Ulster University

HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY EVALUATION PANELS

September 2021

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY EVALUATION PANELS

FOREWORD

This handbook is designed to assist members of University evaluation panels. It describes the processes and quality assurance arrangements which apply in the evaluation of courses and new undergraduate Honours subjects 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 and review.

The term 'course' is used to refer to an integrated programme of study leading to a named award. An undergraduate Honours 'subject' may be offered as an integrated Single Honours degree or as Major, Main or Minor strands which, in combination with strands from other subjects, lead to Honours degree awards. There is no expectation of integration between subjects. The term 'programme' encompasses courses and subjects and is used in a generic sense. Programmes (courses and Honours subjects) are grouped into 'subject units' for the purpose of annual monitoring and revalidation.

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.

G KENDALL
Acting 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. It has over 27,800 students and 2,659 staff.

2 The objects of the University, deriving from 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 Strategic Plan (2016) identifies four broad priority areas: civic contribution, academic excellence, global vision, and operational excellence. Excellence in teaching will provide students with a high-quality, challenging and rewarding learning experience that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to:

- demonstrate critical intellectual enquiry
- progress in their chosen career or entrepreneurial endeavour
- adapt to change
- become responsible global citizens making meaningful contributions to professional communities and wider society.

Student engagement and success are key. The student experience will be enhanced through the provision of well-designed, flexible, inclusive, relevant programmes and curricula.

4 The following Objectives have been set for Teaching Excellence and the Student Experience:

Teaching Excellence

- Define the unique attributes of an Ulster University graduate and our curriculum, to prepare graduates to be engaged contributors to a global and inter-connected society.
- Develop and deliver innovative curricula using contemporary methods of pedagogy that foster diversity, differentiation, and increased opportunities for access.
- Embrace the opportunities presented through emergent technologies to facilitate and complement teaching and learning practices.
- Support and develop our staff to deliver excellence in teaching and learning.

Student Experience

- Nurture vibrant, diverse student communities that take pride in Ulster University and who have a deep sense of belonging and identity.
- Create an environment that facilitates creative, independent learning and inquiry, economically important skills, knowledge and intellectual capital.
- Provide a shared vision and understanding for all staff and students that view students as partners in our educational provision.
- Provide campuses and spaces that stimulate and encourage an engaged student and staff community.

The University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching Excellence (2019) aligns with the Plan and builds on existing practice through a framework for ongoing and new enhancement projects which contribute to the achievement of three overarching aims:

- better learning experience for students;
- better working lives for staff;

- better outcomes for students and society.

5 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.

6 The University and the Students' Union have worked together to develop a partnership framework (2017) based on values of authenticity, excellence, support, trust and transformation. These values underpin how students are supported, enabled to engage in their own learning, work with the University to shape the direction of learning, as well as formal mechanisms for quality and governance. They incorporate the Student Charter and Associate Charters and a set of Principles underpinning the Ulster Student Experience (2015). The latter were drawn up to articulate the aspirations of a range of existing and developing strategies as they affect the student learning experience. They reflect the Graduate Qualities above and focus on the academic curriculum covering the following areas: the Ulster Learning Model (an overarching Principle which incorporates the pedagogic approach to learning and the partnership nature of student engagement in learning and teaching); Employability; Internationalisation; Digital Literacy; Research/Teaching Nexus; Ethics and Sustainability.

Academic Governance

The Senate

7 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 chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and is composed of senior academic office-holders including the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Academic Operation and Portfolio Development, Academic Quality and Student Experience, and Research, with representation from academic staff in the faculties and students. The Senate works through a number of committees, which include the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

Faculties and Schools

8 The University organises its academic activity in four Faculties: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment; Life and Health Sciences; and Ulster University Business School. The activities of Faculties extend across the campuses. The academic staff within Faculties are grouped by cognate subject areas in 23 schools (or departments). There are a number of research institutes. A doctoral college supports PhD researchers. The Distributed Education Board has overall responsibility for the standards and management of certain centrally delivered courses and modules.

9 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 Executive 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. There are three Associate Deans in each Faculty, for Education, Global Engagement, or Research.

Course and Subject Management

10   Each course is administered by a course committee, comprising staff who contribute significantly to the teaching of the course. Members of the course committee may be drawn from a number of Schools and Faculties.   The course committee is responsible to the Faculty Board for the organisation and effective management of the course. The course committee is chaired by a Course Director. The delivery of individual modules is managed by module co-ordinators.

11   The course committee puts in place, in accordance with 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.

12   The University has endorsed Guidelines on Student Induction and a policy on student transition for undergraduate students. A protocol on attendance and guidelines for student notification of absence have been developed. The University issues all students with a University Handbook. In addition, a course handbook, deriving from the evaluation document, is issued to students and supplemented as appropriate by detailed module information. Indicative contents lists for these documents have been approved by the University. A 'Course Support Area' is available in the digital learning environment, Blackboard Learn, for each course. Advisers of studies are appointed for all students, and students are expected to be informed of arrangements for access to staff outside scheduled teaching. In full-time courses, formal staff/student consultative committees are established and/or students are represented on the course committee. In part-time courses, an appropriate method of consultation is developed (eg meetings, email circulations, web discussion groups) and feedback provided. There is guidance on good practice, and a role description for student representatives. An accredited short course module became available to them in 2008.

13   The course committee is responsible for the ongoing administration of the course, including where applicable placement and study abroad in accordance with the University's policies and good practice guidance.   In addition, the course committee must fulfil University quality assurance procedures with respect to the course and associated modules.

14   The course committee (excluding student members), with the external examiner(s), becomes the Board of Examiners for the course and as such determines the assessment results and academic progression of students, and makes recommendations for awards to Senate.

15   For certain provision, these course-based arrangements are adapted to take account of the subject-focused development of undergraduate Honours degree provision. Subject-based management, encompassing Single Honours, Major, Main and/or Minor strands in an undergraduate subject, is the responsibility of a Subject Committee and Subject Director, with a campus Co-ordinating Group, comprising Subject Directors led by a Director of Combined Studies, addressing cross-subject matters (see 57 below).

UNIVERSITY AWARDS

16   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

17   The academic session at the University is semester-based and students are assessed in modules. All award-bearing programmes (full-time and part-time, undergraduate and postgraduate) are accommodated within the modular structure.

18   The academic session is organised into three semesters: autumn, spring and summer. Whilst the majority of courses 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. Full-time Master's require a full calendar year.

19   The first two semesters each comprise 12 weeks of teaching, three weeks of assessment and a vacation 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 a standard pattern.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDIT FRAMEWORK; MODULAR STRUCTURE

20   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 to 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 the national 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

21   The University expects 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

22   Modules are assigned a particular level. The level is an expression of relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and student autonomy. The University formally adopted the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS) level descriptors to describe levels in 2002. The University's levels reflect those commonly in use in the rest of the university sector. These 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.

The following equivalences for credit and qualification levels apply:

University Credit Levels (2009)	University Credit Levels (to 2008)	FHEQ (2008)	FHEQ (to 2008)
1	A	-	-
2	A	-	-
3	A	-	-
4	1	4	Certificate
5	2	5	Intermediate
6	3	6	Honours
7	M	7	Master's
8	D	8	Doctoral

23   The levels encompass the post-16 education systems across both 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 to Higher Education courses). Level 2 is only used in Access Diplomas, but at least 60 credit points in the final year of such courses must be at Level 3.

Modules and Credit Points

24 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 equate to one credit point.

25 Modules are either compulsory or optional within the programme structure. Some modules may in addition be described as 'core', requiring student to meet a threshold standard in both the coursework and examination assessment elements in order to pass the module.

26 Student performance in modules and the programme overall is generally measured in percentage marks (although some record performance on a pass/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 programme of study.

Module Size

27 Taught modules may have any value in multiples of five credit points. There is currently a minimum size of 10 credit points in award-bearing courses but 20 is encouraged as the normal minimum. A strong rationale should be presented for smaller modules. Stand-alone short courses may have a value of five points. If course teams use modules of different sizes, they should ensure that they take account of the overall study load on students.

28 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

29 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 36-42 hours of study per week. Programmes of significantly longer duration comprise additional modules, taken during the summer semester.

30 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.

31 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).

32 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)

33   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 in the other. Subject to fulfilment of the requirements for the year, as expressed in course regulations and in the case of full-time students to study of a minimum of 40 credits in the semester, individual students may be permitted to vary the study pattern or to take additional modules.

Module Teaching Patterns

34   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 learning and teaching 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

35   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 usual 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

The lowest level permissible in undergraduate programmes (other than for Access Diplomas) is Level 3. Except for integrated Master's degrees, the lowest level permissible in postgraduate programmes and the MBBS is Level 6.

Maximum at Lowest Level

With the exception of the courses identified below, the integrated Master's and the MBBS, 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 it is 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. In Honours degrees, particularly in Art and Design or for international students from counties where the school-leaving qualification does not equate to A level standard, an integrated foundation year (Year '0') at Level 3 may be included. From 2016, the concept of 'extended' Master's degrees has been approved which allows additional study of at least 60 credits at Level 6 to be integrated at the start of the course.

Exemptions on the basis of study at Level 3 or Level 6

36   Exemption should not be granted from level 3 modules in undergraduate courses 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 at Level 3 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.

Postgraduate Programmes

37 From 2003 intake, in accordance with the national framework, all courses using Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Master's award titles must be postgraduate in level. These awards have a minimum of 60, 120, 180 credit points respectively. Except for integrated Master's degrees and the MBBS, the lowest undergraduate level which may be included is Level 6. The restriction on volume at this level is indicated in 35 above and in the University's Qualifications and Credit Framework at Appendix 1.

38 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). The 'extended' Master's degree (see 35) fully integrates such a preparatory period.

Entry Standard

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

Pass Mark

40 In Level 4 – 6 modules in Integrated Master's degree courses and in Level 6 modules in extended Master's degrees, and from 2016/17 in Level 6 modules in other postgraduate courses, the pass mark is 40%. The pass mark in Level 7 modules is 50%. The standard of achievement required to progress to Level 7 in extended Master's degrees is 50%. An overall 50% standard must be met by candidates to be eligible for a postgraduate award.

