



**HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS OF
REVALIDATION PANELS IN PARTNER
INSTITUTIONS**

July 2011

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

**HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS OF REVALIDATION PANELS FOR COURSES IN
PARTNER INSTITUTIONS**

FOREWORD

This handbook is designed to assist members of University revalidation panels. It describes the processes and quality assurance arrangements which apply in the revalidation of courses offered in other institutions and outlines other aspects of the University's quality assurance procedures from the submission of an outline proposal to formal approval, together with ongoing monitoring.

The handbook derives its authority from the University's Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations as well as the operational procedures which have been approved by the relevant University committees.

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Head of Academic Office

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A THE UNIVERSITY

- 1 The University of Ulster was founded in 1984 by Royal Charter as a result of a petition from The New University of Ulster and the Ulster Polytechnic. The University is based on four campuses, at Coleraine, Jordanstown, Belfast, and Magee College, Londonderry.

The University's Objects and Vision

- 2 The objects of the University, as stated in its Charter are:

“to advance education through a variety of patterns, levels and modes of study and by a diversity of means by encouraging and developing learning and creativity, for the benefit of the community in Northern Ireland and elsewhere; to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge and culture through teaching, scholarship and research, and to make available the results of such research; and to promote wisdom and understanding by the example and influence of corporate life”.

- 3 The University's Vision is to lead in the provision of *Professional Education for Professional Life*, in a context which envisages the University focusing and deepening its contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of Northern Ireland and its global standing. The University has agreed the following statement of the expected qualities of its graduates.

University of Ulster graduates will demonstrate:

- subject-specific knowledge and skills informed by current research and professional/ vocational practice;
- flexibility, creativity and an entrepreneurial approach to problem solving;
- self-confidence, global citizenship, ethical leadership, and a commitment to life-wide learning, professionalism and employability;
- effective collaborative working, communication skills and the capacity for reflective practice, including the ability to give and receive feedback.

The Corporate Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16 sets out two corporate goals and associated objectives for excellence in both teaching and learning and in research. The goal for Teaching and Learning is to deliver high quality, flexible, student-centred programmes of study that are intellectually challenging, and which provide our students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to gain stimulating and fulfilling employment and to contribute to the advancement of their chosen profession, and to enable those graduates who have the ability and who seek to do so to undertake advanced study and/or research in their chosen subject.

Academic Affairs

The Senate

- 4 The Senate has responsibility for the ordering of the University's academic affairs in teaching and research and for the regulation and supervision of the education of its students. The Senate is composed mainly of academic staff, with provision for representation of non-academic staff and students. The Senate works through a number of committees, including the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Academic Development and Enhancement Committee.

Faculties and Schools

- 5 The University organises its academic activity in six Faculties (Art, Design and the Built Environment; Arts; Computing and Engineering; Life and Health Sciences; Social Sciences; Ulster Business School). The activities of Faculties extend across the campuses. The academic staff within Faculties are grouped by cognate subject areas in schools (departments in the Ulster Business School). Each Faculty also has a research graduate school, and 16 research institutes have been established.
- 6 Each Faculty has a Board which advises and reports to Senate on all matters relating to the organisation of education, teaching and research in the Faculty, including curricula and examinations, and on the progress and conduct of its students. The Dean of the Faculty chairs the Faculty Board.

The Heads of Schools within each Faculty assist with the co-ordination of the work of the Faculty under the leadership of the Dean. Associate Deans and Heads of Schools may be appointed.

Programme Management

- 7 Each course is administered by a course committee, comprising staff who contribute significantly to the teaching of the course. The course committee is responsible for the organisation and effective management of the course. It is chaired by a course director. The delivery of individual modules is managed by module co-ordinators.

Further information on course management is contained in section E.

UNIVERSITY AWARDS

- 8 The University's award-bearing programmes are modular in structure and are delivered in semesters. The minimum criteria for awards (certificates, diplomas, degrees at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels) are specified in terms of entry qualifications, duration, credit points and level.

Academic Year

- 9 The academic session is organised into three semesters: autumn, spring and summer. Whilst the majority of programmes are taught in the first two semesters, there are opportunities in some for students to use an intensive summer semester to vary the pace of their study, or to bridge the gap between a lower level course and the corresponding stage of a related degree course at the University. Some programmes require extended dates of attendance. Full-time Master's require a full calendar year.

- 10 The first two semesters comprise 12 weeks of teaching, and a three week examination period. The spring semester includes an additional one week revision period. The intensive summer semester is eight weeks in length. The full summer semester follows the standard pattern.

Qualifications and Credit Framework; Modular Structure

- 11 The University has adopted a modular structure and a credit framework for the delivery of its courses. The University's current Qualifications and Credit Framework (Appendix 1) replaces the frameworks in use from 1992 to 2001 and from 2002 - 2008. For each University award, the Framework identifies the minimum credit volume, the range of credit levels for modules contributing to the award, the minimum credit points required at the highest level and the maximum permitted at the lowest level within the range, and the pass mark used. The place of the award in QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) is also identified. Other expectations (entry qualifications; duration; progress, consequences of failure and classification) are specified in award and course regulations. Templates for course regulations are maintained by the Academic Office.

Qualifications and Generic Qualification Descriptors

- 12 The University expects courses leading to its awards to meet the generic outcomes for the relevant qualification described in the FHEQ (Appendix 2). Further information on the FHEQ is available at QAA's website. Each specific course has its own aims and learning outcomes set out in a programme specification.

Credit Levels and Generic Credit Level Descriptors

- 13 Modules are assigned a particular level. The level is an expression of relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and student autonomy. The University adopted formally the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS) level descriptors to describe the new levels in 2002. The levels reflect those commonly in use in the rest of the University sector, and are now known as EWNI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) levels. They have been recommended in the higher education credit framework for England, published by QAA in August 2008. They are set out at Appendix 3.

- 14 The following equivalences for credit and qualification levels apply:

<u>University Credit Levels (2009)</u>	<u>University Credit Levels (to 2008)</u>	<u>FHEQ (2009)</u>	<u>FHEQ (2008)</u>
1	A	-	-
2	A	-	-
3	A	-	-
4	1	4	Certificate
5	2	5	Intermediate
6	3	6	Honours
7	M	7	Masters
8	D	8	Doctorate

- 15 The levels encompass the further and higher education sectors and start at 'Entry' level. Entry level and level 1 are not used in University programmes with the exception of a particular introductory level 1 Mathematics module in Access courses. Level 2 is only used in Access to Higher Education courses, but at least 60 credit points in the final year must be at level 3.

Modules and Credit Points

- 16 A module is a component of a programme with its own approved aims, learning outcomes and assessment methods. Each module is usually taught and assessed within a semester. Modules may be delivered across the academic year and assessed in semesters 2 or 3 ('long-thin' modules). Credit points and a credit level, appropriate to the module's content and learning objectives, are allocated in accordance with the overall requirements of the award. Credit points are a notional expression of student effort hours (inclusive of class contact, practicals, fieldwork, private study, assessment). Notionally 10 hours of student effort equates to one credit point.
- 17 Modules are either compulsory or optional within the programme structure. Some modules may be described as 'core', requiring students to meet a threshold standard in both the coursework and examination assessment elements in order to pass the module.
- 18 Student performance in modules and the course overall is generally measured as percentage marks although some record performance on a pass or fail basis. The University confers its qualifications on students who complete modules amounting to the specified number of credits at the appropriate levels for the award in accordance with course regulations and achieve the specified standard of performance to fulfil the learning outcomes of the programmes of study.

Module Size

- 19 Taught modules may have any value in multiples of five credit points with a minimum size of 10 credit points. If course teams intend to use different sizes they should take account of the overall study load for students.
- 20 Periods of placement which are assessed in relation to the learning objectives of the programme may carry credit points. The placement may be integrated with an existing module or considered equivalent to taught modules. The allocation of credit points should not be made mechanistically in relation to the time spent on placement but should be related to the learning objectives of the module; there may be periods during placement when the student is gaining experience, which does not contribute to the fulfilment of intended learning outcomes.

Study Load

- 21 One hundred and twenty credit points represent the normal workload for a full-time programme of study in the standard academic year and 180 credits for study across a full calendar year. Generally 60 credit points of study are undertaken in each of the autumn and spring semesters. This amounts to some 36 to 42 hours of study per week. Programmes of significantly longer duration comprise additional modules, taken during the summer semester.
- 22 In part-time programmes, a maximum of 90 credit points may be studied in the two-semester academic year and 135 in the calendar year (notionally 30 hours per week), with no more than 45 credit points in any semester.
- 23 The special intensive eight-week summer semester allows study of modules amounting to 40 credit points (50 hours per week) (full-time) or a maximum of 20 points for part-time studies (25 hours).

24 This guidance is summarised below:

Study load in credit points	Normal full-time (notional hours per week)	Part-time maximum
Academic year (30 weeks) (2 semesters)	120 (40)	90 (30)
Calendar year (45 weeks+) (3 semesters)	180 (40)	135 (30)
Intensive summer semester (8 weeks)	40 (50)	20 (25)

25 Unequal study load between semesters should not be a feature of course design for full-time courses (and should preferably be avoided in part-time courses but may occur because of module sizes). Individual students may seek, taking account of the optional modules available within their programme, to take a heavier load in one semester than the other. Subject to fulfilment of the requirements for the year as expressed in course regulations, and in the case of full-time students the completion of at least 40 credit points in the other semester, this is permissible.

26 The study loads above represent normal maxima. Proposals for courses with a heavier load as part of their structure, for example completion of 120 credit points in 20 weeks of study for an intensive degree of two years or 60 weeks, require special consideration by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Module Teaching Patterns

27 The balance between lectures, seminars, tutorials, projects, laboratory and fieldwork etc is not regulated. There are conventions within subject areas and common patterns are often followed on a weekly basis. Course/subject teams should take account of the needs of student groups in considering the disposition of various teaching and learning methods. A first year undergraduate teaching policy was approved in 2008.

Use of Modules at Pre-HE Level in Undergraduate Programmes, and Undergraduate Modules in Postgraduate Programmes

28 The 2002 Framework introduced some latitude in the specifications for awards. This is mainly because ab initio study may not be easily accommodated within the expectations of the level. Consequently some modules are permitted at a lower level than would normally be expected in an HE qualification. The following restrictions apply:

Lowest Level

Except for Access Diplomas, the lowest level permissible in undergraduate programmes is Level 3.

The lowest level permissible in postgraduate programmes is Level 6.

Maximum at Lowest Level

With the exception of Access courses, Foundation and Associate Bachelor's degrees, the maximum volume at the lowest level is:

in programmes with 120 or more credit points: 30 credit points

in programmes with fewer than 120 credit points: 20 credit points

In Foundation and Associate Bachelor's degrees: 40 credit points

Access to Higher Education courses are usually made up entirely of modules at levels 2 and 3, with at least 60 credit points at level 3. An introductory Mathematics module at level 1 may be used.

Exemptions on the basis of study at level 3 or 6

29 Exemption should not be granted from level 3 modules in undergraduate programmes and level 6 modules in postgraduate programmes except where relevant study has been successfully completed as part of another programme at the **same** qualification level. For example, a student should not be

exempted from a first year degree module on the basis of a GCE A level in the subject as the latter qualification serves to meet the admission requirements. Programme design should ensure that alternative modules are available for students who do not need to take such foundation modules.

Use of Modules of a Level Higher than that typically associated with a Qualification

- 30 With the exception of a small number of degrees, the classification of undergraduate awards is determined exclusively by students' average performance in the modules studied at the highest level. The inclusion in a programme structure of a module(s) from a higher level than that which would be typical of the qualification level for that programme would not normally be accepted given that, in longer programmes, this would lead to a classification based on a very low number of credits and, in all cases, would result in a classification based on study at a level higher than that associated with the qualification. In such circumstances a carefully articulated rationale for the inclusion of a higher level module(s) will be required for consideration at validation and subsequently by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Postgraduate Programmes

- 31 From 2003 intake, in accordance with the QAA framework, all programmes using Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Master's award titles must be postgraduate in level. These awards comprise a minimum of 60, 120, 180 credit points respectively. The lowest undergraduate level which may be included is Level 6. The restriction on volume at this level is indicated above and in the University's Qualifications and Credit Framework at Appendix 1. Programmes which are postgraduate in time and intended as conversion programmes should be presented as Graduate Certificates or Graduate Diplomas, with a minimum 60 or 120 credit volume respectively. A level 7 dissertation does not form part of such programmes. (See below: undergraduate programmes – level 6.)
- 32 Except where presented as stand-alone qualifications, postgraduate certificates are generally not entry points. Instead they may be awarded to students who successfully fulfil the objectives of the award but do not complete or proceed to the Postgraduate Diploma/Master's stage.

Entry Standard

- 33 The entry standard for postgraduate programmes is a minimum of a non-honours degree (with 360 credits) for Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas, and of a second-class honours degree for Master's degrees, or the equivalent standard in a Graduate Certificate or Diploma. This standard is a pass for Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma and 50% for Master's entry.

Pass Mark

- 34 Except for Integrated Master's degree, the pass mark in all modules and the award overall is 50%. In Integrated Master's, a 40% pass mark is used in the modules at levels 4 – 6.

Undergraduate Programmes

- 35 Within the three main qualification levels, the following awards are available. The pass mark in all is 40%.

Level 4

- 36 Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)

Normally 120 credits at level 4, with a maximum of 30 credit points at level 3. This replaces the former Diploma comprising 120 credit points at level 4.

