COMMENTS		

[Supplement for Foundation degrees not included.]

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