Postgraduate Certificates

41 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.

Master's Dissertations

42 A 60-point dissertation is a common feature of Master's degrees. It is not a requirement. Only those dissertations achieving a mark of 70% or above are required to be deposited electronically in the University's Library.

Integrated Master's Courses

43 The University offers the MBiomedSci, MChiro, MEng, MOptom, MPharm and MSci in this category. Integrated Master's courses are first degrees with postgraduate outcomes at the final level. Hence they are categorised as Master's level qualifications. The pass mark is set at 40% in the undergraduate level modules and 50% in the Level 7 module. The minimum number of Level 7 credit points is 120, not 150 as in other Master's programmes. A project/dissertation and a period of work-based learning are compulsory integral components of such courses.

Undergraduate Programmes

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

Level 4

45 Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)

Normally comprising 120 credits at Level 4, with a maximum of 30 credit points at Level 3, this award replaced the former Diploma comprising 120 credit points at Level 4.

Level 5

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

47 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 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. 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.

48 The University has withdrawn provision of the DipHE award, and no longer offers HNDs and HNCs of the Edexcel Foundation. The Foundation degree and Associate Bachelor's degree take their place.

49 The Advanced Diploma and Certificate comprise 120 and 60 credit points respectively, generally at Level 5, with an entry standard of CertHE or equivalent.

50 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

51 This level comprises Honours degrees, Graduate Diplomas and Graduate Certificates, and non-Honours degrees.

52 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 except in those courses which include and integrated foundation year). It has a two A level/equivalent entry standard. A dissertation/project is a normal expectation in the final level of an Honours degree. A period of work-based learning is also expected as an integral, compulsory part of the curriculum.

53 Graduate Diplomas and Certificates have a minimum entry requirement of a non-Honours degree. They comprise 120 and 60 credit points respectively, generally at Level 6, but with a maximum of 30 or 20 credit points at Level 3 permitted. They are based largely on undergraduate material and are usually taken 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.

54 The non-Honours degree has 360 credit points, with at least 60 at Level 6 and a maximum of 30 at Level 3. It requires two A levels or equivalent for admission. None is currently offered.

Other Undergraduate Qualifications

55 The award titles of Certificate and Diploma are available for courses 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

56 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.

Combined Honours Degrees

57 In addition to the provision of integrated Single Honours degrees, the University's modular framework for Honours degrees allows the combination of certain subjects. These subjects are offered as one or more of the following:

  a) as a **single honours course** (modules amounting to 120 credit points in the subject at each of Levels 5 and 6);

  b) as a **major subject strand** (modules amounting to 80 credit points in the subject at each of Levels 5 and 6);

  c) as a **main subject strand** (modules amounting to 60 credit points in the subject at each of Levels 5 and 6);

  d) as a **minor subject strand** (modules amounting to 40 credit points in the subject at each of Levels 5 and 6).

58 Greater flexibility may be built into Level 4 (or 3) to facilitate delayed and informed choice by allowing students to select up to three subjects at that level.

59 Honours degrees are therefore available as: Single Honours; Major/Minor Honours (two-thirds/one-third weighting of two subjects); Joint Honours (equal weighting of two main subjects); Combined Honours (equal weighting of three minor subjects).

60 There is no integration between subjects in combined programmes, although there is internal coherence and progression within each subject strand.

Titles

61 The award titles available are recorded in the Schedule to Ordinance XXIX. The range has been expanded beyond 'Arts', 'Science' and 'Engineering' to incorporate specific subject awards particularly for practice-based courses, in keeping with national conventions.

62 The subject of study is named in the course 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 course. This weighting should be reflected at levels 5 and 6 in undergraduate degrees.

63 The UK Quality Code proposes that 'Combined Studies' should be reserved for courses involving study of more than three significant components. Within the University, the 'Combined Honours' designation may be used as a convenient summary title where three subjects are selected from a range. Awards will specify the three subjects.

Exit Awards

64 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.

Web-supported module delivery

65 Two broad definitions are used to describe module delivery which is supported by the web:

  • **blended learning** – Although online participation is required, face-to-face interactions remain. Online participation may include any or all of the following:

- accessing key course documents;
- using online course material, which contains major educational content;
- interaction and communication (synchronous and asynchronous) between staff and students or 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.

66 No Year 1 modules may be delivered fully online in full-time undergraduate campus-based programmes. The introduction of fully online Level 5 or 6 modules in full-time undergraduate campus-based programmes may be proposed through the validation process or be approved by the Faculty.

B PRINCIPLES OF STANDARDS ASSURANCE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

67 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 objectives 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 mandatory requirements of the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, and to satisfy the expectations of other external statutory or regulatory bodies.

68 These Principles have been approved by the former Teaching and Learning Committee and Research Degrees Committee.

69 In relation to **standards** the system seeks to ensure that:

- the academic standards of the programmes of study are appropriate to their related awards;

- the University's programme structures accord with the requirements of national Framework for Higher Education Qualification (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.

70 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 and statutory 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.

71 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 validated 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 NEW PROGRAMMES

72 The process of planning and approval is illustrated in the flow chart at Appendix 4.

Approval for Planning

73 A proposal for the introduction of a new course or of Major, Main and Minor undergraduate Honours subject strands in the University, or for major revisions, including a new pathway with a distinct award title, is submitted along with a business case with course costings by the Faculty to the Academic Planning Advisory Group, using Form CA1.

74 In bringing forward a new proposal, the Faculty should ensure that it accords with the University's aims and objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan and relevant strategies. The Faculty also refers to the criteria for the planning of new courses (Appendix 5), the University's scheme of academic awards, the regulations pertaining to these awards, the University's modular and credit framework and relevant national guidance. Internal and external data resources are available to assist Faculties in determining likely demand for and viability of new provision.

75 The Advisory Group reviews the proposal in the context of the University's academic courses plan, paying particular attention to level, location, employment prospects, demand and viability, proposed intake size and resource needs. The Advisory Group recommends to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee whether planning should proceed.

76 The approved outline is used as the basis of the course description in University publicity material, and for the development of the course document which will be submitted for evaluation at the end of the planning period.

Planning

77 The course or subject planning committee is encouraged to seek advice internally and externally and indeed is under an obligation to do so in certain subject areas. The Faculty is expected to facilitate the planning committee in this respect. Account should be taken of the national subject benchmark standards, the generic Qualities of a University of Ulster Graduate and the University's Principles underpinning the Subject Experience (Appendix 6) and the Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning (Appendix 7). An Assessment Handbook gives guidance, including generic assessment criteria by level. The University's expectations for Employability and Entrepreneurship (Appendix 8), should also be addressed.

78 Course teams should take account of curriculum design principles which were developed in 2017. In summary these expect modules to be of a minimum size of 20 credit points, to have four learning outcomes and two items of assessment, and that there should be a consistent approach to assessment workloads. A sound rationale should support proposed variations. The Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice and the Office for Digital Learning offer support and a range of resources to teams preparing for evaluation.

79   Proposals involving a significant element of digital learning should include a comprehensive Digital Learning Plan, in accordance with the University's Quality Precepts for Digital Learning.

80   The Dean and Faculty Board are expected to monitor the resource implications of proposals and ensure that appropriate staffing, physical and recurrent budget resources are available through the development of the Faculty's academic plan. Relevant central departments engage with the Faculty and advise the Academic Planning Advisory Group and the evaluation panel as appropriate.

Establishment of Evaluation Panel

81   An evaluation panel is established for each proposal whose outline curriculum has been approved (except where a course or pathway derives substantially from existing provision and does not require an evaluation meeting). The panel generally consists of an (Associate) Dean or Head of School (Chair) and one University member from a Faculty other than that from which most of the teaching of the course emanates, and two external members.

82   Internal members are drawn from a panel of nominated staff and include Course and Subject Directors and other academic staff with curriculum development and quality assurance responsibilities. External members, who are academic subject experts, are proposed by the sponsoring faculty. An employer representative may be appointed in addition to the academic members. An external who is involved during the planning stages does not normally become a member of the evaluation panel nor should an external be closely associated with the School, eg through acting recently as an external examiner, or having recently been a member of staff, within the last five years. Similarly, members of the course/subject teams should not be closely associated with the externals' institutions, for example through an external examiner appointment.

83   The meeting should normally take place by 30 April of the year preceding entry to the course. The meeting is serviced by the Academic Office.

84   Special arrangements may be made to streamline the evaluation of courses which carry professional, statutory or regulatory body recognition or approval. A joint meeting is held whenever possible.

85   The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that for each award-bearing course or 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; that the programme conforms to the modular structure 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 its aims and objectives to be met;
- there is evidence of reasonable employment prospects and progression opportunities.

86   Members of the panel receive a copy of the Guidelines for Evaluation and Revalidation Panels (Appendix 9), and Aide-Memoire (Appendix 10) the appropriate subject benchmark statement(s) and other relevant information.

Production of Evaluation Document

87   The evaluation document should be produced in accordance with the outline at Appendix 11. It includes a programme specification which follows a template to accord with QAA guidance. Modules are presented in a standard format (Appendix 12) and should meet the curriculum design principles at 78 or justification for variation should be provided. In preparing the assessment strategy, reference should be made to the University's generic guidance and assessment criteria (contained in the

University's Assessment Handbook). An exemplar assessment schedule should be provided along with assessment rubrics. The Curriculum Management System assists teams in the compilation of this document.

88   The document, which has been reviewed within the Faculty and approved on behalf of the Faculty Board, is lodged electronically with the Academic Office for distribution to members of the evaluation panel at least three weeks before the panel meeting.

89   Members of the panel are requested to make initial comments on the document, using Form CA7 (Appendix 13). These are made available to other panel members and the course or subject planning committee in advance of the meeting, along with Academic Office briefing notes identifying key points and standards and regulatory matters.