Level 5

- 37 Foundation degree (FdA, FdEng, FdSc)
Associate Bachelor's degree (AB)
Advanced Diploma (AdvDip)
Advanced Certificate (AdvCert)

- 38 The Foundation degree and Associate Bachelor's degree comprise a minimum of 240 credit points, usually at levels 4 and 5, but with a maximum of 40 credit points at level 3. The Foundation degree is

intended for vocational areas of study. It must include at least 40 credit points worth of work-based learning. Following a Foundation degree, the associated Honours degree is completed in up to two further years of full-time study or the equivalent part-time in a '2 + bridging + 1' model. The bridging element ranges from 0 – 120 credit points depending on the curriculum match. From an Associate Bachelor's degree, a minimum year and one semester are required (with at least 40 credit points at level 2 for the bridging period). A pass standard is required for students to be eligible to progress to the related Honours degree, but initial offer and admission standards are determined by the availability of places.

- 39 The University has withdrawn the award of DipHE and no longer offers HNDs and HNCs of the Edexcel Foundation. The new Foundation degree and Associate Bachelor's degree take their place.
- 40 The Advanced Diploma and Certificate comprise 120 and 60 credit points respectively, generally at level 5, with an entry standard of CertHE or equivalent.
- 41 The minimum general entry requirement for the CertHE, Foundation degree and Associate Bachelor's degree is one GCE A level and three GCSEs or acceptable alternative qualifications.

Level 6

- 42 This level comprises Honours degrees, Graduate Diplomas and Graduate Certificates and non-Honours degrees.
- 43 The Honours degree has a minimum of 360 credit points (with at least 120 at level 6, and a maximum of 30 at level 3). It has a two A level or equivalent entry standard. Normally a dissertation/project is expected in the final level of an Honours degree. It may be omitted where the outcomes are met elsewhere.
- 44 Graduate Diplomas and Certificates have a minimum non-Honours degree entry requirement. They comprise 120 and 60 credit points respectively, at level 6, with a maximum of 30 or 20 credit points at level 3. They are based largely on undergraduate material and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline. They replace postgraduate conversion courses. A Foundation Degree or Associate Bachelor's degree is insufficient for admission to the Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate.
- 45 The non-Honours degree has 360 credit points, with at least 60 at level 6 but with a maximum of 30 at level 3 permitted. It requires two A levels or equivalent for admission.

Other Undergraduate Qualifications

- 46 The award titles of Certificate or Diploma are available for programmes of 60 or 120 credit points respectively, which do not fulfil the minimum requirements for other awards. Access to HE courses, comprising 120 credit points at levels 1 to 3, use the title 'Access Diploma'.

Associate Awards

- 47 The Diploma in International Academic Studies and the Diploma in Professional Practice or Professional Practice (International) are associate awards available for integrated periods of study abroad or placement respectively, lasting at least 25 weeks in Honours and non-Honours degrees. These awards are not made independently of another qualification.

Titles

- 48 Titles reflect the level of the course, through the generic award, and the subject content. The appropriate title for an award is usually self-evident. However, in some subject areas practice in the sector varies, and the choice between 'Arts' or 'Science' or whether to use a more specific practice-based title is largely a matter of convention. For University awards there should be consistency within subject areas, including between undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

Naming Subjects in Titles

- 49 The subject of study is named in the programme title after the award. The University has adopted the QAA guidance that qualification titles should reflect their subject focus. Titles should not normally combine more than three subjects. Where subjects have approximately equal weight they are joined

by 'and' ('X and Y' or 'X, Y and Z': two main subjects or three minor subjects.) In major/minor combinations, the minor subject is linked to the major subject by 'with'. This applies where the minor subject represents one quarter or one third of the programme. This weighting should be reflected at Levels 5 and 6 in undergraduate degrees.

- 50 QAA has proposed that 'Combined Studies' should be reserved for programmes involving study of more than three significant components. Within the University, the 'Combined Honours' designation may be used as a summary title where three subjects are selected from a range. Awards will specify the three subjects.

Exit Awards

- 51 Each award-bearing course requires a statement of overarching aims and objectives, representing a coherent programme of study for a course or subject strand. This also applies to interim 'exit' awards which are not made simply for the accumulation of credit. Students who leave without completing the requirements for a named award may receive a transcript of their studies.
- 52 In courses with staged stepping off and on points and associated awards (eg CertHE/AB/Hons Degree or Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma/Master's degree), only one award is made to students during a continuous period of registration, that at the highest level when the student leaves.

Web-supported Learning

- 53 Two broad definitions are used to describe modules delivered or supported online.

Blended learning – Although online participation is required, face-to-face interactions remain. Online participation may include all or some of the following:

- accessing key course documents;
- using online course material which contain major educational content;
- interaction and communication (synchronous and asynchronous) between staff and students and among students;
- online assessments (formative or summative).

Fully online – There is no face-to-face on-campus component. All content, activities and interactions are integrated and delivered online. The assumption is made that the student may never attend a campus throughout the duration of the module.

No Year 1 modules may be delivered fully online in full-time undergraduate campus-based programmes.

B UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE POLICY AND STRATEGY

Policy Statement

- 54 The Charter of the University enables it to join or co-operate with any other university, place of learning or other body in pursuit of its objectives. It may admit to the privileges of the University or recognise for any purpose any college or other institution or the employees or students thereof. Such arrangements allow the University to extend educational provision beyond its campuses and to respond to a demand for wider access to higher education.
- 55 The University attaches overriding importance to serving the educational, economic, social and cultural interests of Northern Ireland. It has developed close links with the six regional colleges of further education, the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, and other educational providers in Northern Ireland. The University has transferred much of its intermediate-level (level 5) provision to the Further Education (FE) sector in Northern Ireland to reflect regional requirements and support for the community. In line with Government policy, the University in particular supports the development of Foundation degrees. Colleges in Northern Ireland are encouraged to work together in subject networks.
- 56 Proposals for collaboration with institutions abroad are subject to very critical scrutiny to ensure compatibility, especially where the institution concerned may not be familiar with the conventions of the United Kingdom higher education system, and where the institution is in the private sector. Where

the institution is subject to the authority of a government department or agency, the University requires evidence that that department or agency has no objection to the proposed link.

57 The University expects the language of instruction and assessment in awards of the University in overseas institutions to be English.

58 The University must ensure that the academic standards of a particular course and the resources available to deliver it meet the University's criteria for the award in question. The processes and procedures of programme evaluation and review, external examining and moderation for validated activity are integrated with the University's own quality assurance procedures.

59 The University must also give careful consideration to the impact of such developments on its own academic and corporate plans and on the use of its resources. There should be clear educational advantages for both partners and any proposal should work in support of the University's objects and Vision. The University would not normally expect to be involved in collaborative work in subject areas where it does not itself have interest or expertise.

60 The University may investigate the financial health of the institution, and the standing and effectiveness of its provision and collaborative links with other universities.

61 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has published a Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Institutions should be familiar with its content. The Code includes a section on collaborative provision which contains precepts and guidance about the assurance of quality in educational partnerships. The University endorses the Code and has incorporated relevant aspects into its own procedures.

Collaborative Strategy

62 The University approved a five-year Strategy for Collaborative Provision in 2010. The Strategy sets out the following aims:

- to widen participation and enhance opportunities for access to higher education within the region;
- to develop innovative and vocationally relevant programmes which meet identified regional skills needs;
- to provide modes of delivery and progression routes which facilitate life long learning;
- to work with partners to continually enhance the quality of the student learning experience;
- to engage with appropriate international partners to support achievement of the University's strategic objectives.

63 In taking forward these aims the University will seek to ensure:

- the adoption of a partnership working approach which is mutually beneficial, flexible, responsive and financially and academically sustainable;
- the enhancement of the profile and reputation of the University and its partners regionally, nationally and internationally through excellence in programme design, delivery and management.

64 Each aim is supported by a number of key objectives and annual action plans manage their achievement. The full Strategy containing 32 objectives is available at www.ulster.ac.uk/collaborativepartnerships/.

Associate Students

65 In 2010/11, some 5300 students of other institutions studied for awards of the University under validation arrangements. Such students are students of the institution; they are not members of the University, but have the status of 'Associate Student'. Associate students are accorded the following rights and privileges of the University: borrowing and access rights in the University's library, including access to electronic resources; membership of the University's sports centre (upon payment of the

appropriate charge); right of appeal and complaint to the University following completion of the internal procedures of the partner institution. Associate students are not eligible for membership of the Students' Union, and may not avail of University bursaries, prizes or other financial packages offered by the University nor of the services of the Career Development Centre and the Student Support Department. They are subject to University rules and regulations while using University facilities or on University premises. Access to the University's library resources is not intended to substitute for the information resources of the partner institution.

Assurance of Standards

- 66 The Senate is responsible for ordering the academic affairs of the University. Separate procedures for Institutional Recognition and Re-approval were introduced in 2008/9 and are being applied to all prospective and existing partners seeking to offer courses leading to University awards. This ensures that an appropriate due-diligence risk assessment is undertaken. The Senior Management Group advises on the appropriateness of partner institutions in light of the University's strategic plans. The Academic Development and Enhancement Committee considers the appropriateness of proposals for new programmes of study offered by the University and under validation arrangements with other educational institutions in the context of the University's mission, collaborative, international and other strategies and its Academic Plan. The Teaching and Learning Committee keeps under review, advises and makes recommendations to Senate on standards for awards, and determines the approval of courses in accordance with these standards. The Committees work through sub-committees (Academic Planning and Course Approval respectively) and consult with Faculties in conducting their business.
- 67 The University has in place various structures and processes designed to assure the standards of its taught programme provision. There are common University Regulations for all awards and specific course regulations must conform to these regulations. The regulations specify minimum thresholds with regard to entry requirements, duration, assessment and award. The University's qualifications and credit framework sets out minimum requirements in terms of credit points and levels for each award and makes explicit the relationship between awards within an overall hierarchy. The University's programme approval process, of which revalidation is part, the appointment of external examiners and accreditation by appropriate professional and/or statutory bodies contribute to the assurance of standards.
- 68 The University aims to ensure that the academic standards of a particular course and the resources available to deliver it meet the University's criteria for the award in question, whether it is delivered by the University or another institution.
- 69 It applies the same principles of quality assurance to validated course activity as it does to its own provision. The processes of course evaluation and revalidation, monitoring and external examining follow closely the University's own procedures. Additional support and liaison is, however, provided at Faculty level. These arrangements are described in the following sections.
- 70 Since students attending validated courses at other institutions are not registered students of the University, the institutions are not expected to adopt all the University's own procedures in every matter, for example in respect of student discipline, library borrowing arrangements, or methods for obtaining student feedback. Nevertheless, the University expects that adequate arrangements are in place, and requires evidence of these.

Principles of Standards Assurance and Quality Management

- 71 The University aims to operate an integrated system of standards assurance and quality management and enhancement which makes an effective contribution to the achievement of the University's Vision and which underpins the academic planning process. The system must be sufficiently robust to maintain the defined standards of the University's awards, to satisfy internal quality management and enhancement objectives, to comply with the published sections of the *QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education* and to satisfy the expectations of other external statutory or regulatory bodies. The following Principles have been approved by the University.
- 72 In relation to **standards** the system seeks to ensure that:
- the academic standards of programmes of study are appropriate to their related awards;

- the University's programme structures accord with the requirements of the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and all awards conform to the approved structure;
- the standards of awards are kept under review to ensure the continued validity of the award and that student achievement is commensurate with these;
- standards are externally benchmarked and validated through, *inter alia*, the input of external examiners and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and by reference to relevant national subject benchmarks;
- the learning resources provided are sufficient to support students in achieving the award for which they are registered.

73 In relation to **quality** the system seeks to ensure that:

- the processes in place for programme approval, monitoring and review are working effectively;
- the views of students, staff, academic subject peers, employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies are fully integrated into the process of programme planning, development and change;
- appropriate quality management arrangements are in place to ensure that all aspects of learning resources are working effectively in support of student learning;
- timely and appropriate action is taken where change is necessary or where matters of concern have been identified;
- excellence in teaching is recognised and rewarded;
- excellence in research and the support of research study is promoted;
- good practice and innovation are recognised and promulgated.

74 The key operating principles of the system are that:

- all formal processes are linked to the appropriate point in the management structure at which decisions can be taken about the specified action required within the timescale identified;
- all issues raised through the formal processes and any action taken are recorded and reported appropriately;
- formal processes are applied rigorously to all programmes of study and subjects, including provision in partner institutions;
- the implications of the quality processes for Faculties are the subject of consultation before implementation and the effectiveness of processes is reviewed regularly.

C INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL AND PLANNING AND EVALUATION OF NEW PROGRAMMES

75 All partner institutions are subject to formal Institutional approval including institutional recognition visits and re-approval processes. The suitability of a proposed partner is reviewed through consideration of such matters as the institution's history, mission and values, operating environment, financial viability, regulatory framework, management and organisation structures, administrative processes, current provision, existing and proposed collaborative arrangements, quality assurance, recent internal audit reports, learning resources and student welfare. All institutions are expected to undergo re-approval within a five-year cycle.

76 A proposal for the introduction of a new course from an external institution is submitted to the Academic Planning Sub-Committee of the Academic Development and Enhancement Committee. It is accompanied by an assessment from the relevant University faculty. The Sub-Committee reviews the proposal in the context of the University's Collaborative Provision Strategy and its academic plan, paying particular attention to demand, proposed intake size, progression opportunities, employment prospects, and resource needs. The Sub-Committee advises the Academic Development and

Enhancement Committee, which makes recommendations to the Senate, whether planning should proceed.

- 77 If approval to proceed to planning and evaluation is granted, the institution is required to prepare a detailed course proposal. An evaluation panel, comprising internal University and external members, is established. The panel discusses the detailed course submission with the course planning committee and makes recommendations regarding approval to the Teaching and Learning Committee through the Course Approval Sub-Committee.

D REVALIDATION

Revalidation Subject Units

- 78 Each programme is assigned to a revalidation subject unit or sub-unit following its initial approval. These are normally groupings of cognate programmes agreed by the Faculty for the purposes of the efficient organisation of the re-approval process, taking account of commonality in disciplines and to allow a subject overview to be presented. Some units comprise both University and partner college provision. In some cases, programmes may be re-validated on an individual basis. Revalidations may be organised in conjunction with relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.
- 79 The unit may comprise the provision offered by a 'subject network'. In a network the same validated programme operates at a number of different partner institutions. Networks have arrangements for the management and oversight of the network. This is typically achieved through a subject network 'committee' where representatives from each of the partner institutions involved meet with the relevant University staff on a regular basis. Such oversight seeks to ensure a consistent student experience regardless of which location a student enrolls in the course.

Revalidation Cycle

- 80 Each unit or sub-unit is allocated to a particular revalidation year within a quinquennial cycle. New programmes are assigned to a particular unit or sub-unit as part of the initial approval process. This determines their period of approval.

Purpose

- 81 Revalidation follows a regular five year cycle. At the end of the period of approval, in the designated year, the programmes within the unit are presented afresh for revalidation by a University panel. On occasion, a new course proposal which derives substantially from existing provision may also be considered within the unit, if approval for planning and evaluation has been granted. The revalidation exercise is not a periodic review and there is no requirement for a detailed critical self-appraisal of the operation of the courses during the preceding period nor is viability considered in detail. However the panel does meet with students to obtain their views directly. No detailed statistical profiles are provided. Such matters are addressed through the annual monitoring process. The primary purpose of revalidation is the re-affirmation of the standards set for the awards and the courses within the unit and their continuing currency and relevance to the University. It aims to ensure that for each award-bearing course:
- it accords with the University's purpose and core strategic aims;
 - the academic structure and content are appropriate;
 - the proposed award is in accordance with the University's scheme of qualifications; it conforms to the modular and credit framework of the University, and the University's general regulations for the award in question;
 - the standard and student workload are comparable with those of other programmes leading to the same award nationally;
 - the available resources are sufficient to enable the stated aims and objectives to be met for the proposed number of students;
 - there is evidence of reasonable employment prospects and progression opportunities.
- 82 The Panel also uses reports from external examiners to make a judgement about whether intended learning outcomes are being obtained by students and the programme specifications are being delivered.

Revalidation Preparation

- 83 A revalidation preparation form is sent to the Dean of the associated University Faculty at least 12 months before the revalidation event is scheduled to take place. This allows the Faculty to confirm those courses and undergraduate subject strands to be included. A subject unit co-ordinator is nominated. The co-ordinator is responsible for managing the provision of documentation and acts as a single point of contact for the Academic Office and other central departments. Duties are set out at Appendix 4. Partner institutions are expected to maintain close liaison with the Subject Unit Coordinator and the Faculty's Subject Partnership Manager, if different (duties at Appendix 5).

Establishment of Revalidation Panel

- 84 The Academic Office convenes a revalidation panel for each subject unit or sub-unit. The panel consists of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Chair), the Dean or Associate Dean or nominee from the associated Faculty, one University member from a Faculty other than that associated with the provision, and a minimum of two subject-specialist external members. Owing to the non-availability of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, a Dean or Associate Dean or Head or Associate Head of School may be asked to chair a revalidation panel for a subject unit outside his or her Faculty. Other internal members include a representative from the associated Faculty and a senior member of staff from another Faculty who is experienced in curriculum development, quality assurance and collaborative activity.
- 85 External members, as academic subject experts, are proposed by the relevant Faculty. They should be sufficient in number and have sufficient expertise to cover the full range of provision. External members should not have been closely associated with the institution, eg through having recently acted in an advisory capacity, as an external examiner, or having been a member of staff. Employer representatives may be appointed in addition.
- 86 The date of the meeting is arranged in consultation with the subject unit co-ordinator. The co-ordinator liaises with partner institutions. The meeting is serviced by the Academic Office.

Production of Documentation

- 87 Revalidation documentation should be presented in accordance with the sample outline at Appendix 6 and the supplementary information in Appendices 7 - 8. The document includes a programme specification for each course.
- 88 The team is expected to ensure that, in preparing the submission, full account is taken of the University's criteria for the planning of programmes [Appendix 9 a/b], its scheme of academic awards and the relevant regulations for these awards, the University's modular and credit framework and the national benchmark standards for the subject (www.qaa.ac.uk under Academic Infrastructure). Where applicable, the particular requirements of access programmes and foundation degrees should be met. A course may be modelled closely on the curriculum of a course offered by the University, but it may be appropriate to make variations or to develop a distinct programme.
- 89 Institutions are expected to take account of the fact that the University has sought to ensure that, in addition to the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge and skills, undergraduate degree students develop their personal transferable skills as an integral part of their academic programme. These skills and other generic qualities are embodied in 'graduate qualities' and teams should take account of the expectations set out in the statement in Appendix 10. In addition, the University promotes Entrepreneurship Training (Appendix 11) and emphasises the place of Employability in its provision (Appendix 12). A process of Personal Development Planning supports students at the University in taking responsibility for their own development, and institutions may have similar arrangements. For the delivery of the curriculum, the University has Guiding Principles for Teaching and Learning, and Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning (Appendix 13). An Assessment Handbook gives guidance, including generic assessment criteria by level.
- 90 Information may be presented in a single bound document or in separate sections. It should be well indexed and easy to follow and avoid unnecessary duplication. Copies are lodged in the Academic Office for distribution to members of the panel, at least **four weeks** before the panel meeting, (three weeks for single course events). Institutional approval of each college's contribution to the submission is indicated by the relevant director's signature on the title page. The Faculty may have its own process for formal review before submission.
- 91 Members of the panel receive a copy of the Guidelines for Evaluation and Revalidation Panels (Appendix 14), an Aide-Memoire (Appendix 15) the appropriate national/subject benchmark

statement(s), and other relevant information. The revalidation panel also receives the last two annual reports from external examiners (module responsibilities of external examiners are mapped within the revalidation document) in order to provide a context for discussion.

- 92 Members of the panel are requested, time permitting, to make initial comments on the document, using Form CA7 (Appendix 16). These are made available to other panel members and the subject team in advance of the meeting. The Subject Partnership Manager provides preliminary comments on the nature of the Faculty's engagement with partner institutions and in the preparation of documentation, and any recommendations regarding adjustments to approved maximum cohort sizes. The meeting is serviced by the Academic Office which provides to the Chair briefing notes on key issues and standards and regulatory matters. These are made available to the panel members and the subject team on the day of the meeting.

Inspection of Resources

- 93 Specialist resources (library, equipment, laboratories etc) are normally inspected at the start of the panel meeting. Where provision is spread across a number of locations, arrangements are made for separate preliminary inspections by the external members of the panel, guided by the designated subject unit co-ordinator, wherever possible. Written reports using Form CA8 (Appendix 17) are provided for the panel. Where several sites are involved (potentially in subject networks) it is not always possible for externals to visit all locations. This is only required where specialist resources are needed for delivery. If an inspection is not possible, a report is provided by the Subject Partnership Manager, in consultation with University subject experts.
- 94 Relevant central University departments are asked to provide reports on resource matters.

Panel Meeting

- 95 A sample agenda and provisional programme are given at Appendix 18. The sample programme is based on a one-day event. The actual duration depends on the extent of provision. The agenda and programme are discussed in advance with the subject unit co-ordinator. Arrangements are varied where partner college courses are included within a unit or sub-unit which mainly comprises University provision. The agenda and programme may be altered to take account of the additional requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Where courses operate within a subject network, the arrangements for the management of the network are explored.
- 96 The meeting takes place on one University campus or in one institution. The subject unit co-ordinator, senior representatives from each institution, course directors and module co-ordinators are required to meet with the panel. Other staff may attend, but are not required to do so. The Faculty Head of Collaborative Courses is in attendance throughout the meeting unless also acting as subject unit co-ordinator. The Panel meets with a representative group of students, including class representatives in full-time courses or in other courses where this is a form of student consultation. Notes of guidance are provided to students (Appendix 19). For a multi-site unit, if external panel members meet separately with students at other locations as part of a preliminary visit, they are asked to identify issues raised and points of commendation in their CA8 report.
- 97 The panel is expected to conduct a critically constructive and independent assessment of the provision within the subject. At the end of the meeting, the chair of the panel reports to the subject unit co-ordinator and institutional representatives the panel's conclusions and recommendations, and any conditions of approval, with any adjustments to approved intake sizes and the proposed period of approval, which is normally for a further five years.

Report of Revalidation Panel

- 98 A report of the meeting, when confirmed by the chair, is circulated to members of the panel, to the Dean and Subject Unit Co-ordinator, Subject Partnership Manager and the institutions, and forwarded to the Course Approval Sub-Committee. (A draft report is provided in advance to the Subject Unit Co-ordinator.) Following consideration of the report, the Sub-Committee makes recommendations regarding approval to the Teaching and Learning Committee.
- 99 Where the Faculty or partner institutions find difficulty in meeting the conditions specified by the panel, it is expected to report accordingly to the Sub-Committee, giving reasons, within four weeks of receiving the panel's report.

- 100 Otherwise, the Subject Unit Co-ordinator should submit to the Academic Office, within three months of receipt of the report, and no later than the end of May:
- a) bound copies of the final version of the revalidation documentation, incorporating such amendments as are required for approval;
 - b) a brief paper indicating how the recommendations and conditions have been addressed, the nature of the amendments made and page-referencing their location within the document.

Conclusion and Final Approval

- 101 The revalidation process is concluded when the chair of the panel certifies by signature on the title page that the final documentation is satisfactory. Provision is approved for a period of five years in accordance with the revalidation schedule. Ongoing approval is subject to satisfactory outcomes in the annual monitoring process. Where a particular course within a subject unit is not approved for the normal five year period, it may be subject to a separate individual revalidation.

E COURSE MANAGEMENT

- 102 The arrangements for administration of the course are expected to be consistent with University practice.

Course Committee

- 103 A course committee for the course is established. Terms of reference and membership are given at Appendix 20. The course committee is responsible for the ongoing administration and effective management of the course.

Course Director and Module Co-ordinators

- 104 A course director and module co-ordinators are designated. Duties and responsibilities of course directors are given at Appendix 21.

Student Advice and Consultation

- 105 The course committee is expected to put in place, in accordance with institutional, University and Faculty policies, arrangements for student support and guidance, in particular:

- student induction and transition, and monitoring attendance
- studies advice and access to staff
- student consultation

The University has developed guidelines for student induction and a policy on transition for undergraduate students, as well as a protocol on attendance and guidelines on notification of absence.

- 106 Students should be provided with institutional level information. A course handbook, deriving from the evaluation document, is also issued and supplemented as appropriate by detailed module information.

- 107 Students should be made aware of arrangements for access to staff outside scheduled teaching. The course committee should ensure that, for full-time programmes, there is a staff/student consultative committee (which reports to the course committee) or student representation on the course committee. The use of both means is considered best practice. Such committees should meet at least once each semester and there should be at least two student members for each year group on the committee. Substantive items relating to teaching and learning including the external examiner's report and course committee's response should be included on the agenda for meetings. The University considers commendable the practice of students chairing and minuting consultative committees.

- 108 For part-time courses, if a formal consultative committee is not feasible, course committees should develop appropriate methods of consultation, eg email consultation, online discussion board, meetings with students, outcomes of discussions with advisers of studies or module tutors. A summary of issues raised must be formally minuted at course committee meetings and appropriate feedback given to students.

- 109 In addition, the course committee should give consideration to the allocation to each student of an adviser of studies, drawn from the teaching staff of the course, in accordance with the code of practice at Appendix 22.

Conduct of Examinations and Assessment

- 110 The University is concerned that the security of assessment is adequately safeguarded. Arrangements for the conduct of examinations are expected to be comparable to those operating in the University and set out in the University's Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study. Institutions are required to use 'anonymous' marking in connection with written examinations and are encouraged to do so, where appropriate and practicable, for coursework. They must have arrangements for dealing with plagiarism and other forms of cheating.

Boards of Examiners

- 111 A board of examiners is constituted to determine the academic progress of students and make recommendations to Senate regarding final awards. The Board comprises internal examiners and external examiner(s). A representative from the Faculty attends the meeting.

Appeals and Complaints

- 112 The institution is expected to have appropriate arrangements for considering requests for review of decisions and for dealing with complaints. Having exhausted internal procedures, Associate Students may appeal or complain to the University.

F COURSE MONITORING AND REVISION

- 113 Institutions have their own processes for quality assurance. These may include the review and evaluation of individual modules. The following University-level arrangements apply.

Subject Partnership Managers

- 114 Subject Partnership Managers provide a focus for the development, monitoring and enhancement of collaborative arrangements at Faculty level. Duties and responsibilities are given at Appendix 5. All the Faculty Heads meet in a Forum.

External Examiners

- 115 The University appoints, on the recommendation of the associated Faculty, one or more external examiners for each programme. The external examiner is provided with a handbook by the University and receives a course document and other relevant material from the course director. The external examiner is required to provide an annual report to the University on the operation of the programme and the quality of the students' work, course delivery and assessment. A copy of this report is provided to the institution, and the Faculty for action and response.

Module Monitoring

- 116 The University has a module monitoring process for its own provision. This process is based on an initial analysis of statistical data about student progression and achievement with comparisons to internal and external benchmarks. Those modules identified as 'outliers' as a consequence of this exercise are subject to more detailed scrutiny which may involve seeking student evaluation and feedback. Action plans for improvement are developed as required. Institutions are encouraged to use similar arrangements.

Annual Course Review

- 117 The University's Quality Management and Audit Unit makes arrangements for the annual review of courses offered by partner institutions in order to monitor the quality of provision and the performance of students. Course committees submit a self-evaluation report, detailing and commenting upon such matters as student enrolments, profile and performance, the views of students and external examiners and Subject Partnership Managers, quality assurance issues, learning resources and course developments. The institution, at senior management level, signs off these reports before they are submitted to the University. A panel considers these course reports. A consolidated report is made to

the Academic Development and Enhancement Committee, indicating any action which has to be taken or is proposed in response to particular issues.