Panel Meeting

90   The panel meets with the course or subject planning committee to discuss the proposal. The meeting allows ready clarification of queries and provides first-hand evidence to support confidence in the capabilities of the team responsible for delivery. A typical agenda and provisional programme are given at Appendix 14. The actual arrangements for consideration of the proposal may vary and these are discussed with the (Associate) Dean, Head of School and the chair of the planning committee at the preliminary meeting of the panel. An inspection of physical resources may be undertaken. Panel members use Form CA8 (Appendix 15) to record their views. The panel receives reports on resource matters from central service departments. In support of good assessment design, the University's Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice provides comments on its involvement with the team, or a report on the rubrics provided.

91   The evaluation panel is expected to conduct a critically constructive and independent assessment of the proposal. The extent to which discussions focus on curriculum will be determined by the relationship of the proposal to a currently approved University. In any case, the panel will wish to be assured that the staff responsible for delivery have a clear understanding of the programme and its objectives.

92   At the end of the meeting the Chair of the panel reports to the (Associate) Dean, Head of School and chair of the course/subject planning committee the panel's conclusions and recommendations, and, if the programme is to be approved, the conditions of approval (if any), and any matters which are either to be kept under review by the course or subject committee or to be the subject of continuing dialogue, if necessary with guidance and advice from members of the panel.

Report of Evaluation Panel

93   A report of the meeting, when confirmed by the Chair, is circulated as soon as possible to members of the panel, to the Dean and chair of the course/subject planning committee. Recommendations for approval are considered by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC).

94   Where the planning committee finds difficulty in meeting the conditions specified by the panel, it is expected to report accordingly, giving reasons, within four weeks of receiving the panel report.

95   Otherwise, the planning committee should submit to the Academic Office, within six weeks of the event (four weeks for events in May or later), the final version of the evaluation document incorporating such amendments as are required, and a brief paper indicating how the recommendations and conditions have been addressed and the nature of the amendments made.

Conclusion of Evaluation Process

96   The evaluation process is concluded when the chair of the evaluation panel certifies that the final document is satisfactory and ASQEC endorses the recommendation for approval. The course is approved for a maximum period of five years until the time of revalidation (see Section G below). Ongoing approval is subject to satisfactory outcomes in the annual monitoring process.

97   Once a course is approved, a course committee is formally established and a course director appointed (subject committee and director for subject-based provision).

D   REVISIONS TO EXISTING COURSES

98   Where it is proposed to revise the structure, content or regulations of an existing course or Honours subject, details are submitted to the Faculty for consideration and approval using Form CA3. Proposed changes in the following areas require further consideration by a University-level committee before final approval is given: course title, location, mode, aims and objectives, revisions which have implication for central resources. Where the revisions are substantial, the course should be evaluated as if it were a new proposal.

E   MODULE REVIEW

99   Modules are monitored in two ways, through the Module Feedback Survey and the Module Monitoring process.

100   The Survey gathers feedback, at module level, on teaching and the quality of the student experience at the point of delivery. The Survey questionnaire comprises 11 closed questions on the student's learning experience covering module delivery, assessment, feedback, learning resources, and the tutor. In addition there are two open questions used to capture student opinion on what they felt was particularly good about the module and what, if anything, they would seek to improve. The Survey is administered online and reports are quickly available to module teams and senior Faculty staff.

101   Each semester, the Module Monitoring process provides an analysis of statistical data about student progression and achievement to the Head of School who identifies modules worthy of further review on account of student performance which is significantly higher or lower than expected. These modules are subject to detailed scrutiny, through a process determined by the Head of School, and an action plan is developed. The plan is monitored by the course/subject committee and Head of School, and feeds into annual course monitoring.

F   ANNUAL MONITORING

102   The 'Programme Management System' locates responsibility for the ongoing review of programmes and enhancement of the student learning experience with the academic staff delivering the programme, that is the course or subject team. Course/Subject Committees consider quality indicators (including statistical data, external examiner reports, professional, statutory and regulatory body and employer engagement, student feedback and National Student Survey (NSS) results) on an ongoing basis as and when they are available, throughout the year.

103   Existing committee structures within the Faculty and University permit the flow of issues and good practice from Course/Subject Committees to the appropriate decision-making point. Annual monitoring activity is embedded within Course/Subject Committee activity and Faculty and University officers use the same information to maintain oversight, through a process of 'Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement'.

104   A risk-based approach is taken for University monitoring with provision categorised each year according to a range of quantitative and qualitative metrics as requiring 'Active Monitoring', 'Local Enhancement' or 'Academic Excellence'. There are regular University-level meetings with Associate Deans to consider appropriate actions.

G   REVALIDATION

105   The University's system of revalidation involves the assignment of each course to a revalidation unit or sub-unit and the scheduling of all revalidation events within a five-year cycle. Units and sub-units are agreed with Faculties and generally comprise a number of courses. This exercise is essentially concerned with the re-affirmation of standards for the awards and courses or undergraduate subjects within the unit and their continuing currency and relevance to the University's purpose, in the light of changes in the subject, in external points of reference, in teaching and learning, and in student demand, employment opportunities and employer expectations. A new course proposal may exceptionally be considered at the time of revalidation. Courses may be exempted from revalidation in light of performance in annual monitoring.

H   COLLABORATIVE PROVISION AND OUTCENTRES

106   The University may develop in partnership with other institutions collaborative provision whereby:

a)   a programme is jointly planned and delivered with another institution. A joint course, which may lead to a joint award where the other institution has such authority, requires broadly equal academic contributions from each partner;

b)   a module or modules of a University programme are contributed by another institution. This may involve off-campus delivery at an outcentre;

c)   the University delivers a programme, in whole or in part, at an outcentre;

d)   an institution is approved to deliver to its students a programme leading to an award of the University, under a validation arrangement;

e)   an institution is approved to deliver to University student an existing University programme, under a franchise arrangement.

Formal agreements are drawn up to govern these arrangements.

In category a) joint evaluation of the proposal is conducted where possible. Under b) relevant staff from the institution are members of the University's course committee and Board of Examiners. New proposals under a – c are evaluated in accordance with the arrangements described in this handbook.

APPENDICES

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER
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	40	Associate Award.
Diploma in International Academic Studies	5	120	3, 4, 5	90	30	40	Associate 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	Replaced.
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	More at Level 3 if includes integrated foundation year.
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.
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery	7	780	5, 6, 7	190	175	40	50% at Level 7. New award from 2021.
Integrated Master's Degree	7	480	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	120	30	40	50% pass mark at Level 7 (from 2003 intake). More at Level 3 if includes integrated foundation year.
Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development	7	60	7	60	-	50	Award framework for short course modules, from 2012.
Postgraduate Certificate	7	60	6, 7	40	20	50	40% pass mark in Level 6 modules from 2016/17.
Postgraduate Diploma	7	120	6, 7	90	30	50	40% pass mark in Level 6 modules from 2016/17.
Master's Degree	7	180	6, 7	150	30	50	40% pass mark in Level 6 modules from 2016/17.
Extended Master's Degree	7	240	6,7	180	-	50	From 2016/17. 40% pass mark in Level 6 which forms preliminary stage. 50% required to progress to Level 7.
Professional Doctorate	8	540	7, 8	420	120	50	From 2010.

FHEQ = Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, third edition 2014.

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 level names adopted in 2008/9 correspond 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 DipHEs and Edexcel HNDs and HNCs from 2008, and the Diploma in Area Studies and Diploma in Industrial Studies from 2011.

The mark for the award of DPP and DIAS was revised from 50% from 2015/16 placement year.

Appendix 2

QAA: FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

The UK Quality Code provides the following generic descriptions of Higher Education qualifications in the Framework. 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 could 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 institutions 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, in order 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 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 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 will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

  o the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;

  o decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts;

  o 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 holders 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's 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, for example, 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:

  o to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;

  o 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:

  o the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;

  o decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations;

  o 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).

First degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science comprise an integrated programme of study and professional practice spanning several levels. While the final outcomes of the qualifications themselves typically meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 7, these qualifications may often retain, for historical reasons, titles of Bachelor of Medicine or Bachelor of Veterinary Science. The use of the title 'Dr' by medical doctors is a historical abbreviation for the profession; it does not indicate a qualification at doctoral level.

Descriptor for higher education qualifications 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 the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to 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 which include the name of the discipline in their title (eg 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 producing a contribution to (professional) knowledge. The titles PhD and DPhil are commonly used for doctoral degrees awarded on the basis of original research.

Achievement of outcomes consistent with the qualifications descriptor for the doctoral degree normally requires the study equivalent to three full-time calendar years.