Course Revisions

- 119 Proposals to make minor amendments to the structure, content or regulations of the programme are submitted to the relevant sub-committee of the associated Faculty Board for consideration and approval. The external examiner and students should be consulted as appropriate. Proposed changes to the course title, mode of attendance, aims and objectives, location, intake size and resources (human and physical) approved to support the programme require the additional approval of the University.

G ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE UNIVERSITY

Detailed guidelines are provided to the institution, covering the following:

Agreement

A formal agreement is signed by the Vice-Chancellor and the head of the institution when the conditions specified in the revalidation report are met and satisfactory copies of the course document are received. The agreement sets out the respective duties and responsibilities of the University and the institution.

Financial Arrangements

The institution is informed of the appropriate financial arrangements in advance of course approval. A licence fee is charged and a fee is set for each student enrolled on the course, for each year of the course. The model is currently being reviewed.

In addition, the University seeks reimbursement for such costs as it may incur in connection with the design, evaluation, monitoring, review, examining, assessment and general supervision of the course. These include travel and accommodation expenses of the external examiner.

Student Recruitment, Admission, Registration and Enrolment, Data Provision, Examinations and Conferment of Awards

Subject to the overall authority of the University, the institution is responsible for the recruitment, admission and registration of students and for their teaching, examining and discipline. Students are students of the institution; they are not members of the University but have limited privileges as Associate Students.

APPENDICES

QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK (2009)

AWARD	QUALIFICATION LEVEL (FHEQ)	MINIMUM OVERALL CREDITS	TYPICAL RANGE OF LEVELS	MINIMUM NO OF CREDITS AT HIGHEST LEVEL	MAXIMUM NO OF CREDITS AT LOWEST LEVEL	PASS MARK %	OTHER REQUIREMENTS/ COMMENTS
Access Diploma	-	120	1, 2, 3	60	10	40	
Certificate of Personal and Professional Development	-	60	3, 4	-	60	40	Award framework for short course modules.
Certificate	4	60	3, 4	-	60	40	At least 40 at 4 for FHEQ.
Diploma	4	120	3, 4	-	120	40	At least 90 at 4 for FHEQ.
Certificate of Higher Education	4	120	3, 4	90	30	40	
Diploma in Professional Practice/Professional Practice (International)	5	60	5	60	60	50	40% for progress to next stage 50% for award.
Diploma in International Academic Studies	5	120	3, 4, 5	90	30	50	40% for progress to next stage 50% for award.
Foundation Degree	5	240	3, 4, 5	100	40	40	Must include 40 credits of work-based learning at Level 5.
Associate Bachelor's Degree	5	240	3, 4, 5	100	40	40	
Advanced Diploma	5	120	3, 4, 5	90	30	40	
Advanced Certificate	5	60	3, 4, 5	40	20	40	
Non-Honours Degree	6	360	3, 4, 5, 6	60	30	40	
Honours Degree	6	360	3, 4, 5, 6	120	30	40	
Graduate Diploma	6	120	3, 4, 5, 6	90	30	40	Graduate entry.
Graduate Certificate	6	60	3, 4, 5, 6	40	20	40	Graduate entry.
Integrated Master's Degree	7	480	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	120	30	40	50% pass mark at Level 7 (from 2003 intake)
Postgraduate Certificate	7	60	6, 7	40	20	50	
Postgraduate Diploma	7	120	6, 7	90	30	50	
Master's Degree	7	180	6, 7	150	30	50	
Professional Doctorate	8	540	7, 8	420	120	50	From 2010

FHEQ = Framework for Higher Education Qualifications designed by Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, second edition 2008.

The highest level in a range is typical: modules from higher levels may contribute to lower level awards, eg an Advanced Diploma may include level 6 modules. The minimum and maximum number of credits relate to a course with the minimum overall credits. Some degrees may include an additional foundation level comprising level 3 modules. The HE credit levels used by the University are those specified in the England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) credit guidelines. They are identified by a sequence of numbers from 4 to 8. Levels below Higher Education are also used as indicated. The levels adopted in 2008/9 level to those used in the University's two earlier frameworks as follows: 1, 2, 3 = A; 4 = 1/B; 5 = 2/C; 6 = 3/D/M1; 7 = M/M2; 8 = D.

The University ceased to offer DipHE and Edexcel HNDs and HNCs from 2008, and, the Diploma in Area Studies and the Diploma in Industrial Studies from 2011.

QAA: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

The QAA provides the following descriptors of higher education qualifications in the second edition of the Framework (2008). The descriptors are in two parts: the first being a statement of outcomes, the achievement of which is assessed and which a student should be able to demonstrate for the award of the qualification; the second is a statement of the wider abilities that a student should be expected to have developed. Each descriptor identifies a particular qualification at that level which should meet the descriptor in full. The descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at that level.

There are five levels of higher education qualifications awarded by universities and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 4: Certificate of Higher Education

Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study;
- an ability to present, evaluate, and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work;
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments;
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

Holders of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. They will be able to communicate accurately and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. The Certificate of Higher Education may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 5: Foundation Degree

Foundation degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed;
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context;
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study;

- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis;
- effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively;
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. They will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6: Bachelor's degree with Honours

Bachelor degrees with Honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline;
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline;
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline;
 - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline;
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge;
- the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects;
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem;
- communicate information, ideas, problems, and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts;
 - the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Holders of a bachelor's degree with Honours will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements, and to communicate them effectively.

Holders of a bachelor's degree with Honours should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

Bachelor degrees with Honours form the largest group of higher education qualifications. Typically learning outcomes from these programmes would be expected to be achieved on the basis of study equivalent to three full-time academic years and lead to awards with titles such as Bachelor of Arts, BA Hons or Bachelor of Science, BSc Hons. In addition to bachelor's degrees at this level are short courses and professional 'conversion' courses, based largely on undergraduate material, and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline, leading to graduate certificates or graduate diplomas.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7: Master's degree**Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:**

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations;
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems. They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Master's degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research, or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes often lead to the degree of MPhil. The learning outcomes of most master's degree courses are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year, and are taken by graduates with a bachelor's degree with Honours (or equivalent achievement).

Master's degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an increased intensity, complexity and density of study. Master's degrees – in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas – typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.

Some master's degrees, for example in science, engineering and mathematics, comprise an integrated programme of study spanning several levels where the outcomes are normally achieved through study equivalent to four full-time academic years. While the final outcomes of the qualifications themselves meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 in full, such qualifications are often termed 'integrated master's' as an acknowledgement of the additional period of study at lower levels (which typically meets the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6).

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8: Doctoral degree**Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:**

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;

and holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/or exposition of knowledge, which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research. Holders of doctoral degrees will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees will have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, and innovation in tackling and solving problems.

Doctoral programmes, that may include a research component but which have a substantial taught element (for example professional doctorates) lead usually to awards that include the name of the discipline in their title (for example EdD for Doctor of Education or DClinPsy for Doctor of Clinical Psychology). Professional doctorates aim to develop an individual's professional practice and to support them in providing a contribution to (professional) knowledge. The titles PhD and DPhil are commonly used for doctorates awarded on the basis of original research. Achievement of outcomes consistent with the qualification descriptor for the doctoral degree normally requires study equivalent to three full-time calendar years.

SUMMARY OF EWNI GENERIC LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

(Source: NICATS Manual: 2002 and HE Credit Framework for England, 2008)

The level descriptors should be seen as a developmental continuum in which preceding levels are necessarily subsumed within those which follow. Levels 4 – 8 are relevant to HE learning.

Learning accredited at this level will reflect the ability to:

ENTRY LEVEL - employ recall and demonstrate elementary comprehension in a narrow range of areas, exercise basic skills within highly structured contexts, and carry out directed activity under close supervision.

LEVEL 1 - employ a narrow range of applied knowledge, skills and basic comprehension within a limited range of predictable and structured contexts, including working with others under direct supervision, but with a very limited degree of discretion and judgement about possible action.

LEVEL 2 - apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas and employ a range of skills within a number of contexts, some of which may be non-routine; and undertake directed activities, with a degree of autonomy, within time constraints.

LEVEL 3 - apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories; access and analyse information independently and make reasoned judgements selecting from a considerable choice of procedures in familiar and unfamiliar contexts; and direct own activities, with some responsibility for the output of others.

LEVEL 4 - develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base; employ a range of specialised skills; evaluate information using it to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems; and operate in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs.

LEVEL 5 - generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level, with a command of specialised skills and the formulation of responses to well defined and abstract problems; analyse and evaluate information; exercise significant judgement across a broad range of functions; and accept responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.

LEVEL 6 - critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, utilising specialised skills across an area of study; critically evaluate new concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations; and accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.

LEVEL 7 - display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for related decision-making including use of supervision.

LEVEL 8 - make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry demonstrating a command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers; accepting full accountability for outcomes.

Table of generic level descriptors

Level	Intellectual skills and attributes	Processes	Accountability
Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ recall and demonstrate elementary comprehension in a narrow range of areas with dependency on ideas of others. Exercise basic skills. Receive and pass on information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate mainly in closely defined and highly structured contexts. Carry out processes that are repetitive and predictable. Undertake the performance of clearly defined tasks. Assume a limited range of roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out directed activity under close supervision. Rely entirely on external monitoring of output and quality.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ a narrow range of applied knowledge and basic comprehension. Demonstrate a narrow range of skills. Apply known solutions to familiar problems. Present and record information from readily available sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show basic competence in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts. Utilise a clear choice of routine responses. Co-operate with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise a very limited degree of discretion and judgement about possible actions. Carry restricted responsibility for quantity and quality of output. Operate under direct supervision and quality control.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas. Make comparisons. Interpret available information. Demonstrate a range of skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose from a range of procedures performed in a number of contexts, some of which may be non-routine. Co-ordinate with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake directed activity with a degree of autonomy. Achieve outcomes within time constraints. Accept increased responsibility for quantity and quality of output subject to external quality checking.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities, demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories. Access and evaluate information independently. Analyse information and make reasoned judgements. Employ a range of responses to well defined but often unfamiliar or unpredictable problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts using a range of technical or learning skills. Select from a considerable choice of procedures. Give presentations to an audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in self-directed activity with guidance/evaluation. Accept responsibility for quantity and quality of output. Accept limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base. • Employ a range of specialised skills. • Determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems. • Generate a range of responses, a limited number of which are innovative, to well defined but often unfamiliar problems. • Evaluate information, using it to plan and develop investigative strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities. • Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, selecting or presenting information, methods or resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake self-directed and a limited amount of directive activity. • Operate within broad general guidelines or functions. • Take responsibility for the nature and quantity of outputs. • Meet specified quality standards.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate ideas through the analysis of information and concepts at an abstract level. • Command wide ranging, specialised technical, creative and/or conceptual skills. • Formulate appropriate responses to resolve well defined and abstract problems. • Analyse, reformat and evaluate a wide range of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of technical, professional or management functions. • Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility and accountability within broad parameters for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically review, consolidate, and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge. • Utilise highly specialised technical or scholastic skills across an area of study. • Utilise research skills. • Critically evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of situations. • Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills. • Demonstrate expertise in highly specialised and advanced technical, professional and/or research skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity. • Design and apply appropriate research methodologies. • Communicate results of research to peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept accountability in related decision making including use of supervision.
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate command of methodological issues. • Communicate results of research to peers and engage in critical dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept accountability in related decision making including use of supervision.

DUTIES OF SUBJECT UNIT CO-ORDINATOR

Each subject unit or sub-unit has a Co-ordinator who is appointed by the Dean of the Faculty and has overall responsibility within the Faculty for the revalidation of the unit/sub-unit. The Co-ordinator acts as a central contact person for liaison with the Academic Office and other departments.

The main duties of the Subject Unit Co-ordinator are:

- 1 To consult with the Dean regarding completion of revalidation preparation form (CA6) and its return to Academic Office.
- 2 To liaise with the Subject Team, Heads of School, Course/Subject Directors, Module Co-ordinators and other teaching staff of the University and external institutions regarding planning, preparation and arrangements for the revalidation event.
- 3 To liaise with the Academic Office regarding joint validation arrangements and requirements.
- 4 With the approval of the Dean, to liaise with PSRB(s) regarding joint validation arrangements and requirements.
- 5 To support arrangements for site visits through liaison with the Academic Office, Information Services, external panel members, The Subject Partnership Manager and other staff as appropriate and to co-ordinate the programme for these visits.
- 6 To co-ordinate the preparation and submission of the requisite documentation for consideration by the revalidation panel.
- 7 To co-ordinate the Faculty's response to the revalidation panel's report and provision of final documentation for approval.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUBJECT PARTNERSHIP MANAGERS

General

Under Ordinance XXIX on the Recognition of Institutions, the University appoints members of staff, Subject Partnership Managers, to course committees at recognised institutions. The role of the Partnership Manager is to provide a focus for the development, monitoring and enhancement of collaborative arrangements at subject level and to maintain an overview of such provision taking account of University and Faculty strategic priorities.

Key Responsibilities include:

- 1 Taking account of the Faculty's academic plan, to support the development and implementation of the Faculty's strategy for its collaborative provision in relation to both local and overseas provision for the specified subject area(s) in conjunction with the Dean and Heads of Schools.
- 2 To act as a point of contact for all the Faculty's local and overseas collaborative partners for the specific subjects and to bring forward to relevant Faculty and University committees proposals for new subject networks or changes to existing networks and programmes.
- 3 To coordinate subject networks.
- 4 To seek to identify and resolve problems related to the Faculty's collaborative provision in liaison with partner institutions and, as appropriate, Faculty management or central departments or University committees.
- 5 To liaise with central departments to ensure that standards assurance and quality management activities for the specified subjects are achieved in a co-ordinated and effective manner.
- 6 To actively encourage partner institutions to take account of new technology in curriculum design to enhance flexibility and mode of delivery.
- 7 To ensure there are effective channels of communication with Course Directors in partner institutions, to include an annual meeting, the outcome of which to be reported as part of the annual report.
- 8 To support the annual course review process, participate in the review of programme submissions, and ensure that effective and appropriate follow-up action is taken to address issues identified at both institution and subject levels.
- 9 To develop an effective channel of communication with students studying on University awards at partner institutions to achieve feedback on the student experience.

Responsibilities in relation to individual courses

- 1 **Admission and Enrolment** To provide advice and guidance on:
 - Entry requirements
 - Exemptions and accreditation of prior learning
 - Applicants who do not meet the standard entry requirements for the programme
 - Registration procedures
 - Rights and obligations of Associate Students
- 2 **Teaching and Learning** To provide advice and guidance on:
 - Programme developments and proposed curriculum changes
 - Policy and regulation
 - Programme-specific learning resources
 - Reading lists
 - University regulations
- 3 **Assessment**
 - To review and agree:
 - Arrangements for the internal and external moderation of assignment questions and examination papers and for the moderation of assessed work in line with Faculty policies
 - Cross-moderation across common modules where appropriate

- Arrangements for the appointment of the external examiner(s) and to make recommendation(s) to the Faculty
 - Arrangements for the Board of Examiners meeting(s) in accordance with University policy
 - To communicate the overall timetable for the examination process to the partner institution
 - To attend a sample of Board of Examiner meetings, ensuring coverage of all collaborative provision over a period (note: chairing Boards of Examiners is not part of the role)
 - To discuss and co-ordinate the Faculty and partner institution response to the external examiner's report and to monitor required action
- 4 Resources**
- To review CVs for new staff in the partner institution associated with the validated provision
 - To review the other resources and facilities available to support programme delivery
 - To liaise with Library personnel regarding library resources
- 5 Student Support**
- To report on resources on an annual basis
 - To review arrangements for the academic and pastoral support of students
- 6 Quality**
- To receive agendas, papers and minutes for all course committee meetings
 - To receive the agenda and minutes of all staff/student consultative committee meetings (if applicable). (The Subject Partnership Manager has the right to attend any staff/student consultative committee meeting)
 - To ascertain student views on the course on an annual basis through a meeting with students and report outcomes in the annual report
 - To monitor action arising from module monitoring activities
 - To advise on and, where appropriate, attend student appeals
 - To provide support for staff in partner institutions participating in staff development events
- 7 Publicity Material**
- To monitor the accuracy of publicity/promotional / marketing material developed by partner institutions, taking necessary remedial action, and to present any findings in the annual report
- 8 Reporting**
- To provide an annual report for consideration as part of the Annual Course Review exercise
 - To provide other reports to University or Faculty committees or panels as required
- 9 Involvement in University Processes**
- To be involved in:
- Initial course planning, evaluation, monitoring and revalidation activities, and in these contexts to provide advice and guidance to the course team and to draw to the attention of the University any concerns in relation to the proposed programme development
 - Amendments to current programmes
 - Annual Course Review

Other Duties

- Normally to undertake specified teaching or other duties as agreed with the Head of School
- To participate in external reviews relating to collaborative activity
- To update the collaborative courses register on an ongoing basis

SUBJECT REVALIDATION DOCUMENTATION (Partner Institution)

Title page to identify provision

Course Committee(s) membership

(Note: the sections may be presented in separate documents or in a single bound document.)

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION	A	<u>Introduction</u> <i>(A brief summary of the rationale, origins, demand and relationship with other courses in the institution and University may be provided. Projected intakes for next five years should be given.)</i>
SECTION B: COURSE/SUBJECT PROVISION	B1	<u>Programme Specification(s)</u> <i>(For each course, a summary statement of its main features and learning outcomes in accordance with standard template.)</i>
	B2	<u>Commentaries</u> differentiated by subject, course, level, campus, institution, as appropriate, on the following matters, related to University and Faculty/institution policies and strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent and proposed changes • Academic progression and internal coherence and opportunities for student choice within the programme(s) <u>Structure diagram(s)</u> <i>(For each course or undergraduate strand by mode of attendance, a diagram indicating semesters, modules, their credit value and level, compulsory or optional status, pre- or co-requisites and whether modules are <u>Current</u>, <u>Revised</u> or <u>New</u>)</i> • Transfer to and from other programmes of study and opportunities for progression to further study <i>(where applicable)</i> • Work-based learning and supervised work experience/ placement <i>(where applicable)</i> • Teaching, learning and assessment strategies <i>(to include development of study skills, exemplar assessment schedule and arrangements for feedback)</i> • Scholarship-informed curriculum and teaching • Creativity, innovation and good practice • Standards • Employability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduate qualities - Widening participation - Work-based learning - Personal development planning - Entrepreneurship training - Career opportunities, development and progression
	B3	<u>Regulations</u> <i>(in accordance with standard template)</i> <i>(For revalidation, each set of regulations for each award (which will be provided to students), or, where there is sufficient commonality, a single exemplar set by qualification, with variations stated eg entry requirements.)</i>
	B4	<u>Module Descriptions</u> <i>(in accordance with standard format)</i> <i>Modules should be indexed and grouped by level (or course if limited commonality)</i>
SECTION C*: COURSE AND SUBJECT MANAGEMENT	C1	Equality of Opportunity Admissions Policy Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order (SENDO)
	C2	Course and subject management, including, as applicable, arrangements for placement and study in other institutions
	C3	Student support and guidance
	C4	Arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement

* not required where Institutional Recognition or Re-approval Process has been completed except for Subject Network Management, if applicable.

SECTION D: RESOURCES <i>available to the course(s)/subject</i>	D1	<p><u>Resources</u> (physical)</p> <p>Accommodation, library, laboratory, computing and other equipment for the course(s) (<i>General resources need only be described briefly, but specialist resources should be detailed. Library resources should specifically identify whether they are available from the library catalogues. For revalidation, dedicated resources for particular courses should be clearly identified.</i>)</p> <p>Maintenance and renewal plans</p>
	D2	<p><u>Resources</u> (staff)</p> <p>Summary statement and brief CVs for all staff contributing to the subject unit (with particular reference to more recent activities). (<i>These staff form the course or subject committees. CVs should be no longer than 1 or 2 pages each. For revalidation, a summary matrix indicating which staff contribute to which courses or subject strands should be provided.</i>)</p> <p>Statement of how the teaching and research areas represented are of relevance to the subject</p> <p>Information on the use of part-time lecturers, postgraduate teaching assistants and demonstrators</p> <p>Information on staff development</p>
<p>IN ADDITION: reports from University departments on Library and IT resource matters are provided centrally to the panel; external examiner reports for the last two academic years are also provided to the revalidation panel. The Faculty Head of Collaborative Courses provides a statement on the nature of the Faculty's engagement with each institution in the preparation of documentation and any recommendation regarding adjustment to the approved intake sizes.</p>		

SECTION C COURSE MANAGEMENT

Equality of Opportunity and Admission Policy, SENDO

Refer to the institution's policy statement. Comment on arrangements for recruitment and selection and ongoing support for students with particular needs.

Course Management

Refer to the terms of reference of course committees and the statement of duties of Course Directors and describe how they operate for the course, together with arrangements for the co-ordination of module delivery. Comment on arrangements for the management of placement and study abroad if applicable.

Subject Network

Where the same course is provided at a number of locations by a network, consider such matters as arrangements for curriculum development, staff development, the use of lead module coordinators, common assessment and internal cross-moderation.

Student Support and Guidance

Reference should be made to induction and transition arrangements (a brief outline of events during the introductory period and the module-linked processes designed to support transition and develop tertiary level study skills (including writing and referencing) should be given); information provided to students, student handbooks/handouts, student attendance policy; the role of Course Directors, and advisers of studies and other arrangements including those which the course team operates with the institution's central support services; arrangements for Personal Development Planning (PDP).

Staff/Student Consultation

For full-time courses, the University requires either the establishment of a staff/student consultative committee or student representation on the course committee (with at least two students per year group); the use of both is recognised as best practice. Such committees meet at least once per semester and are expected to include substantive items on their agenda relating to teaching and learning, assessment, the annual report of the external examiner and response, studies advice, employer engagement, and health and safety matters.

For part-time courses, where formal committees may be less practicable, a Course Committee should develop an appropriate method of consultation, eg email circulation, online discussion boards, meetings with students, outcome of discussion with advisers of studies or module tutors. A summary of issues raised must be formally minuted at course committee meetings and appropriate feedback provided to students.

Consultation with students is required for any proposal to amend a course during its period of approval. In addition, informal feedback by lecturing staff is a regular feature of course delivery.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Refer to and comment on the following:

- the mechanisms for staff/student consultation including staff/student consultative committees;
- the use made of student and graduate questionnaires and their findings;
- the processes of annual course review and module evaluation and their findings;
- the role of external examiners and how they operate in relation to the course;
- articulation with the institution's strategy for teaching and learning;
- relationship to relevant support structures within the institution.
- the processes to ensure that matters raised by students and elsewhere are addressed at institutional level, if appropriate.

CRITERIA FOR THE PLANNING OF PROGRAMMES

Proposals should:

1 GENERAL

Be consistent with the broad objectives of the University as contained in the Charter and as interpreted in its core strategic aims, development plans, academic policy documents, Teaching and Learning Strategy, Collaborative Strategy and policy on equality of opportunity.

2 PERSONAL

Meet the requirements of students for personal and intellectual development and enable them to prepare for, or further, their careers or studies. Where appropriate work-based opportunities should be developed.

3 COMMUNITY

Aim to satisfy the community interest as regards professional, commercial, industrial and similar requirements. Programmes should enhance student employability by reflecting student and employer needs regionally, nationally and internationally, and as appropriate government policy on skills (see Appendix 12).

4 DEMAND

Show evidence of demand. Proposals should be relevant, student-centred and client-focussed. They should be offered in modes which facilitate participation.

5 RESOURCES

Specify the minimum resource requirements which would allow the programme to proceed; demonstrate that the programme is a justifiable use of resources both in relation to the University and the community.

6 AWARD AND STANDARDS

Establish that the programme is compatible with the principles incorporated in the overall modular structure of the University, its scheme of awards and its qualifications and credit framework. Proposals should meet the national Benchmark standards for the Subject and the expectations of relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Wherever possible fitness to practise or recognition by a professional body should be achieved.

7 GRADUATE QUALITIES

For undergraduate degrees, ensure consistency with the qualities expected of a University of Ulster graduate, in accordance with the statement at Appendix 10.

For all provision, ensure the development of entrepreneurship training and the promotion of entrepreneurship (Appendix 11).

Course teams should demonstrate that courses continue to meet these criteria at revalidation.

CRITERIA FOR THE PLANNING OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Course proposals should:

- a) be consistent with the broad objectives of the University, the expectation of the generic programme specification for Access Diplomas (see Academic Office website), and possess the following key features, in that they:
 - facilitate entry to Higher Education
 - are designed and taught to meet the needs of mature students (namely aged 19 years and over at the commencement of the course)
 - cater for those without conventional entry qualifications who do not yet feel ready for direct entry to Higher Education
 - meet the needs of specific groups in the community, identified as under-represented in Higher Education, and therefore facilitate the implementation of equal opportunities policies
 - offer a curriculum which recognises the strengths and prior experiential learning of mature students and which values their diversity of culture
 - provide a planned programme of studies, or an organised educational experience which is an alternative to the courses provided by other educational, vocational or professional examining authorities
- b) show evidence of demand for the course and of opportunities for progression to further study;
- c) show evidence that adequate resources will be available to allow the course to proceed;
- d) demonstrate that there will be a satisfactory framework within which the course will be organised and managed;
- e) fulfil the criteria for an Access Diploma award of the University, with 120 credits (1200 student effort hours). At least 60 credit points in the final year must be at NICATS Level 3. There may be one introductory Mathematics module at level 1.

Courses are taken over a period of two years part-time or one year full-time study.

The content of a programme depends on its nature and subject area but the crucial difference between Access and other provision at this level is an emphasis on learning skills as well as content, on 'learning to learn' as well as learning 'facts'. Students are encouraged to integrate learning skills with discipline knowledge.

The aim of Access provision is to develop transferable skills which can be used by the student who will enter Higher Education for the first time, and there is usually a core consisting of study skills, communication skills, literacy, numeracy, information technology and tutorial support.

All Access courses are expected to meet GCSE equivalence in English. They may also provide a GCSE standard of competence in Mathematics. The former NICATS project developed standard modules in Mathematics at this level, whose GCSE equivalence has been approved by the University, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

Assessment usually encompasses both coursework (essays, seminar presentations, etc) and timed seen or unseen written examination papers, as a process of student assessment and as a preparation for study in higher education.

GRADUATE QUALITIES

The following statement of the expected qualities of graduates reflects Ulster's vision of leading in the provision of professional education for professional life.

University of Ulster graduates will demonstrate:

- Subject-specific knowledge and skills informed by current research and professional/vocational practice
- Flexibility, creativity and an entrepreneurial approach to problem solving
- Self-confidence, global citizenship, appreciation of sustainability matters, ethical leadership, and a commitment to life-wide learning, professionalism and employability
- Effective collaborative working, communication skills and the capacity for reflective practice, including the ability to give and receive feedback

Approved by Teaching and Learning Committee, June 2011 (revised October 2011). This statement replaces one adopted in October 1998.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING

The University aims to embed a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in every student and throughout every programme. Entrepreneurship is about managing change within social systems that adds value in some way to those living and/or working within them. It is not solely about commercial business development or new business start-up. Two generic ten point modules at level 5, *Entrepreneurship Awareness* and *Entrepreneurship Applied*, provide one way for teams to meet the University's expectations. If one or both modules are not suitable, course/subject teams are required to identify how they will incorporate entrepreneurship into the curriculum. Course and subject teams outside the Office of Science and Technology (OST) constituency, which do not use the *Entrepreneurship Awareness* module, should demonstrate how they have interpreted the learning outcomes, but are not required to introduce all the outcomes. A generic 15 point module at level 7 has also been developed.