SUMMARY OF EWNI GENERIC CREDIT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS
(Source: NICATS Manual, 2002 and the 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 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 and accepting full accountability for outcomes.
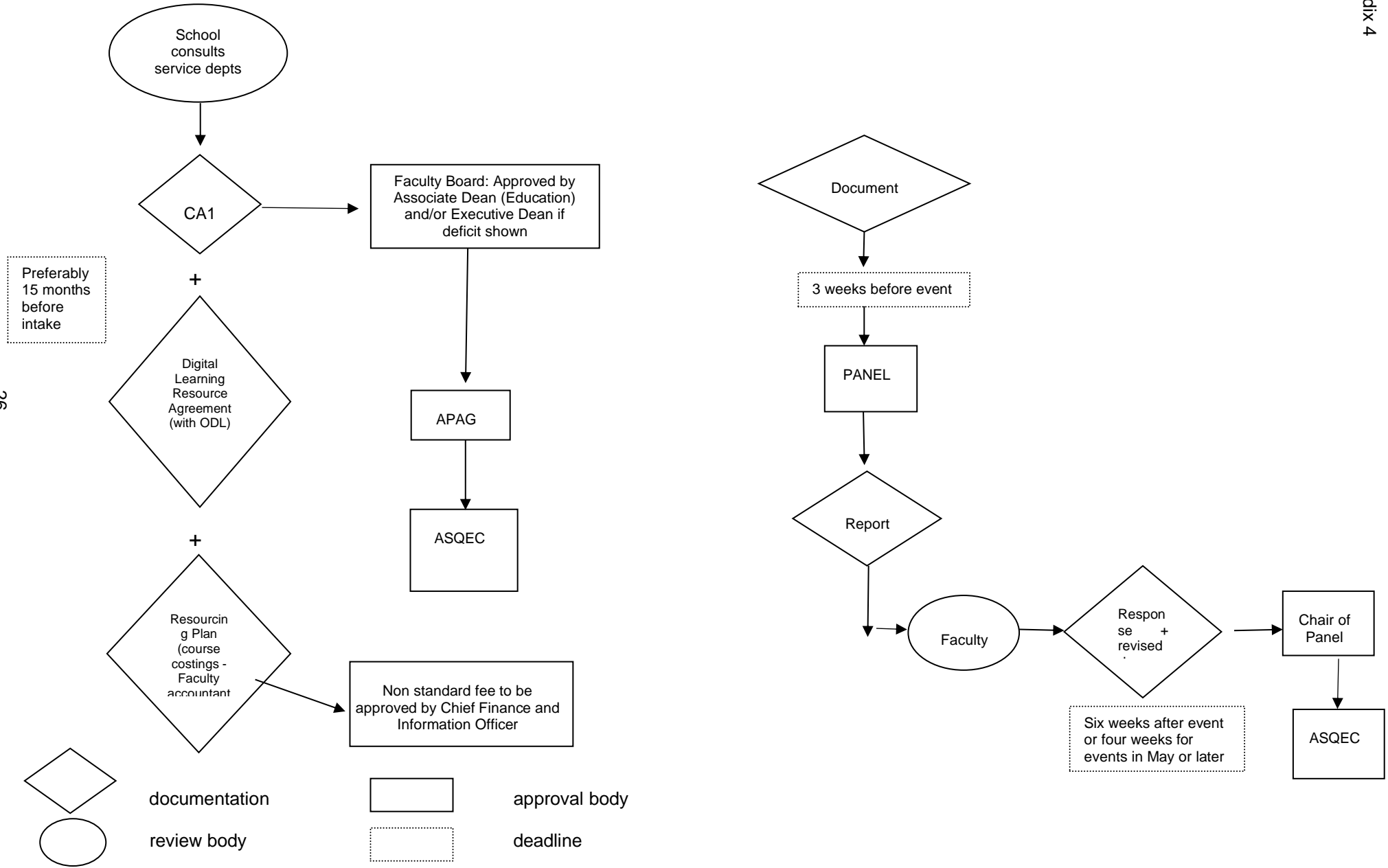
Table of generic level descriptors

Level	Intellectual skills and attributes	Processes	Accountability
Entry	• 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.	• 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.	• Carry out directed activity under close supervision. • Rely entirely on external monitoring of output and quality.
1	• 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.	• Show basic competence in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts. • Utilise a clear choice of routine responses. • Co-operate with others.	• 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	• Apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas. • Make comparisons. • Interpret available information. • Demonstrate a range of skills.	• Choose from a range of procedures performed in a number of contexts, some of which may be non-routine. • Co-ordinate with others.	• 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	• 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.	• 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.	• 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	• 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.	• 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.	• 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.

	• 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.		• Meet specified quality standards.
5	• 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.	• 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.	• Accept responsibility and accountability within broad parameters for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
6	• 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.	• 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.	• Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
7	• 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.	• Conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity. • Design and apply appropriate research methodologies. • Communicate results of research to peers.	• Accept accountability in related decision making including use of supervision.
8	• Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry.	• Demonstrate command of methodological issues. • Communicate results of research to peers and engage in critical dialogue.	• Accept accountability in related decision making including use of supervision.

Typical Planning and Approval Process

Approval for Planning → Development → Evaluation → Approval of Proposal

School consults service depts

CA1

Preferably 15 months before intake

Digital Learning Resource Agreement (with ODL)

+

+

Resourcing Plan (course costings - Faculty accountant

Faculty Board: Approved by Associate Dean (Education) and/or Executive Dean if deficit shown

APAG

ASQEC

Non standard fee to be approved by Chief Finance and Information Officer

Document

3 weeks before event

PANEL

Report

Faculty

Response + revised .

Six weeks after event or four weeks for events in May or later

Chair of Panel

ASQEC

◇ documentation

⬭ review body

▭ approval body

┈ deadline

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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 Strategic Plan, academic policies, guiding principles and documents, and policy on equality of opportunity.

2   AWARD AND STANDARDS

Establish that the programme is compatible with the principles incorporated in the overall modular course structure of the University, its scheme of awards and its qualifications and credit framework (Appendix 1). 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.

3   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 learning opportunities should be developed.

4   COMMUNITY

Aim to satisfy the community interest as regards professional, 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 8).

5   GRADUATE QUALITIES

Ensure consistency with the qualities expected of a University of Ulster graduate, in accordance with the statement at Appendix 6.

6   DEMAND

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

7   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.

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

Appendix 6

GRADUATE QUALITIES AND PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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 and October 2011. This statement replaces one adopted in October 1998.

Guidance

The following guidance has been endorsed by the Committee to assist course teams. Additional resources for students and a Curriculum Mapping tool for staff are available through the 'Staff Employability Portal'.

The University includes the above Statement of Graduate Qualities in the national Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) document which is available to all students commencing undergraduate degrees at the University from 2011/12. The document is developed over the student's career and it may be released to third parties with the permission of the graduate student.

It should be borne in mind that there are many qualities that a university graduate might expect to have. In essence this statement tries to encapsulate those qualities that characterise an Ulster graduate. As they apply to any Ulster graduate they are generic and aspirational until they are related to specific discipline areas. The challenge for faculties is to articulate the graduate qualities as they refer to each programme or subject area.

The purpose of the Statement of Graduate Qualities is two-fold.

- It acts as a framework on which evidence can be accumulated on the qualities. A sample evidence base is set out below demonstrating where the student's experience can be applied.

- It also acts as a guide for course teams to develop further opportunities to evidence the qualities.

Tying the Graduate Qualities into course evaluation and revalidation as well as into the HEAR document process is designed to ensure that the Graduate Qualities are properly embraced and articulated and not seen as a 'lip-service' exercise.

Articulation of the graduate qualities through the subject disciplines is not a new concept. Emphasising them at a programme-of-study level helps to make them more transparent and

more explicit; course teams and students are more conscious of them, more alert to looking for opportunities to express them.

In articulating the Graduate Qualities in an evaluation or revalidation document it is not envisaged that the course team provide a tick-box mapping exercise but it should provide a narrative at the course level and use examples from modules in defending their approach. Value is seen in the review and reflection entered into by the course teams as they explore the Graduate Qualities and facilitate students meeting them.

The Graduate Qualities have been written with the nominal degree graduate in mind but as they are generic, they should also inform and be considered by other levels of qualifications.

Evidence that the Graduate Qualities have been achieved.

Examples below are only indicative and are not meant to be an exhaustive list of the sources of evidence. As an exercise, faculty groups or subject disciplines might wish to concentrate on a graduate quality that does not easily lend itself to articulation and discuss how evidence could be demonstrated with the spirit of the graduate quality.

Subject-specific knowledge and skills informed by current research and professional/vocational practice.

Evidence will come from the Subject Benchmark Statements and specific PSRB requirements.

The student can point to learning outcomes at programme level and within specific modules. In particular, students can refer to the input from research active staff in the final year.

Flexibility, creativity and an entrepreneurial approach to the resolution of problems.

The student can point to examples within modules where creativity, complex problem solving and innovation could be demonstrated.

Self-confidence, global citizenship, appreciation of sustainability matters, ethical leadership and a commitment to life-wide learning, professionalism and employability.

Relevant examples and evidence could be garnered from exchange programmes, Study USA and Erasmus, placement, visiting speakers, work with multi-national corporations, as well as the curriculum and learning and teaching and assessment methods in appropriate modules. (See also guidance on internationalisation of the curriculum (2013).)

Evidence from the student's engagement with Tutoring in Schools, Science Shop, mentoring, corporate social responsibility, sponsorship and volunteering activities and participation in clubs and societies.

Students could provide evidence of employability from placement reports and employers, programme-specific KIPTs, student project, seminars and workshops and examples of working as an individual or in a team.

QAA and HEA have published guidance on education for sustainable development (2014): qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/supporting-resources (or search for Sustainable Development).

Effective collaborative working, communication skills and the capacity for reflective practice, including the ability to give and receive feedback.

The student can point to areas where skills such as teamwork, presentation, analysis, critical evaluation and argument have been developed throughout their course; input and accreditation by professional bodies; placement and choices within a programme.

Principles underpinning the Student Learning Experience

The Student Experience Principles (2015) set out the principles of the Ulster Student Learning Experience. It is not intended to redefine the Ulster experience but to articulate in a set of Principles the aspirations of a range of existing and developing strategies as they impact on the student experience in relation to learning and teaching and the delivery of Ulster's graduate qualities. Detailed guidance supports the implementation of the Principles with questions to prompt discussion within course teams and identified resources.

Six principles have been developed covering the following areas:

- The Ulster Learning model. (This is an overarching principle and incorporates both the pedagogic approach to learning and the partnership nature of student engagement in learning and teaching.)
- Employability
- Internationalisation
- Digital Literacy
- Research/Teaching Nexus
- Ethics and Sustainability

Ulster's Learning Model
- Ulster students will be at the heart of the learning experience
- Ulster students will engage in a collaborative, learner-centred, active and participative environment.
- Learner-centred teaching will promote inquiry-based learning methods to facilitate exploration, innovation, critical thinking, leadership and problem-solving.
- Learning will be facilitated through critical reflection on individual and group-based transformative learning experiences.
- Ulster students and staff will be engaged in a learning community which facilitates the transition through programmes of study and on to employment.

Employability
Ulster students will develop the knowledge and skills to be confident and capable of competing for, and succeeding in, stimulating and fulfilling employment through the provision of opportunities designed into their programme of study. A student's whole experience at Ulster contributes to successful employability.

Internationalisation
Ulster students will be equipped with the necessary skills, understanding and confidence to live, work, and study in international and intercultural contexts.