(Further advice and guidance is available from Faculty Co-ordinators of Academic Enterprise.)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Level 5 Modules

The first module, *Entrepreneurship Awareness* is designed to be a core module and focuses basically on knowledge transfer. It seeks to provide students with insights to problems and issues associated with establishing and managing the development of any innovative enterprise.

As a consequence of undertaking this module students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Define what entrepreneurship is, consider how everyone has the potential to be entrepreneurial, and explore the constituents of the entrepreneurial process.
- Identify steps required to research the potential for an innovative idea for the development of an existing enterprise, a new venture or a social change opportunity.
- Examine the key resources required to exploit an innovative idea or opportunity to develop an existing business, launch a new venture, or initiate a social enterprise.
- Identify the key steps required for exploiting an innovative idea or opportunity to develop an existing business, launch a new venture, or initiate a social enterprise.

Intellectual Qualities

- Recognise the central role of creativity and innovation in entrepreneurship, in the generation of new ideas and, where appropriate the core challenges of protecting those new ideas which have commercial/social value.
- Appreciate the significance within the entrepreneurial process of calculated risk-taking, attitudes to failure and tolerance of uncertainty

Professional/Practical Skills

- Organise and utilise the components of the planning process in the development of an innovative project or the exploitation of a new opportunity to develop an existing business, launch a new venture, or initiate a social enterprise.
- Communicate and sell innovative ideas effectively.

Transferable/Key Skills

- Recognise the value and potential of innovative and entrepreneurial thinking for effective problem solving and change management.
- Recognise the core role of creativity and innovation in managing the entrepreneurial process effectively.

The second level 5 module, *Entrepreneurship Applied*, is designed to be an elective module and builds on the *Entrepreneurship Awareness* module. It seeks to expose students to some of the practical challenges involved in managing the entrepreneurial process. The learning outcomes for this module are that successful students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrate the ability to effectively apply project/venture planning competencies relating to progressing a social or community development, organisational change opportunity or setting up a new venture.

Intellectual Qualities

- Demonstrate evidence of creative and innovative thinking for the solution of entrepreneurial problem solving.

Professional/Practical Skills

- Demonstrate an ability to identify viable opportunities to problem solve, address an area of need or fill a gap in the market relating to progressing a social or community development, organisational change opportunity or setting up a new venture.
- Apply new project/venture planning competencies.
- Demonstrate an ability to manage key entrepreneurial resources.
- Operate as a member of a team.

Transferable/Key Skills

- Apply creative and innovative thinking.
- Demonstrate an ability to manage key resources.
- Communicate new ideas effectively, using a variety of media.
- Employ opportunity identification and analysis to the relevant discipline/subject area.

Level 7: Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice

The level 7 module, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, is designed to be an elective module. It seeks to expose students to the challenges involved managing the entrepreneurial process. It aims to present students, where possible working in teams, with an opportunity to undertake an entrepreneurial project in which their ability to evaluate and resolve problems and issues associated with entrepreneurial activity will be tested.

Successful students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Critically analyse key theories of entrepreneurship in its various forms, the entrepreneurial process and environment.
- Within the context of the discipline/subject area, critically evaluate the role of the entrepreneur

and his/her team in new venture creation, in the development of established organisations or in the development of an innovative project.

- Critically examine the components of a new project or venture plan and aspects of the planning process.
- Critically examine the role of creativity and innovation in opportunity identification and the challenges of protecting new ideas.

Intellectual Qualities

- Experiment with creative thinking techniques in seeking solutions to complex entrepreneurial problems, including new product/service development and/or the development of new processes/systems.
- Acquire an understanding of the importance of acting, thinking and behaving in an entrepreneurial manner in the discipline/subject area.

Professional/Practical Skills

- Integrate entrepreneurship theory and practice through the development of an effective, plan either to progress a new venture, to develop an existing organisation, a social/community development, or an organisational change opportunity.
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively.

Transferable/Key Skills

- Critically examine and appreciate the importance of the resources needed to effectively exploit the potential of an entrepreneurial opportunity, including financial, human and physical resources.

EMPLOYABILITY

Over the past few years there has been a move away from perceiving employability as a bolt-on marginal and optional activity towards a more integrated approach to valuing employability in the curriculum. The definition of employability, developed by the HEFCE's Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team (ESECT), fits in well with the University aims for supporting student learning.

“A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.” ESECT 2002

These achievements have academic value in their own right and are necessary for academic success. In promoting these achievements the University is contributing to student employability. The rationale for including 'Employability' as one of the key 'themes' as part of the evaluation or revalidation exercise is as follows:

- Employability is a key government policy objective for Higher Education
- Faculties, as part of their teaching and learning strategy, will have to address explicitly the issue of employability
- Course programme's contribution to employability can be highlighted
- Helps to identify how approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, that are implemented, are consistent with enhancing employability
- Helps to value explicit approaches to promoting employability such as work-based learning, personal development planning and career management provision.

The promotion of employability is a strategic aim of the Teaching and Learning Strategy of the University. Areas covered under the key objective of employability include:

- a) **Graduate Qualities**
Faculties are required to identify graduate qualities appropriate to employment prospects of students, and to integrate these into both teaching and learning and assessment procedures.
- b) **Widening Participation**
Widening participation is more than just getting students into higher education, it also includes supporting them through HE and out into the world of work. This includes retention issues, student support and helping all students, including non-traditional entrants, to maximise their career potential.
- c) **Work-Based Learning**
The University has long recognised the importance of work-based learning in helping students improve their employability skills (industrial placement, professional practice education etc).
- d) **Personal Development Planning**
PDP is a structured process to support students to become more effective, independent and autonomous learners, and to plan for career development. At the University it features in all undergraduate courses. It has been piloted in postgraduate courses and is to be embedded in all courses.
- e) **Entrepreneurship**
All Faculties have been asked to introduce exposure to entrepreneurship into their programmes as appropriate. Skills associated with entrepreneurship are closely aligned with employability.
- f) **Career Development**
The self-promotional and career management skills aspects of employability are of critical importance for graduates securing and maintaining employment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: TEACHING AND LEARNING

In promoting the Teaching and Learning Strategy (2008/09 - 2012/13), the University acknowledges its key role in enhancing the experience of University of Ulster students. The Teaching and Learning Strategy, therefore, embodies a number of guiding principles which the University advocates and upholds for students studying at the institution, namely:

- that the learning and teaching opportunities afforded to students should challenge students intellectually, encourage reflective learning, and enable them to take their place and be at ease with 'diverse others' locally and internationally;
- that the learning and teaching is designed to develop the subject-specific and generic transferable skills necessary for academic success, future employment and active citizenship;
- that students should appreciate the importance of demonstrating high standards of academic integrity and ethical conduct in every aspect of their studies, research and professional practice;
- that the learning and teaching environment and the delivery of programmes and research student training are as supportive and inclusive as is reasonably possible;
- that it encourages approaches to teaching and assessment that foster student engagement, together with an awareness and understanding of the skills and attributes that they already possess and are developing;
- that curricula, teaching, learning and assessment methods take account of the diverse learning support needs of the student body;
- that in valuing lifelong learning deep approaches to learning are fostered which enable students to continue to grow, and develop on graduation into their chosen careers;
- that value is attached, and encouragement given, to scholarship in teaching, and the scholarship of teaching with staff integrating their own research and professional practice into all aspects of curriculum delivery, leading to research informed teaching and evidence-based effective pedagogic practice;
- the creation of an atmosphere that provides a safe environment for experimentation and risk-taking for curriculum development, for teaching and assessment practices and for students;
- that in welcoming and celebrating the diversity of its staff and student body the University will endeavour to ensure that for all programmes of study, both classroom based and on-line, these guiding principles will apply.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK FOR LEARNING

Assessment and Feedback for Learning should:

1. Help to clarify, from the early stages of a programme, what good performance means (goals, criteria, standards)
2. Encourage 'time and effort' on challenging learning tasks which recognise the importance of learning from tasks, not just demonstrating learning through the tasks
3. Deliver timely learner-related feedback information that helps students to self-correct and communicates clear, high, expectations and professionalism
4. Provide opportunities for students to act on feedback and close any gap between current and desired performance through complementary and integrated curriculum design and pedagogic practice
5. Ensure that all assessment had a beneficial, constructive, impact on student learning, encouraging positive motivational beliefs, confidence and self-esteem
6. Facilitate the development of self-and peer-assessment skills and reflection on learning, to enable students to progressively take more responsibility for their own learning, and to inspire a lifelong capacity to learn
7. Encourage interaction and dialogue around learning and professional practice (student-student, lecturer-student and lecturer-lecturer) including supporting the development of student learning groups and peer learning communities

The implementation of these principles will influence curriculum design, delivery and educational practice, such that students and staff become co-creators and collaborators in learning.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION AND REVALIDATION PANELS FOR PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

1 COURSE APPRAISAL

A critical but constructive and detailed appraisal of the course proposal or provision with the subject unit is to be carried out and a report with findings and recommendations made to the Teaching and Learning Committee through its Course Approval Sub-Committee.

2 UNIVERSITY OBJECTS AND VISION

The objects of the University, as stated in its Charter, are:

“to advance education through a variety of patterns, levels and modes of study and by a diversity of means by encouraging and developing learning and creativity, for the benefit of the community in Northern Ireland and elsewhere; to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge and culture through teaching, scholarship and research, and to make available the results of such research; and to promote wisdom and understanding by the example and influence of corporate life.”

The University's Vision is to lead in the provision of *Professional Education for Professional Life*, in a context which envisages the University focusing and deepening its contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of Northern Ireland and its global standing.

The University's Teaching and Learning, Collaborative Provision and Widening Participation Strategies elaborate the University's approaches to the achievement of these aims as they relate to the provision of courses by partner institutions. The overall Vision of the Collaborative Strategy is “to advance excellent learning opportunities through collaborative working”.

In order to achieve its Vision, the Strategy sets out the following aims:

- to widen participation and enhance opportunities for access to higher education within the region;
- to develop innovative and vocationally relevant programmes which meet identified regional skills needs;
- to provide modes of delivery and progression routes which facilitate life long learning;
- to work with partners to continually enhance the quality of the student learning experience;
- to engage with appropriate international partners to support achievement of the University's strategic objectives.

In taking forward these aims the University will seek to ensure:

- the adoption of a partnership working approach which is mutually beneficial, flexible, responsive and financially and academically sustainable;
- the enhancement of the profile and reputation of the University and its partners regionally, nationally and internationally through excellence in programme design, delivery and management.

3 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

The University is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity. The Charter states that ‘persons shall not be excluded by reason of religious belief, political opinion, race or sex from admission as members ... of the University ... or any advantage or privilege thereof; preference shall not be given on the grounds of religious belief, political opinion, race or sex’.

The University's Equality Scheme outlines its commitment to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland (1998) Act. Under the Act the University must fulfil its objectives, as a teaching, research and examining body within the provision of its Charter and Statutes, in a way which promotes equality of opportunity and good relations.

Section 75 of the Act requires the University, in carrying out all its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without, and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SENDO) applies to all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment and student support. Staff are obliged to anticipate the requirements of disabled students so that they are not placed at a disadvantage and to make reasonable adjustments. This may include adjustment to the form or conditions of assessment.

4 SOME GENERAL CRITERIA

Courses should aim to:

- a) meet the requirements of students for personal and intellectual development and as a preparation for or furthering of careers and further study;
- b) satisfy the community interest as regards professional, commercial, industrial and similar requirements;
- c) alert the student to the interdependencies and social implications of fields of study;
- d) encourage rigorous and imaginative thinking and where possible a problem-solving approach to learning, consistent with the academic standard of the award;
- e) explore the basis for, and develop the capacity to make, value judgements and encourage an independent approach towards decision and action taking;
- f) provide opportunities for appropriate forms of expression and communication, including literary, numerate and artistic;
- g) permit the acquisition of technical, professional and practical knowledge suitable to the form and standard of the course and as may be required by external bodies;
- h) permit choice of content and sharing of components with students of other programmes;
- i) assist the student to relate the content of the programme to practical situations within the institution or outside.

5 THE PARTICULAR COURSE

With regard to each course, it will assist the Course Approval Sub-Committee to have views on the following:

- a) the appropriateness of its aims and objectives within the context of the plans of the institution and the University and the overall aims of the subject;
- b) the standards set with regard to the following:
 - i) the admission requirements and admission and induction procedures*;
 - ii) the structure and levels of the course, including its academic progression and internal coherence, and its compatibility with the principles incorporated in the overall modular framework of the University and its system of awards;

- iii) the relevance and currency of the syllabuses for the different components of the course; the extent to which they are informed by scholarship (or research) and taught or supervised by staff engaged in scholarship (or research); and the extent of consultation with industry, commerce and professions or other interested bodies;
 - iv) the forms, quality and management of the teaching and learning processes, including arrangements for the first year in undergraduate courses, group work and independent learning, and placement or study in other institutions, where available;
 - v) the assessment strategy, methods and criteria, and their likely effectiveness as learning aids and in judging student achievement, in relation to the course and module aims and intended learning outcomes (including feedback);
 - vi) relevant national benchmarks and codes of practice;
 - vii) the staff resources available in relation to the proposed intake, and opportunities for development, and the ability of staff to work together constructively;
 - viii) the adequacy of the provision and deployment of other resources in relation to the proposed intake, including accommodation, library, laboratory and computing, and student support and guidance;
- c) the steps taken to ensure the development of entrepreneurship;
 - d) how it satisfies the institution's policy on equality of opportunity*;
 - e) the approach taken to address issues arising from quality assurance procedures and to quality matters generally*;
 - f) the achievement of employability; employment prospects and progression opportunities;
 - g) matters relating to course management (including processes to safeguard the security of assessment and to address plagiarism and other forms of cheating)*;
 - h) strengths, creativity, innovation and good practice, and other aspects for commendation;
 - i) the conditions and recommendations, if any, subject to which the course is recommended for approval, and the number of students who may be recruited;
 - j) for revalidation, whether intended learning outcomes are being achieved and programme specifications delivered.

* Note: bi procedures, d, e, g not required where the University's Institutional Recognition procedures have been applied (see 9 below) – except for management of subject networks (8).

6 GRADUATE QUALITIES

The University approved in 2011 a revised statement of the qualities expected of a graduate of the University of Ulster. They are expected to demonstrate:

- Subject-specific knowledge and skills informed by current research and professional/vocational practice
- Flexibility, creativity and an entrepreneurial approach to problem solving
- Self-confidence, global citizenship, ethical leadership, and a commitment to life-wide learning, professionalism and employability
- Effective collaborative working, communication skills and the capacity for reflective practice, including the ability to give and receive feedback

The course team's approach to the development of such qualities and skills at a level consistent with the award should be explored in the context of subject benchmark standards.

7 ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING

The University aims to embed a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in every student and throughout every programme. Generic learning outcomes have been developed for Entrepreneurship. Two generic ten-point modules at level 5, *Entrepreneurship Awareness* and *Entrepreneurship Applied*, and one 15 point module at level 7, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, which incorporate these outcomes, provide one way for course teams to meet the University's expectations. If one or both modules are not suitable, the course team is required to identify how it will incorporate entrepreneurship into the curriculum.

8 THE SUBJECT UNIT OR SUB-UNIT (for revalidation); SUBJECT NETWORK

The subject unit or sub-unit is usually a grouping of cognate courses agreed by the Faculty for the purposes of revalidation, in accordance with a five year cycle of approval. This grouping provides for efficiencies and economies in the organisation and presentation of material. The unit may match existing organisational structures in the Faculty.

Panels should consider the individual merits of each course in accordance with 5, and address generic subject-wide matters such as the broad aims of provision, overall teaching, learning and assessment strategies, module duplication and the efficient use of resources.

The 'Subject Network' is the University's preferred model of collaboration in Northern Ireland, with partners collaborating in the development of a single course which is offered at a number of locations. The capacity of each institution to deliver the course, as well as the cooperative arrangements for its management and the assurance of comparable standards through the operation of the network should be considered.

9 THE INSTITUTION

The University has developed a separate process for institutional approval and re-approval which began in 2008/9. That process considers matters relating to the institution as a whole:

- a) its educational ethos, its experience and capability to deliver higher education courses;
- b) staff recruitment, induction and development policy;
- c) quality assurance policy and procedures, including arrangements for student feedback and complaints;
- d) admission, examination and assessment and appeals procedures (including arrangements for dealing with cheating and plagiarism) and administrative support;
- e) student support and guidance arrangements;
- f) institutional management arrangements;
- g) financial health;
- h) physical condition of the buildings, health and safety matters;
- i) its understanding of current practices and expectations of UK higher education, for example, in connection with external examining, assessment arrangements, student learning at higher levels, and quality assurance arrangements.

Pending the full implementation of these arrangements for all partner institutions, the panel may report as appropriate on any relevant issues which have emerged through evaluation/revalidation.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

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 Staff Development's website under 'Resources for Teaching and Learning'.)
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)	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?

	Structure diagrams	<p>Are modules located in the appropriate semester and year?</p> <p>Are modules correctly designated as compulsory or optional? Does the study load, 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 guiding principles therein and the guidelines for first year teaching, and the development of Graduate Qualities?</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 student-centred and 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 development of academic skills (including learning to learn in higher education) embedded as an integrated and integral part of the first year curriculum?</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 use made of group-work and e-learning? If not, would they be beneficial?</p> <p>Are all learning outcomes equally achievable by disabled students? Guidance is available from Equality and Diversity Services' website under 'Staff Guidance Documents'.</p>

	<p><u>Assessment</u></p>	<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 promote student learning as well as providing evidence of that learning? Does it 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 and explicit assessment of learning to learn and subject relevant study skills?</p> <p>Note that course teams are expected to provide an exemplar assessment schedule to show in each semester/year the type of assessment, weighting and indicative timing/submission of tasks.</p> <p>The assessment of individual student performance in group work is a concern. How does the strategy for the assessment of group work ensure adequate recognition?</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>Are the deadlines for submission of assignments across the course manageable for students?</p> <p>What feedback arrangements are in place? Are they clearly articulated at course and module level? Are they prompt? Are they appropriate and effective for the type of assessment and student group?</p> <p>Is there evidence that the University's Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning are being addressed?</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	Scholarship-informed curriculum and teaching	The University's Collaborative Strategy states the University's aim to work with partners to enhance the quality of the student learning experience and a key supporting objective of promoting the development of courses which are scholarship-informed, and taught and supervised by those engaged in scholarship. Is there evidence of this?
COMMENTS		
B2.7	Creativity, Innovation and Good Practice	Is there evidence of creativity and innovation in curriculum design and delivery?

		This should take account, as appropriate, of course, institution, faculty, University and national initiatives. Consider engagement with the University's Centre for Higher Education Practice, the Higher Education Academy, Centres for Excellence in Learning and Teaching.
COMMENTS		
B2.8	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		
B2.9	Employability	Has the team adequately addressed the points in the University statement on Employability in relation to the following: (B2.9.1 – 6).
COMMENTS		
B2.9.1	Graduate Qualities	Are graduate qualities appropriate to employment prospects of students identified? Do they relate to the University's statement? Are these integrated into both teaching and learning and assessment procedures?
COMMENTS		
B2.9.2	Widening Participation	What support is provided to all students, including non-traditional entrants, to maximise their career potential?
COMMENTS		
B2.9.3	Work-based Learning	How does this help students improve their employability skills?
COMMENTS		
B2.9.4	Personal Development Planning	How does Personal Development Planning or equivalent support the development of key qualities for employability and career development, as well as supporting subject-related learning?
COMMENTS		
B2.9.5	Entrepreneurship Training	Are the University's level 5 [7] 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		
B2.9.6	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 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 the threshold standard must be met in both assessment elements? Is this reasonable, eg core modules?</p> <p>Are any departures from regulations proposed? For Honours degree classification is a departure from the 'exit velocity' principle proposed?</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 and course rationale, aims, learning outcomes?</p> <p>Are the design and organisation of the curriculum effective in promoting student learning and achievement of the intended learning outcomes?</p> <p>Does the curriculum embed the development of academic skills (including learning to learn in higher education) as an integral and integrated part of the first year (full-time), as a minimum? Are study skills explicitly assessed?</p> <p>Are the teaching, learning and assessment 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? Does the assessment meet the University's Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning?</p> <p>Does the assessment of group work ensure that individual student achievement is recognised? The University expects that at least 25% of each student's assessment result in group work is based on his/her individual contribution in modules contributing to a final award, and significantly more where these modules are wholly or mostly assessed by group work.</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?
COMMENTS		
SECTION C: COURSE AND SUBJECT MANAGEMENT <i>Not a requirement for institutions which have completed the University's Institutional Recognition or Re-approval process except in respect of subject networks</i>		
C1	<p>Equality of Opportunity 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?</p> <p>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> <p>Do the arrangements for support of placement and study abroad meet the expectations of the University's Code of Practice and Protocol respectively?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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)?</p> <p>(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?</p> <p>Will part-time contracts allow sufficient time to undertake expected duties?</p> <p>Is adequate support provided for postgraduate teaching assistants, demonstrators and part-time lecturers and their integration into the team?</p> <p>What arrangements are there for induction and mentoring of new staff? Have all recently appointed teaching staff received appropriate induction? 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 evidence of scholarship in staff profiles?</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?</p> <p>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>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 <i>Not a requirement for institutions which have completed the University's Institutional Recognition or Re-approval process.</i>		
	<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		

Academic Office
July 2011

AIDE-MEMOIRE

SUPPLEMENT FOR FOUNDATION DEGREES

Relationship with other courses within the host institution (A)	
1	If transfer into the course from existing provisions is planned, are the pathways clear and can admission be achieved in a way which does not weaken the academic integrity of the final award?
Course Structure: Benchmarks and reference points (B2.8)	
2	Where applicable has the Course Planning team taken account of: University of Ulster Qualifications and Credit Framework; Subject Benchmarks; National Occupational Standards; Sector Skills Council Frameworks; HEFCE Prospectus.
Course Structure: Curriculum (B1, B2.8, B2.9.6, B4)	
3	Does the design and content of the curriculum reflect the core features of the Foundation degree qualification (employer involvement; accessibility; progression and articulation; flexible delivery)?
4	Does the curriculum take account of national occupational standards and subject benchmarks or has the curriculum drawn upon the relevant Sector Skill Council Foundation degree framework?
5	Is there balance and integration of employment-related skills and broad-based academic study and content?
6	Do the Learning Outcomes demonstrate the integration of Work-Based Learning/Work Related Learning with the academic and theoretical content?
7	How is employer confidence in the programme content and output to be assessed?
8	Are the progression arrangements governing admission on to programmes within the University (and, if appropriate, accreditation pathways for professional and vocational bodies) explicit and achievable?
9	Are the students adequately prepared for Work-Based Learning?
Work-Based Learning (WBL) (B2.4)	
10	Are you confident that sufficient placement opportunities of appropriate level and nature will exist to service the needs of all students on the programme?
11	Will individual Learning Contracts be established between the student, the institute and the employer to facilitate the operation and assessment of the WBL component?
12	Are the arrangements for the marking, moderation and external examining of the WBL component satisfactory?
Teaching, learning and assessment (B2.5)	
13	Does the teaching and learning strategy serve the core features of a Foundation degree (providing the knowledge, understanding and skills that employers need)?
14	Does the assessment framework address a range of employment-related skills (generic, key, technical, work-related)?
15	How specifically does the teaching and learning strategy tie together academic learning and WBL (eg do modules use actual case studies; undertake 'real' briefs/projects; is any of the student output seen/commented upon/checked by employers)?
16	Where employers are contributing to the delivery of the programme, how are these contributions designed and integrated?
17	Are employers involved in the assessment of students? If so, how are they prepared to fulfil the role? Are they available to respond to student queries which may arise at times and locations which are accessible to the students?
Specific Course Management (C2)	
18	Are there mechanisms for effective monitoring, enhancement and review across all aspects of the course provision involving all stakeholders?
Faculty Head of Collaborative Courses (D2)	
19	Is the role of the Faculty Head of Collaborative Course understood?

Academic Office
July 2008

COURSE EVALUATION/SUBJECT REVALIDATION**PRELIMINARY COMMENTS FORM****Form CA7****COURSE/SUBJECT:****DATE OF VALIDATION:**

Members of the panel are requested, time permitting, to provide preliminary comments on the submission. External members are asked to consider the curriculum and its delivery in particular. Please refer to the Aide-Memoire as appropriate. Comments are made available to other panel members and the course/subject team in advance of the meeting.

Please return the completed form to the Academic Office or submit comments electronically to:.....@ulster.ac.uk
(name)

Name:**Date:****Position:****1 INITIAL OVERVIEW****2 MATTERS ON WHICH THE COURSE/SUBJECT TEAM IS TO BE COMMENDED****3 MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CLARIFICATION****4 MATTERS OF CONCERN LIKELY TO REQUIRE SPECIFIC ACTION**

Academic Office
June 2008

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER**COURSE EVALUATION/SUBJECT UNIT REVALIDATION****INSPECTION OF PHYSICAL RESOURCES REPORT FORM****Form CA8**

INSTITUTION/CAMPUS: _____

COURSE/SUBJECT UNIT: _____

DATE OF VISIT: _____

PRESENT: _____ (Panel Members)

_____ (Faculty Link Person:
external courses)_____ (Course/Subject
Representatives)

(Panel members should note that for external courses the University's Information Services Department will provide a detailed report on general computing and library resources.)

1	ACCOMMODATION	
	Is the teaching and specialist accommodation adequate?	Yes/No
	Are the study facilities for students adequate?	Yes/No
	If No to any of the above, please give details. If Yes, please add comments, if desired.	

2	IT SERVICES	
	Are the IT resources and technical support adequate?	Yes/No
	Do the present level of availability and future commitments for IT laboratory services meet the requirements of the provision?	Yes/No
	Is the basic IT literacy training, eg email, web browsing, wordprocessing, presentation software, adequate?	Yes/No
	If No to any of the above, please give details. If Yes, please add comments, if desired.	
	Is new subject-specific software needed to support the course?	Yes/No
	If Yes, please specify:	

3	LIBRARY	
	Are the book and periodical stocks and other non-book media adequate and appropriate for the course(s)?	Yes/No
	Are the commitments to meet future needs adequate?	Yes/No
	Is electronic and remote access available? (External provision only.)	Yes/No

	Are opening hours adequate? (External provision only.)	Yes/No
	If No to any of the above, please give details. If Yes, please add comments, if desired.	

4	OTHER SUBJECT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES	
	Do adequate resources and equipment exist?	Yes/No
	Will additional resources be necessary?	Yes/No
	If No, identify any particular items. If Yes, please add comments, if desired.	
	Is there a maintenance/renewal/updating policy for equipment?	Yes/No
	Is this adequate?	Yes/No

5	OTHER FACILITIES (external institutions only)	
	Give general views on facilities for students, eg Catering, Childcare, Parking, Residences.	

**REPORT ON MEETING WITH STUDENTS
(Revalidation only – for separate multi-site visit)**

Form CA8b)

To ensure that student views are disseminated to both panels and course/subject teams, panel members are requested to provide brief comments on their meeting with students.