Digital Literacy
Ulster students will develop the knowledge, skills, experience and digital capabilities to equip them for living, learning, communicating and working in a digital world and to maximise their employability.

Research/teaching Nexus
Ulster students will experience research and/or scholarship informed teaching to gain the skills to demonstrate critical intellectual enquiry in their taught courses to enable them to become independent learners and progress to their chosen careers and/or as a preparation for further study or research.

Ethics and Sustainability
Ulster students will gain an understanding of and exemplify ethical behaviours and learn productive resolutions to problems for current and future needs.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK FOR LEARNING

The University has adopted (June 2011) the following statement.

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 the tasks, not just demonstrating learning through the tasks;

3   deliver timely learner-related feedback information that helps students to self-correct and communicate 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 has 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.

Appendix 8

EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1. Ulster's Employability Strategy

Ulster's (2018-2023) Employability Strategy employability.ulster.ac.uk/strategy/ is premised on the belief that the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes for employability is best embedded within the curriculum and supported with access to impactful co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities.

The Staff Employability Portal ulster.ac.uk/employability/staff provides detailed guidance and resources to assist programme teams with embedding Employability and Enterprise in the curriculum.

The key drivers for employability include:

Embedding Employability in the Curriculum

Embedding employability is about providing the opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, experiences, behaviours, attributes, achievements and attitudes to enable graduates to make successful transitions and contributions, benefitting them, the economy and their communities. Employability is relevant to all students, and at all levels of study so includes both undergraduate and postgraduate provision. To be addressed effectively, employability should be embedded into all learning and teaching processes and practices – particularly in the curriculum – and considered throughout the student lifecycle, from the very start of a student programme through to the completion of their studies.

All stakeholders, including academic staff, students, employability services, students' unions, and employers, have a role to play in embedding employability and should be involved in doing so via a collaborative, partnership approach

Embedding employability is important to:

Students: with the rise in tuition fees, students are investing in their future careers and are more focussed on how the institution can support them to enhance their immediate employment prospects and longer term employability.

Employers: employers have specific needs in terms of graduate knowledge, skills and attributes which should inform the curriculum, HE business engagement and employability support in HE.

Institutions: excellence in graduate employment and employability enhances an institution's reputation and global standing, influencing student recruitment and engagement with employers.

UK economy: graduate employability is a government priority as it is vital to the UK's economic growth (regionally, nationally and internationally) and supports both social and cultural development.

A key element of embedding employability is the Integrated Curriculum Design Framework (ICDF) ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development/icdf and in particular the development of stages 1 – 4:

Stage 1: Contextualised Research & Analysis
Stage 2: Stakeholder Engagement
Stage 3: Programme Design
Stage 4: Module Design

Graduate Outcomes

With the Graduate Outcomes survey timing, moving from six months to 15 months post-graduation, the University has a longer window to support graduates to secure graduate level employment. This, however, will require Ulster to significantly extend and expand the support it gives to students after they graduate if positive results are to be achieved at a sector level for the Graduate Outcomes Survey.

Employer Engagement

Ulster University recognises the centrality of employer engagement in the design and delivery of the curriculum, enhancing student employability and responding to local and national demand for skills. The University must maintain and continue to develop its approach to employer engagement and business partnerships to support institutional priorities, the Northern Ireland Programme for Government and relationship building with local, national and international business.

Work Experience

Work Experience is increasingly valued by employers, with 59% of employers rating it as one of the most important factors when recruiting graduates (CBI/Pearson, 2017). Work experience complements the development of transferable skills and positive attitudes to work. It also improves a student's opportunity to gain a professional/managerial job on graduating (BIS, 2013b).

Integral to providing students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to take on challenging graduate level jobs are the opportunities afforded to our students to undertake work-based and /or work-related learning either as an integral part of their course of study as a coterminous award, or short-term internships.

Widening Participation

Ulster University is a sector leader in widening access to higher education, with the institution consistently attracting students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Institutional data and wider research highlight that students from Widening Participation (WP) backgrounds are significantly less likely to achieve positive employability outcomes compared to their non-WP counterparts.

All faculties and central departments must maintain and further develop support for WP students and graduates to ensure they have positive graduate outcomes.

Entrepreneurship

Given the broad portfolio of Ulster's subject provision and the regional infrastructure of start-up, microenterprise and small business sectors, it is important that we adequately prepare students for alternative career options and develop their confidence to take entrepreneurial activity to the next level. Enterprising competencies, such as teamwork, creative thinking, problem-solving and commercial awareness, are essential skills that have been identified by employers as key priorities.

Embedding the delivery and assessment of enterprise competencies in the curriculum will be useful to those in employment, or those who become self-employed and work on a freelance or consultancy basis.

2. **Employability and Employment**

Enhancing employability is a priority and our ambition is to be a sector leader in the provision and support of student and graduate employability.

In light of government policy and changes in the future of work, the University needs to develop further its provision for graduate employability and employment, and in doing so acknowledge

the distinction between employment and employability. Whereas **employment** is generally understood to mean having a job or being self-employed, **employability** means possessing the skills and qualities which will facilitate and enhance one's chances of gaining a job or self-employment.

The University adopts the Advance HE view of employability as: 'providing opportunities, to develop knowledge, skills, experiences, behaviours, attributes, achievements and attitudes to engage graduates to make a successful transition and contribution; benefitting them, the economy and their communities' (HEA 2015).

Employability is therefore not simply about getting a job but embraces the development of:
1   Employability skills and attributes;
2   Career planning and management skills;
3   A capacity of deep learning, reflection and action planning; and
4   A positive attitude towards lifelong learning.

3.   The University's Framework for Employability

The complexity of employability and the variety of effective and legitimate approaches taken to embed it in our curricula underscore the fact that there is no 'one size fits all' approach. Embedding and enhancement have to be undertaken with reference to curricula context, and without prejudicing the subject specific and disciplinary dimensions of learning.

The University has developed an innovative and comprehensive employability framework that can be woven into the fabric of the curriculum, the students' learning experiences, and our co-curricular and extra-curricular provision. The framework creates an ecosystem of multiple, interconnected employability activities which faculties, schools and programmes can use to plan, develop and deliver their own student-centred approaches to employability**.**

The Framework for Employability is supported by an Engagement model and Academic Support model. See employability.ulster.ac.uk/strategy/ (pages 13-15).

4.   Go Global (Outward Mobility)

As the UK seeks to boost trade links around the world, outward student mobility has never been more important. Outward mobility benefits individuals, universities, society and the economy, with many universities offering degrees with placements abroad, ranging from a few weeks to an entire year. Gaining international experience as a student at Ulster can have a significant impact on future career plans.

Graduate employers increasingly seek recruits with multicultural awareness, adaptability and awareness of global business networks; international work-based learning experiences enable students to develop and document these highly transferable skills which are proven to increase employability.

The University's Employability Strategy 2018-2023 affirms our commitment to increasing the opportunities for Ulster students to access international work experience, through internships, placements and work-related learning, and where appropriate, for these experiences to be assessed and accredited.

By encouraging our students to experience different work environments, people, cultures and organisations, they will not only develop their technical and professional skills but will also develop a global mindset to excel in a competitive graduate job market.

For further information and advice on managing and developing global placement opportunities, see the 'international work experience' section in the Staff Employability Portal.

5. The relationship between Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

There is an overlap between the broad set of skills, attributes and competencies that contribute to graduate employability and the characteristics of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. These are not the same, for example a small or micro business may value and utilise enterprising and entrepreneurial qualities more highly than a larger business or company, although a research and development department within the same company may also seek out these competencies. Hence the potential career trajectory of the student has a part to play.

An effective approach to Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education has a significant impact on learning to learn, and therefore the future success of the individual student. It prepares them for a rewarding professional life and acts as a significant vehicle to deliver against the institutional aims for graduate employment, employability and future success.

Employability support within the University covers a vast array of interventions and activities, both in the curriculum and beyond. These interventions may also support Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. However, an effective approach needs to go much deeper than these kinds of activities alone and collaboratively we need to develop a broader more coordinated range of activities that build year on year.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between enterprise and employability/entrepreneurship. Career paths may reflect these interconnections.
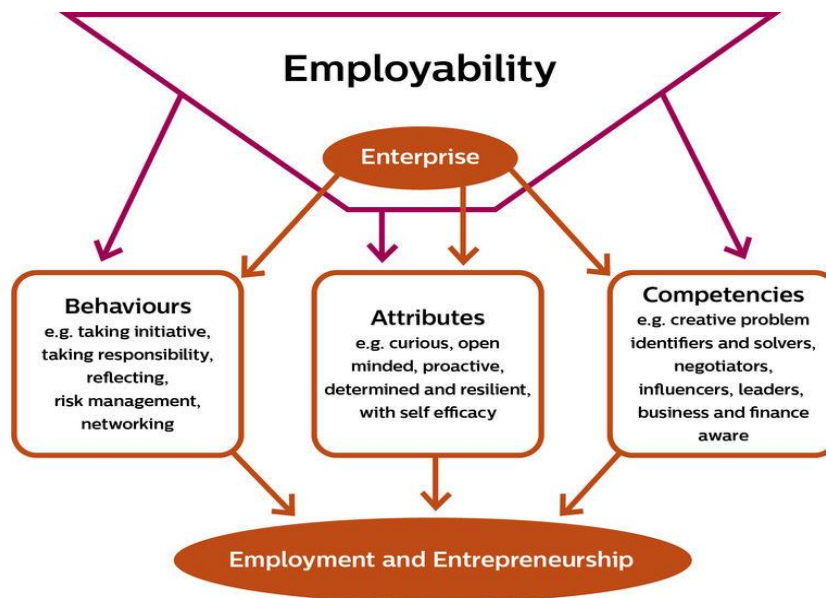
Discovering synergies between enterprise and employability (credit: Higher Education Academy)

For additional support and guidance on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education please refer to qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/supporting-resources, or search this portal.

6. Performance Measures

It is expected that the University's' Employability Strategy will be reflected within Faculty and Professional Services planning processes and action plans in order that all appropriate areas within the institution develop a robust evidenced based approach to supporting student employability and are accountable for their part in its delivery.

Indicative Performance Measures for the Strategy

University Profile
- Establish Ulster University as a leading HE institution for student and graduate employability.
- Meeting or exceeding the HESA PI for employability.
- 80% of all graduates and 76% of full-time undergraduates gaining professional/managerial jobs or undertaking further study.

Curriculum
- Employability and enterprise embedded in all programmes of study as demonstrated through the evaluation and re-validation processes.
- Develop programmes that are informed by employers' requirements both nationally and internationally.

Employability Support
- Recognition that employability is the responsibility of the whole University through Faculty and Professional Service processes and action plans.
- Foster and further enhance the development of active internal and external partnerships to support student and graduate employability.
- Increase the number of student-led career enhancement activities.

Career/Employability Development
- Provide an employability offering that enables students from all backgrounds, ages and those with a disability to increase in confidence, discover and action their career goals as evidenced by the outcomes of the Student Employability Journey questionnaire, the Graduate Outcomes Survey and NSS.
- Increased student engagement in career development learning and employability activities reflected in high student satisfaction and better impact measures.
- Increased engagement with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities with the aim of 50% of full-time undergraduate students gaining the Ulster EDGE Award.

Employer Engagement
- Increased graduate employer engagement measured through the numbers and range of opportunities for students and improved reputation measures in relevant metrics.
- Increased opportunities through the University's alumni network, building on existing mentoring and engagement programmes, to connect more students with appropriate individuals and opportunities.
- Increased participation of employers in Faculty/School/Programme Advisory Boards.

Work Experience
- An increase in the range and availability of work experience and placement opportunities for students and graduates.
- Increased numbers of students undertaking international work experience.

June 2019

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION AND REVALIDATION PANELS

1   COURSE APPRAISAL

A critical but constructive and detailed appraisal of the course proposal or provision within a revalidation unit/sub-unit is to be carried out. The unit is a set of cognate courses grouped together 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 information. Panels should consider the individual merits of each course or honours subject strand in a unit in accordance with the criteria at 2 and 3 below, and address generic subject-wide matters such as the broad aims of provision, overall learning and teaching and assessment strategies, and the efficient use of resources.

A report of the meeting is prepared. Recommendations for approval are considered by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

2   SOME GENERAL CRITERIA

Programmes should aim to:

a)   meet the requirements of students for personal and intellectual development and as a preparation for, or furthering of, careers and for 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 University or outside.

3   THE PARTICULAR COURSE

With regard to each course or Honours subject strand, please consider:

a)   the appropriateness of its aims and learning outcomes within the context of the University's objectives, strategies and overarching guidance (see 4 – 7);

b)   the standards set with regard to the following:

i)   the admission requirements;

ii)   the structure and levels of the course or subject strand, including its academic progression and internal coherence, and its compatibility with the principles incorporated in the overall qualifications and credit framework of the University and its modular course structure;

iii) the relevance and currency of the syllabuses for the different components of the course or subject strand; the extent to which they are informed by research or scholarship and taught by staff engaged in research or scholarship; the extent of consultation with industry, commerce and professions or other interested bodies;

iv) the forms, quality and management of the learning and teaching 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 (including feedback), methods and criteria, and their likely effectiveness as learning aids and in judging student achievement, in relation to the course or subject strand and module aims and intended learning outcomes;

vi) relevant national benchmarks and codes of practice;

vii) the staff resources available and opportunities for development and the ability of staff to work together constructively;

viii) the adequacy of the provision and deployment of other resources, including accommodation, library, laboratory and computing, and student support and guidance;

c) the steps taken to ensure the development of entrepreneurship;

d) the achievement of employability; employment prospects and progression opportunities;

e) strengths, creativity, innovation and good practice, and other aspects for commendation;

f) the conditions and recommendations, if any, subject to which the course or subject strand is recommended for approval.

4 UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC PLAN

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 Strategic Plan (2016) identifies four broad priority areas: civic contribution, academic excellence, global vision, and operational excellence. Excellence in teaching will provide students with a high-quality, challenging and rewarding learning experience that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to:

- demonstrate critical intellectual enquiry
- progress in their chosen career or entrepreneurial endeavour
- adapt to change
- become responsible global citizens making meaningful contributions to professional communities and wider society.

Student engagement and success are key. The student experience will be enhanced through the provision of well-designed, flexible, inclusive, relevant programmes and curricula.

The following Objectives have been set for Teaching Excellence and the Student Experience:

Teaching Excellence

- Define the unique attributes of an Ulster University graduate and our curriculum, to prepare graduates to be engaged contributors to a global and inter-connected society.
- Develop and deliver innovative curricula using contemporary methods of pedagogy that foster diversity, differentiation, and increased opportunities for access.
- Embrace the opportunities presented through emergent technologies to facilitate and complement teaching and learning practices.
- Support and develop our staff to deliver excellence in teaching and learning.

Student Experience

- Nurture vibrant, diverse student communities that take pride in Ulster University and who have a deep sense of belonging and identity.
- Create an environment that facilitates creative, independent learning and inquiry, economically important skills, knowledge and intellectual capital.
- Provide a shared vision and understanding for all staff and students that view students as partners in our educational provision.
- Provide campuses and spaces that stimulate and encourage an engaged student and staff community.

The University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching Excellence (2019) aligns with the Plan and builds on existing practice through a framework for ongoing and new enhancement projects which contribute to the achievement of three overarching aims:

- better learning experience for students;
- better working lives for staff;
- better outcomes for students and society.

5   CURRICULUM DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The University supports an integrated curriculum design framework (see summary document Curriculum Design at Ulster, 2019). For modules, there is a norm of a minimum size of 20 credit points, and typically no more than four learning outcomes and two items of assessment in a module. (An item may include more than one component, but the overall item will have a single mark.) The typical assessment load is 2000 words (or equivalent) per 10 credit points. These norms are not limits and course teams should present a sound rationale to depart from them.

There are guiding resources for writing learning outcomes and reading lists, designing assessment and associated briefs, criteria and rubrics, and equivalence for different types of assessment. General guidance on assessment is also contained in the University's Assessment Handbook which includes Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning.

Panels are asked to discuss with course/subject teams their approach to curriculum design.

6   GRADUATE QUALITIES AND STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE PRINCIPLES

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, 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

The course or subject 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.

Principles underpinning the Student Learning Experience

The Principles of the Ulster Student Learning Experience (2015) do not redefine the Ulster experience but articulate in a set of Principles the aspirations of a range of existing and developing strategies as they impact on the student experience in relation to learning and teaching and the delivery of Ulster's graduate qualities.

Six principles have been developed covering the following areas:

Ulster's Learning Model (an overarching principle)
- Ulster students will be at the heart of the learning experience
- Ulster students will engage in a collaborative, learner-centred, active and participative environment.
- Learner-centred teaching will promote inquiry-based learning methods to facilitate exploration, innovation, critical thinking, leadership and problem-solving.
- Learning will be facilitated through critical reflection on individual and group-based transformative learning experiences.
- Ulster students and staff will be engaged in a learning community which facilitates the transition through programmes of study and on to employment.

Employability
Ulster students will develop the knowledge and skills to be confident and capable of competing for, and succeeding in, stimulating and fulfilling employment through the provision of opportunities designed into their programme of study. A student's whole experience at Ulster contributes to successful employability.

Internationalisation
Ulster students will be equipped with the necessary skills, understanding and confidence to live, work, and study in the international and intercultural contexts.

Digital Literacy
Ulster students will develop the knowledge, skills, experience and digital capabilities to equip them for living, learning, communicating and working in a digital world and to maximise their employability.

Research/teaching Nexus
Ulster students will experience research and/or scholarship informed teaching to gain the skills to demonstrate critical intellectual enquiry in their taught courses to enable them to become independent learners and progress to their chosen careers and/or as a preparation for further study or research.

Ethics and Sustainability

Ulster students will gain an understanding of and exemplify ethical behaviours and learn productive resolutions to problems for current and future needs.

Guidance and curriculum mapping tools support course teams in considering these matters.

7 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 learning and teaching 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. These may include adjustment to the form or conditions of assessment. The University's Admissions Policy reflects these principles.

Academic Office
October 2019

Appendix 10

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

AIDE-MEMOIRE FOR EVALUATION AND REVALIDATION

This Aide-Memoire consists of questions and prompts to assist panel members in their consideration of the appropriateness of the course or subject, or courses or subject within a revalidation unit, to the University's objectives and the standards for the award(s). It is also available to course/subject teams to aid their preparation, for the event.

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 previously used by QAA academic reviewers and draw on the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*. Certain questions will be more valuable to external subject experts, others to internal University members conversant with University policies and processes.

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

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION (SUBJECT AND PROGRAMME CONTEXT)		
A1	Rationale and Origins	Academic Planning Advisory Group has already considered questions of demand and viability before permitting a new 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 course(s) fit with the University's strategic aims and objectives? Do they satisfy the general criteria identified in the Guidelines? If a course is only available full-time, would part-time mode be feasible?
COMMENTS		
A2	Projected intakes	
COMMENTS		
A3	Contextualised Research and Analysis: Standards and Quality Indicators	What has the team's approach been to fulfilling the expectations about standards set out in the relevant subject benchmark statement? Are these met? 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? Are the relevant PSRB requirements addressed? If applicable, is fitness to practise achieved? Have any concerns raised by external examiners been addressed? If necessary, have the reasons for particular entry standards, requirements or competences been explained? (See also B3 regulations.) How have the quality indicators (course, learner, employability analytics) informed curriculum (re) design?
COMMENTS		
A4	Stakeholder Engagement:	How have appropriate stakeholders been involved in programme(s) design and development? Are student and employer needs (regionally, nationally and internationally) and, as appropriate, government policy on skills adequately reflected? Is there evidence that relevant and worthwhile careers will be available to new graduates?
	PSRBs	Are there appropriate working relations between the course/subject team and the relevant PSRBs?
	Graduate Qualities	Has the team identified appropriate attributes and skills, including critical thinking, which meet the University's broad expectations as set out in the Statement of Graduate Qualities and their discipline reference points? Are these integrated into learning and teaching and assessment processes? How will graduates be able to demonstrate them?
	Academic Excellence and Research-based Teaching	The University expects courses to be underpinned by current and appropriate discipline-specific and pedagogic research and scholarship (and professional activity where appropriate). Is there evidence of this?