1 OVERVIEW

2 MATTERS OF COMMENDATION IDENTIFIED

3 MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE DISCUSSION WITH THE COURSE/SUBJECT TEAM

4 MATTERS OF CONCERN LIKELY TO REQUIRE SPECIFIC ACTION

SIGNED: _____

Date: _____

(Panel members)

The completed form should be returned to the Academic Office representative prior to or at the evaluation/revalidation meeting.

Academic Office
July 2011

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING TOURS OF FACILITIES IN PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

The tour of partner institution resources is an essential part of the validation process. In an effort to ensure consistency in the approach taken by the Subject Partnership Manager accompanying members of the validation panel the following checklist has been compiled.

- A visit to typical teaching accommodation and other relevant facilities in the area(s) used by the students concerned.
- A visit to the computing facilities available to the students.
- A visit to the library premises to enable the visitor to see what books are available. If books have recently been ordered that are not yet in the Library or the team intends to make purchases on confirmation of validation it is advisable to have a list of such books and the librarian briefed to indicate that they have been or are to be ordered.
- The student support facilities (counselling; careers; financial support) so that the visitor can see the sort of advice available to students and in particular to the type of (adult) learner who enters these programmes.
- The catering facilities might also be included – the opportunities such students have to sustain themselves during the day and/or evening. Visitors may want to know about out-of-hours provision if relevant.

Institutions should remember that the tour is their opportunity to show themselves off to best advantage and impress the visitor with their care, academic concern and support as well as the facilities and library and web support that are offered to students. Institutions may decide, where appropriate, to provide a presentation from subject experts, for example the Head of IT resources. This may be appropriate where an institution operates across a number of sites, and where students have access to facilities across sites in close proximity to each other.

The person in charge of the tour should devise a planned itinerary around the institution and send it to the relevant Partnership Manager in advance of the event. There should also be someone from the institution to take the visitors around whose name should be indicated in advance. The institution needs as well to suggest where the visitor should be taken on arrival.

It is probably wise to allow one and a half to two hours for the tour.

A CA8 is used to record the conclusions of the visit.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

SUBJECT/COURSE

A meeting of the Revalidation Panel to consider the above provision will be held on _____ at _____ in _____.

AGENDA AND PROGRAMME

1 MEMBERSHIP

To note that the membership of the Panel is as follows:

In attendance

(The Subject Partnership Manager is normally in attendance, unless acting as Subject Unit Coordinator)

2 SUBJECT UNIT PROVISION/COURSE

To note the provision:

3 GUIDELINES FOR REVALIDATION PANELS

To receive the Guidelines for Revalidation Panels.

4 STANDARDS

To receive the QAA benchmark statement for (subject)

To receive external examiners' reports for the last two years.

5 SUBJECT/COURSE DOCUMENTATION

To receive preliminary comments from members (CA7, CA8 reports), and a statement from the Subject Partnership Manager.

To receive reports from central University departments on Library and IT resource matters (CA10 reports).

To discuss the subject/course documentation (enclosed) and to consider inter alia:

- Overview
- Aims and intended learning outcomes
- Course structure and coherence
- Syllabuses and reading lists
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies and methods (including the development of study skills, exemplar assessment schedule and arrangements for feedback)
- Scholarship-informed curriculum and teaching
- Standards
- Regulations
- Employability and Graduate Qualities
- Admissions policy, Equality of Opportunity, SENDO*
- Course Management*
- Student support and guidance*
- Quality assurance and enhancement*
- Physical resources
- Staff resources and staff development

6 COURSE AND INSTITUTIONAL* ADMINISTRATION AND/OR SUBJECT NETWORK MANAGEMENT

To discuss administrative arrangements.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To note strengths, creativity, innovation and good practice and other aspects for commendation.

To consider the Panel's conclusions on standards and recommendations regarding approval.

*Not required where University's Institutional Recognition or Re-approval process completed. If so student guidance included under teaching, learning and assessment.

OUTLINE PROGRAMME OF REVALIDATION MEETING (ONE DAY EVENT) – COLLEGE-BASED PROVISION

9.30 am – 10.30 am	Introductions and Tour of Facilities*
10.30 am – 11.30 am (Coffee at 10.30am)	Private meeting of Panel To note the agenda and to identify issues which should be discussed with the Subject unit team.
11.30 am – 12.00 pm	Meeting with Senior Institution Staff and Subject Unit Co-ordinator To consider how the subject unit's provision fits within the overall academic plans of the contributing institution(s) and the University; and to discuss such matters as strategy for HE provision, progression opportunities, staffing and other resources.
12.00 pm – 12.45 pm	Meeting with students
12.45 pm – 1.15 pm	Lunch
1.15 pm – 4.00 pm	Meeting with Subject Unit Team To discuss the Subject unit provision: (see main agenda)
4.00 pm – 4.30 pm	Private meeting of the Panel To note strengths, creativity, innovation, good practice and other aspects for commendation. To confirm the qualification level of each course. To confirm the credit value and level of all modules. To confirm course regulations. To finalise the Panel's conclusions and recommendations as follows: a) whether the Subject unit provision and its component courses remain current and valid and are to be approved; b) whether intended learning outcomes are being achieved by students and the programme specifications are being delivered; c) conditions of approval, if any; d) matters on which the Faculty/institutions are required to respond and the date by which this response should be received; e) recommendations for further consideration by the Faculty/institutions.
4.30 pm – 4.45 pm	Meeting with institution representatives and Subject Unit Co-ordinator a)+ To note the requirements of the University's Ordinance in the Recognition of Institutions and the Recognition Agreement(s). To consider aspects of institutional administration and liaison with the University. To confirm financial arrangements. b) to communicate the Panel's conclusions and recommendations.

* May not involve the whole panel

+ The first part of this meeting may not be required where the University's new Institutional Recognition or Re-approval process has been completed.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

REVALIDATION

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS (PARTNER INSTITUTION)

Background

The University of Ulster is committed to providing high quality courses, which meet national and international standards for the award and the subject which delivered by the University itself or by partner institutions. We expect courses to be well organised and delivered, and to provide appropriate challenges to students. We want them to be current, relevant and student-centred and to enhance students' prospects for employment and further study.

The University has a range of processes to assure the quality of courses on a periodic as well as an annual basis. Generally courses are approved for a five-year period. In their final year of approval they must undergo 'revalidation', with the course or subject team presenting the course in the form of a detailed course document for discussion with a University panel. For certain courses revalidation is organised to coincide with accreditation by a professional or statutory body. Related courses are grouped together in revalidation units.

Purpose of Revalidation

The primary purpose of revalidation is the re-affirmation of the standards set for the awards and the courses within the unit and their continuing currency and relevance to the University. It aims to ensure that for each award-bearing course and undergraduate subject strand:

- it accords with the University's purpose and core strategic aims;
- the academic structure and content are appropriate;
- the proposed award is in accordance with the University's scheme of qualifications; it conforms to the modular and credit framework of the University, and the University's general regulations for the award in question;
- the standard and student workload are comparable with those of other programmes leading to the same award nationally;
- the available resources are sufficient to enable the stated aims and objectives to be met;
- there is evidence of reasonable employment and progression prospects.

Process

The panel considers documentation submitted by the course/subject team and has an introductory meeting with relevant senior management of the institution to discuss how the provision fits within its academic plans, and matters such as resources. A tour of facilities is normally undertaken by the panel. The panel meets with a representative group of students to discuss their views on the course provision, following which it has a detailed discussion with the course/subject team, during which it will clarify any issues arising from previous meetings and the submission.

The panel then meets privately to finalise its conclusions on whether the provision remains current and valid, to identify good practice and makes recommendations regarding the continuation of approval to the University's Teaching and Learning Committee.

Panel Membership

The panel normally consists of a University Pro-Vice-Chancellor, an experienced member of academic staff (from the University), and at least two external subject specialist members from other universities. Industry/employer representative and those of relevant professional or statutory bodies may be involved.

Meeting with Students

Members of the course/subject team will not be present at this meeting and individual views will not be attributed in any report of the meeting. The panel chair will introduce the panel members to you and may ask you to introduce yourselves.

The panel members will want to explore issues that they have noted from their reading of the

documentation provided or that have arisen in their discussions with staff and others. They will be particularly interested in your experiences and how well you believe the course is fulfilling its aims and preparing you for your future career or studies.

They may ask you about your general experience at the institution, and you will have an opportunity to raise topics that you would wish to mention.

The panel may seek your views on some of the aspects of your studies listed. (These topics include those which have been identified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for its audit meetings with students.)

You are welcome to raise points not covered by the panel's questions.

Your contribution to the revalidation exercise is very much appreciated.

Curriculum Content and Organisation

- reason for choosing course/University of Ulster
- match between curriculum and expectations (for example, flexibility, choice, content)
- appropriateness of the curriculum content to the development of knowledge and skills
- relevance to prospective career/further study
- timetable and workload
- opportunities for practical and vocational experience, where appropriate.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- range of teaching and learning methods experienced
- quality of teaching and contact with staff
- guidance and support for independent study
- understanding of assessment methods and criteria
- use of formative assessment
- feedback on assessed work.

Progression and Achievement

- advice on progression
- attainment of intended learning outcomes
- awareness of qualities and skills acquired
- perceptions of 'added-value'
- career aspirations.

Support and Guidance

- induction
- support during periods of practice, study abroad, work experience and other off-campus experience (if applicable).

Learning Resources

- course materials provided
- library services (opening hours, practical access, user support, availability of stock)
- IT provision (opening hours, practical access, user support, availability of terminals)
- specialist equipment, including relevant software
- teaching accommodation, including laboratory or studio provision
- space for study or other independent learning, including practical projects
- catering, social areas.

Student Consultation

- ways in which your views are sought
- representation on Staff/Student Consultative Committees or course/subject committees
- the degree to which your views are influential, with examples
- students' contribution to course development including preparation for revalidation.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF A COURSE COMMITTEE AT A PARTNER INSTITUTION

- a) To advise and report on:
 - i) all matters relating to the organisation of teaching, including curricula and examinations, in the course;
 - ii) the effective and efficient use of resources for the course;
 - iii) the progress and conduct of students on the course;
 - iv) the establishment of an effective form of consultation between staff and students on the course;
 - v) such other matters as may be determined.
- b) To submit to the University annual reports on the operation of the course, including reports submitted by external examiners.
- c) To consider evidence of extenuating circumstances presented by students in relation to performance in assessment in semester one, and to decide whether to permit them to take the assessment as for the first time.
- d) To consult with other course committees on matters of mutual interest or concern.

The membership of a course committee at an educational institution should include:

- a) all members of the teaching staff on the course;
- b) the Subject Partnership Manager;
- c) the Dean of the associated Faculty of the University (*ex-officio*);
- d) at the discretion of the institution:
 - i) student representatives (subject to their exclusion from consideration of reserved business), the number and manner of appointment to be determined by the institution;
 - ii) co-opted members, subject to such terms and conditions as the institution may determine.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COURSE DIRECTORS

The Course Director will be responsible for the organisation and management of the course. In particular the Course Director will:

- 1 act as Chairman of the Course Committee;
- 2 in consultation with senior management as appropriate, keep under review the provision of human and physical resources for the course;
- 3 in consultation with senior management as appropriate, ensure that a module co-ordinator is appointed for each course module;
- 4 ensure regular liaison with the Subject Partnership Manager and other University staff as appropriate;
- 5 ensure that the Course Committee carries out its functions and be responsible in collaboration with other members of the Course Committee for:
 - a) preparation of course publicity material;
 - b) ensuring that information held on the University module database is updated to take account of revisions which affect the modules taught in the course;
 - c) oversight of the selection of applicants;
 - d) the timetabling of the course;
 - e) arrangements for student induction programmes, including the preparation and distribution of course handbooks and other material to students;
 - f) ensuring that students are adequately informed of both general health and safety matters and those specific to their course of study and for communicating relevant information to them;
 - g) allocation of advisers of studies to students;
 - h) the regular review of student attendance and progress and presentation of reports on such matters to the Course Committee, including evidence of extenuating circumstances as submitted by students in relation to performance in semester one;
 - i) implementation of the Course Committee's decision regarding the method of staff/student consultation;
 - j) consideration of requests for permission for late submission of coursework on behalf of the Course Committee;
 - k) collation of draft examination papers and collaboration with external examiners and the University in the approval and moderation of examination papers and other forms of assessment;
 - l) confirmation of the examination timetable;
 - m) arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners and for the attendance of external examiners;
 - n) arrangements for the preparation of students' results profiles for presentation to the Board of Examiners;
 - o) communicating to unsuccessful students the Board of Examiners' decisions about their performance and progress;
 - p) preparation for consideration by the course committee of a draft response to the report(s) of external examiner(s);
 - q) preparation and submission of appropriate documentation, for initial consideration by the Course Committee, for annual monitoring and revalidation and for proposed revisions to the course.

The Course Director may be required to participate in the registration and enrolment of students and associated administrative procedures.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ADVISERS OF STUDIES

- 1 Each registered student on a taught programme of study shall have an adviser of studies.
- 2 Advisers of studies are encouraged to attend induction programmes for new students and to establish contact with their students.
- 3 Advisers of studies will agree with their students the frequency and format of meetings which will normally take place at least once during each semester.
- 4 Advisers of studies have a responsibility to guide their students in matters regarding their choice of optional modules, curriculum content, assessment, progress, and study and examination skills.
- 5 Advisers of studies are encouraged to make themselves conversant with the academic and personal background of their students, and, as necessary, to consult other members of staff who teach or supervise them.
- 6 Advisers of studies are responsible for reporting on their students' progress in accordance with the procedures approved by the course committee.
- 7 Advisers of studies are also encouraged to act in a general advisory capacity and to assist their students in meeting the requirements of study for the course.
- 8 Advisers are responsible for referring to the course committee and/or the board of examiners, through the Course Director, information relevant to their students' progress or academic performance.