		Has there been participation in curriculum development activity (e.g. Advance HE/ Higher Education Academy projects or with the University's Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice or Office for Digital Learning)?
COMMENTS		
A5	Revisions (Revalidation only) and Innovations	Is the summary of recent and proposed revisions sufficient? Is the rationale for proposed changes clear and are the changes appropriate? (Revalidation only).
		Is there evidence of creativity and innovation in curriculum design and delivery? This should take account, as appropriate, of course, school, faculty, University and national initiatives and identified stakeholders' needs. Consider engagement with the Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice, Office for Digital Learning, Jisc and Advance HE/Higher Education Academy.
COMMENTS		
SECTION B: THE PROGRAMME(S)		
B1	Programme Design Commentaries	
B1.1	Subject/Course Philosophy	Is it evident that the course philosophy is 'owned' by the team? Is it visible in the design of programme(s) and modules?
		How are global citizenship, education for sustainable development, internationalisation integrated into the design of the programme(s)? (Guidance in Graduate Qualities and Principles underpinning the Student Experience [Appendix 15]; TLC/13/14; and from Global Engagement Department.)
COMMENTS		
B1.2	Course Structure, Progression, Coherence, Choice	Is there coherence within the course/strand? Are the choice of modules and their level and sequence 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	If needed (multiple entry points, pathways), are there diagrams to illustrate sequencing of modules? Are modules located in the appropriate semester and year? 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? Has a sound rationale been given for modules smaller than 20 credit points?
		How flexible is the part-time mode?
		Are the modules shared with other programmes?
	Transfer (to and from other programmes of study and opportunities for progression to further study)	Are adequate and meaningful opportunities for transfer to and from other courses available?
		Has the articulation been clearly addressed?
COMMENTS		
B1.3	Student support and guidance Induction Study skills	Are the learning and teaching methods varied? In undergraduate courses are they responsive to the range of entry qualifications?
		How has the course team facilitated opportunities to build communities and foster a sense of belonging? Does the strategy clearly articulate the induction process for each level? Does induction effectively support the transition into, through and beyond HE?
		How are the specific requirements of students with disabilities and others with particular needs, as recognised under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order, addressed and supported? Do Advisers of Studies and other staff engage with student support professionals?
		Do the expectations for attendance support student learning, particularly in year 1 of undergraduate courses, where attendance is a key requirement for success. How is attendance monitored? Is monitoring effective? How are issues of retention addressed?
		Do the induction and transition processes meet the expectations of the University's guidance? Are the arrangements for induction effective?
		Does the development of study skills include self-assessment skills? Are there opportunities for students to reflect on, and take responsibility for their own learning?

		How are HE study, writing and referencing skills developed? Is the development of academic skills (including learning to learn in higher education and enquiry and information literacy skills) embedded as an integral and integrated part of the first year full-time undergraduate curriculum as a minimum?
		What approaches are adopted for large groups, small groups, practical sessions? How is student participation achieved?
		Does the assessment strategy have an adequate formative function in developing student abilities? Does the assessment strategy in year 1 of undergraduate courses explicitly promote the effective adoption of HE 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 in the first year in accordance with University policy?
COMMENTS		
B1.4	Information Literacy and Digital Capabilities	How are information literacy skills embedded and progressively developed across the programme levels? Has the Library been involved?
		Do the assessment tasks develop ICT proficiency and skills?
COMMENTS		
B1.5	Learning and Teaching Strategy	Does this section provide an overview of <u>key</u> learning and teaching pedagogy/approaches, which would demonstrate effectiveness in promoting student learning and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the effective delivery of the curriculum?
		Is there evidence of compliance with University, Faculty and School policies and priorities in relation to learning and teaching, including the guidelines for first year teaching, and the development of Graduate Qualities?
		Are the learning and teaching delivery methods varied, promoting inclusivity for all students. Do the learning and teaching methods make use of innovative learning technologies?
		What learning approaches and teaching methods are adopted for large groups, small groups, practical sessions? How is student participation achieved? Is use made of group work and e-learning? If not, would they be beneficial?
		For substantial fully online provision, is there a comprehensive digital learning course management plan, drawn up in consultation with the Office for Digital Learning to meet the Quality Precepts for Digital Learning?
COMMENTS		
B1.6	Assessment Strategy	Is there evidence of compliance with the University/Faculty/School policies in relation to assessment?
		Does the assessment strategy give confidence that achievement of the intended learning outcomes will be tested and measured?
		Does the strategy provide adequate safeguards of validity and reliability and fairness?
		Is there a range of assessment methods? Are they appropriate to the learning outcomes? Will they be effective in judging achievement? Does the assessment facilitate a progressive development path across modules and levels?
		Do the assessment criteria enable examiners and students to distinguish between different categories of achievement (mark bands) for the level of the module and the award?
		The assessment of individual student performance in group work is a concern. The University has agreed that in a module which contributes to an award classification, normally at least 25% of each student's assessment result in group work should be based on his or her individual contribution (June 2010). What is the course team's approach to the assessment of group work?
		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?
		Does the assessment strategy have an adequate formative function in developing student abilities?

	Note that the team provides exemplar assessment schedules to show in each semester or year the types of assessment, weighting of and indicative timing and submission deadlines for tasks.	Is the load equitable and consistent? Are the deadlines for submission of assignments across the course manageable for students? What feedback arrangements are in place? Are they clearly articulated at course and module levels? Are they timely? Are they appropriate and effective for the type of assessment and student group? Is there evidence that the University's Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning are being addressed? For fully online provision do the assessment arrangements meet expectations for security, confidence in the identity of students completing assessment, reliable and safe receipt of work, as set out in the Quality Precepts for Digital Learning? Are all learning outcomes equally achievable by disabled students? Guidance is available at ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/119815/Revised-SENDO-Staff-Guidance-Booklet-2016.pdf.
COMMENTS		
B1.7	Employability and Enterprise	Does this section provide an overview of how employability and enterprise is embedded at each level within the programme? Has the team incorporated impactful curricular and co-curricular activities to support employability? Has the team given consideration to developing appropriate international work experience opportunities for students? Are graduate qualities appropriate to employment prospects of students identified? Are these integrated into both learning and teaching and assessment processes? Will graduates be able to demonstrate them? Are there opportunities for students to record and reflect on the skills and attributes they are developing throughout their programme of study?
	Work-based Learning	Has a clear rationale been provided for appropriate forms of work-based learning to be integrated into the student experience? Are there appropriate opportunities for meaningful work-based learning/study abroad, related to the objectives of the course and any professional or regulatory requirements? Are they assessed at the assigned level? Is there adequate preparation for, and monitoring of, placement/study abroad in accordance with the University's Guide to Good Practice for Placement/Study Abroad Policy? Are the learning outcomes further developed in subsequent study?
	Career Opportunities, Development and Progression	How do students gain the self-promotional and career management skills critical for securing and maintaining employment? 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? What support is provided to all students, including non-traditional entrants, to maximise their career potential?
COMMENTS		
B2	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)? Are the programme learning outcomes written at the final level of the award? Are they correctly mapped in the matrix? (Detailed comments on specific module outcomes, assessment methods and criteria should be made under 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 the course regulations in section B3?
COMMENTS		
B3	Regulations	(Either full set(s) or a link to the standard template; a statement of specific requirements and proposed departures are provided.) Do course regulations accord with the requirements of the University's award regulations? (ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice under Regulations)

		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.)	
		Do qualifications proposed for accreditation of prior learning/exemption match the content and level of the modules in question?	
		Are there modules in which the threshold standard must be met in both assessment elements? Is this reasonable, e.g. core modules?	
		Are any departures from University regulations proposed? Are they appropriate?	
COMMENTS			
B4	Module Descriptions (For each module) CHERP has developed guidance on module design, including writing learning outcomes, reading lists, assessment briefs, criteria and rubrics. ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development	Does the module title adequately reflect the content? Is the credit level properly assigned? Is it reflected in the outcomes? Do the taught modules meet the University's acceptable sizes (any multiples of 5 from 10 credit points)? Has a sound rationale been given for modules smaller than 20 credit points (a curriculum design principle)?	
		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 and independent study?	
		Is there a clear relationship between module rationale, aims and learning outcomes and those of the course?	
		Are the design and organisation of the curriculum effective in promoting student learning and achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the fulfilment of Graduate Qualities and the Student Experience Principles including employability, global citizenship, education for sustainable development, internationalisation (see B1.1, 1.7)?	
		Does the curriculum embed the development of academic skills (including learning to learn in higher education initial enquiring developed?) as an integral and integrated part of the first year (full-time) as a minimum? Are study skills explicitly assessed in accordance with University policy?	
		Are the learning and teaching and assessment methods appropriate to the intended learning outcomes at the level of the module?	
		Is the curriculum 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?	
		In an Honours degree in accordance with University expectation, is there a sustained project or dissertation module? Are the arrangements for project/dissertation supervision adequate?	
		Do the specific assessment criteria meet the University's generic level criteria as stated in the Assessment Handbook?	
	Course teams upload in a supplementary document assessment rubrics for each module.	Is the assessment weighting between coursework and examination appropriate? Is the rationale for different assessment weightings between modules sound? Are there more than two items of assessment? (An item may include more than one component (such as in a portfolio) but the overall item will have a single mark.) Has a case been made to depart from this curriculum design principle? Is sufficient information provided about the forms of assessment (eg duration and format of examination, length of assignment, summary assessment criteria/ marking scheme)? Is there equity and consistency in assessment, taking account of the University's workload equivalence guide for word counts (2018)? There should be approximately 2000 words (or equivalent) per 10 credit points. 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?	
		Where a word limit is set, do penalties follow University's policy (2018)?	
		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 modules are wholly or mostly assessed by group work.
		What are the arrangements for moderation and external examining of work-based learning/placement?
		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: RESOURCES		
C1	Physical	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?
		Is there a renewal/updating policy for equipment?
		Comment on the general appearance/condition of buildings and classrooms. Are there adequate study facilities for students?
COMMENTS		
C2 C2.1	Staff Summary and CVs ulster.ac.uk/cherp/academic-development	Are the staff sufficiently qualified and experienced to deliver the course successfully at its qualification level? Is there appropriate expertise? Is there evidence of research or scholarship in staff profiles?
		Are the staff numbers adequate? What is the balance between full-time and part-time staff? Will part-time contracts allow sufficient time to undertake expected duties?
		What arrangements are there for induction and mentoring of new staff? Have all recently appointed teaching staff received academic induction in line with University policy? Is there sound leadership in the course/subject and module teams? Are you confident that the staff can work together as an effective team?
		Is there adequate technical, administrative and other support staff?
		Is there a staff development plan? Will it contribute to the enhancement of teaching? What use is made of Peer Observation and Peer-Supported Review? How many staff have undertaken the University's Postgraduate Certificate and/or MEd in Higher Education Practice or are otherwise qualified in teaching in higher education?
COMMENTS		
C2.2	Summary matrix (revalidation)	Does the matrix match the information in module descriptions?
COMMENTS		
C2.3	Part-time staff, PTAs and recognised teachers	Is adequate support provided for postgraduate teaching assistants and demonstrators, part-time lecturers and recognised teachers and their integration into the team?
COMMENTS		
INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATION		
Joint courses or networks		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 co-ordinators built into a calendar of events; identification of lead module co-ordinators; possible meeting of module teams; common external examiner(s); internal cross-moderation; common timing for shared examinations; common examination board as permitted by University; co-ordination of revisions; consideration of student views across all partners; common template for course handbook.
COMMENTS		
DOCUMENTATION		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? Have assessment rubrics been provided?

[Supplement for Foundation degrees not included.]

Academic Office
July 2020

Appendix 11

COURSE EVALUATION DOCUMENT (INTERNAL PROVISION)

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION (SUBJECT AND PROGRAMME CONTEXT)	A	Introduction (Subject and Programme Context)
		Title page *to identify provision* (*in accordance with template*)
		Course/Subject Committee membership *(also identify members of course/subject planning committee)*
		• A brief summary of the rationale, origins and (if applicable) relationship with other courses in the School/Faculty/subject
		• Projected intakes for next five years with minimum/maximum cohort numbers with a brief commentary on market research including international markets where relevant
		• Contextualised Research and Analysis – to include how standards and quality indicators inform curriculum (re) design
		• Stakeholder Engagement – to include a brief summary of consultation with e.g. PSRBs, employers, alumni, students; and
		   o Identification of graduate qualities
		   o A brief commentary on academic excellence and research-based teaching which shows how discipline research, impact and professional activity of the course team inform the programme design
		• A summary of revisions (revalidation only) and innovations in programme design based on the analysis from contextualised research, stakeholder engagement and past enhancements

SECTION B: THE PROGRAMME(S) PROGRAMME DESIGN COMMENTARIES	B1	Brief Commentaries differentiated by subject, course, level, campus, institution, as appropriate, on the following matters, related to University and Faculty/institution policies and strategies: • Subject/Course philosophy agreed by the team • Course structure(s), academic progression and internal coherence and opportunities for student choice within the programme(s). Transfer to and from programmes • Student support and guidance, induction, development of study skills • Information literacy skills and digital capabilities • Learning and teaching strategy - to include key approaches and delivery methods • Assessment strategy and exemplar assessment schedule(s) and arrangements for feedback • Employability and enterprise – to showcase examples of effective practice e.g. curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular, work-based learning, outward mobility
PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION(S)	B2	Programme Specification(s) (*For each course or undergraduate honours degree subject (with information relating to each strand), a summary statement of its main features and learning outcomes in accordance with standard template.*)
PROGRAMME REGULATIONS	B3	Regulations (*in accordance with standard template.*) *A link to the standard template with a statement of specific requirements and proposed departures or set(s) may be provided.*
MODULE DESCRIPTIONS	B4	Module descriptions *(in accordance with standard format.)* *See the ICDF Module Design Planner. Modules are indexed and grouped by level automatically. Any separate short-course module descriptions should be uploaded in a supplementary document.*
SECTION C: RESOURCES available to the course(s)/subject	C1	Resources (physical) Specialist rooms/facilities/equipment/resources required beyond the standard provision should be clearly identified and detailed. Library resources should specifically identify whether they are already held by the Library. If not, the sub-librarian should be consulted. For revalidation, dedicated resources for particular courses should be clearly identified.
	C2	Resources (staff) Summary statement and brief CVs for all staff contributing to the subject unit (with particular reference to more recent activities.) *(CVs should be no longer than one or two pages each. These staff form the course or subject committees.)* For revalidation, a summary matrix indicating which staff contribute to which courses or subject strands should be provided. Information on the use of part-time lecturers, postgraduate teaching assistants and demonstrators, and recognised teachers.
IN ADDITION: 'Curriculum Design at Ulster' is provided centrally to the panel; external examiner reports for the last two academic years are also provided to the revalidation panel. Assessment rubrics for all modules should be uploaded as a supporting document by the team.		

TEMPLATE FOR MODULE DESCRIPTION

A summary of headings is given on this page:

MODULE TITLE

MODULE CODE

EFFECTIVE FROM

MODULE LEVEL   3, 4, 5 or 6 for sub-degree and undergraduate modules; 7(or 6) for postgraduate taught modules

CREDIT POINTS

PREREQUISITE(S)

COREQUISITE(S)

MODULE INSTANCE(S)

Location	Semester	Module Coordinator	Teaching Staff

HOURS   Indicate total notional student effort hours and division between lectures, seminars, tutorials, practicals, private study etc (10 hours = 1 credit point)

TOTAL EFFORT HOURS   This is the number of credit points multiplied by 10. The total of effort hours detailed above must match this figure.

ACADEMIC SUBJECT   as required for module database

RATIONALE   State the general purpose of the module in the context of the subject area as a whole

AIMS   State the educational aims of the module

LEARNING OUTCOMES   State the knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities whose acquisition a successful student should be able to demonstrate

CONTENT   Ensure that the content relates to the aims and intended learning outcomes of the module

LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS   Specify the methods to be used

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK   Specify the methods to be used with examples as appropriate

Give the distribution of marks between
% Coursework   % Examination

READING LIST   Divide into required and recommended reading to include Author, Year, *Title*, Place of Publication, Publisher

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Up to 480 characters (for use in module database and online prospectus)

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

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 in particular the curriculum and its delivery. 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 or submit comments electronically to: …………………@ulster.ac.uk Academic Office, University of Ulster, Cromore Road, Coleraine, BT52 1SA.

Name: ……………………………………………   *Date:* …………………

Position: ……………………………………………

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1   INITIAL OVERVIEW

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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

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

Date

AGENDA and PROGRAMME

1   **MEMBERSHIP**

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

In Attendance:

2   **GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION PANELS**

To receive a copy of the Guidelines for Evaluation Panels (attached).

3   **SUBJECT BENCHMARK STANDARDS**

To receive the UK Quality Code's Subject Benchmark Statement for [subject]

4   **COURSE SUBMISSION**

To receive for information 'Curriculum Design at Ulster'.

To receive preliminary comments from members (CA7, CA8 reports).

To receive reports from central University departments on Library, IT and digital learning matters.

To note the assessment rubrics for each module.

To discuss the course submission, and to consider inter alia:

Rationale, projected intakes, standards and quality, outcomes of stakeholder engagement in respect of graduate qualities, academic excellence and research-based teaching
Innovations
Course philosophy
Course structure and coherence
Student support and guidance and the development of study skills, information literacy and digital capabilities
Learning and teaching and assessment strategies and methods, and exemplar assessment schedule and arrangements for feedback
Employability and enterprise
Programme specification and module descriptions
Regulations
Physical resources
Staff resources

5   **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

To consider conclusions on standards and recommendations regarding approval.

OUTLINE PROGRAMME OF EVALUATION MEETING (internal provision)

9.30 am – 10.15 am	**Introductions and Tour of Facilities* (if required)**

10.15 am – 11.00 am   **Private meeting of Panel**

To note the agenda and to identify matters to be discussed with a) the Faculty Senior Management Team and b) the Course Planning Committee.

11.00 am - 11.30 am   **Meeting with (Associate) Dean, (Associate) Head of School and Chair of Course Planning Committee**

To consider how the proposal fits within the Faculty's course provision and to discuss such matters as the Faculty and School learning and teaching strategies, staffing and other resources.

11.30 am - 1.15 pm   **Meeting with Course Planning Committee**

To discuss the course submission (see main agenda).

1.15 pm - 1.45 pm   **Lunch** *(Panel only)*

1.45 pm - 3.00 pm   **Further Meeting with Course Planning Committee (if necessary)**

3.00 pm - 3.30 pm   **Private meeting of the Panel**

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

To confirm the qualification level of the course.
To confirm the credit value and level of modules.
To confirm course regulations.

To finalise the Panel's conclusions and recommendations as follows:

a)   whether the course should be approved and the minimum and maximum cohort sizes;

b)   conditions of approval, if any;

c)   recommendations for further consideration;

d)   the date by which a response should be received.

3.30 pm - 3.45 pm   **Meeting with (Associate) Dean, (Associate) Head of School and Chair of Course Planning Committee**

To communicate the Panel's conclusions and recommendations.

*May not involve the whole panel.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER   **FORM CA8**

COURSE EVALUATION/SUBJECT UNIT REVALIDATION

INSPECTION OF PHYSICAL RESOURCES REPORT   **FORM CA8a)**

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 new external courses/locations the University's central departments will provide detailed reports 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.	

Academic Office
July 2016