

**AIDE-MEMOIRE FOR EVALUATION AND REVALIDATION**

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

The questions and prompts are set out in the order of presentation of validation documentation. They supplement the topics identified in the Guidelines for evaluation and revalidation panels. **They are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.** Some questions are those used by QAA academic reviewers and draw on chapters of the *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. All will assist course/subject teams in preparing their documentation.

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

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| <b>SECTION A: INTRODUCTION</b>             |  |   |
| A  | INTRODUCTION   | This section is essentially contextual. 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 subject/course aims and objectives fit with the University’s strategic aims and objectives? Does it satisfy the general criteria identified in the Guidelines? If a course is only available full-time, would part-time mode be feasible?  |
| COMMENTS                                   |  |   |
| <b>SECTION B: COURSE/SUBJECT PROVISION</b> |  |   |
| B1   | Programme Specification(s)   | Are these clearly and fully presented? Is there a clear relationship between the intended learning outcomes and the aims of the course/subject strand (including for any proposed pre-final exit awards)? Do the learning and teaching and assessment methods relate to the outcomes? Are the programme learning outcomes written at the final level of the award? Are they correctly mapped in the matrix? (Detailed comments on the specific outcomes, assessment methods and criteria should be made under B2 and B4.)<br><br>Is the summary information on course structure consistent with that in the rest of the documentation?<br><br>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                                   |  |   |
| B2   | Commentaries   |   |
| B2.1                                       | Curriculum design process.<br>REVALIDATION - recent and proposed changes                           | Has the team’s approach to curriculum design and the Curriculum Design Framework been described?<br><br>Have recent changes to the course/subject strand been clearly explained and justified? Is the rationale for proposed changes clear and are the changes appropriate?   |
| B2.2                                       | Structure, progression, Coherence, Choice (within the programme)<br><br>Structure diagrams, tables | 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?<br><br>If needed (multiple entry points), 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  |

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|          |  | <p>structure and workload balanced and reasonable? Has a sound rationale been given for modules smaller than 20 credit points?</p> <p>How flexible is the part-time mode? Are the modules shared with other programmes?</p>  |
| COMMENTS |  |  |
| B2.3     | Transfer (to and from other programmes of study and opportunities for progression to further study)  | <p>Are adequate and meaningful opportunities for transfer to and from other programmes of study provided?</p> <p>Has the articulation been clearly addressed?</p>  |
| COMMENTS |  |  |
| B2.4     | Work-based learning, supervised work experience (placement) [study abroad where appropriate] (See also placement modules and Employability.) | <p>Are there appropriate opportunities for meaningful work-based learning/study abroad, related to the objectives of the course and any professional or regulatory requirements? Is it assessed at its 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? What are the arrangements for moderation and external examining? How are the specific requirements of students with disabilities addressed?</p>   |
| COMMENTS |  |  |
| B2.5     | <p>Learning and Teaching and Assessment (including support for students)</p> <p><u>Learning and Teaching</u></p>                             | <p>Does this section provide an analytical overview of approaches which would demonstrate the effectiveness of strategies in promoting student learning?</p> <p>Is there evidence of compliance with University, Faculty and School policies and priorities in relation to learning and teaching, in particular the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and the guidelines for first year teaching, the development of Graduate Qualities and the Principles of the Student Learning Experience?</p> <p>Are the strategies effective in promoting student learning and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes?</p> <p>Are the learning and teaching methods varied? In undergraduate courses are they responsive to the range of entry qualifications? Do the induction and transition processes meet the expectations of the University's guidance? How are issues of retention addressed? Are the arrangements for induction effective? Do they include self-assessment skills?</p> <p>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 it effective?</p> <p>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? How does induction and the first year curriculum support transition? Are there opportunities for students to reflect on and take responsibility for their own learning? Is there evidence of compliance with University policy on Personal Development Planning (under review)?</p> <p>What approaches 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?</p> <p>How is digital literacy, a Student Experience Principle, achieved?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>How are the requirements of students with disabilities and others with particular needs, as recognised under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order, addressed?</p> |

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|          |   | For undergraduate healthcare and social work courses, are the DHSSPS guidelines (2007) for Safe, High Quality Health and Social Care in Curricula addressed?  |
|          | <p><u>Assessment</u></p> <p>Note that the course teams are expected to provide an exemplar assessment schedule to show in each semester or year the types of assessment, weighting and the indicative timing and submission deadline for tasks.</p> | <p>Is there evidence of compliance with the University/Faculty/School policies in relation to assessment?</p> <p>Is there a range of assessment methods? Is the range appropriate and the load equitable and consistent? Are they appropriate to the learning outcomes? Will they be effective in judging achievement? Do the assessment criteria enable examiners to distinguish between different categories of achievement (mark bands) for the level of the module and the award?</p> <p>Does the assessment strategy have an adequate formative function in developing student abilities? Does the assessment strategy in year 1 of undergraduate courses explicitly promote the effective adoption of 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?</p> <p>Does the assessment strategy give confidence that achievement of the intended learning outcomes will be tested and measured?</p> <p>Does the strategy provide adequate safeguards of validity and reliability and fairness?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Is best practice, as referenced in the University's Assessment Handbook, adopted? What approaches are taken to such matters as moderation (including for placement), double marking and anonymous marking of coursework?</p> <p>Do the assessment criteria meet the University's generic level criteria as stated in the Assessment Handbook?</p> <p>Are the deadlines for submission of assignments across the course manageable for students?</p> <p>What feedback arrangements are in place? Are they clearly articulated at course and module levels? Are they timely? Are they appropriate and effective for the type of assessment and student group?</p> <p>Is there evidence that the University's Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning are being addressed?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Are all learning outcomes equally achievable by disabled students? Guidance is available at <a href="http://ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/119815/Revised-SENDO-Staff-Guidance-Booklet-2016.pdf">ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/119815/Revised-SENDO-Staff-Guidance-Booklet-2016.pdf</a>.</p> |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.6     | Research/Scholarship informed curriculum and teaching   | The Learning and Teaching Strategy expects courses to be underpinned by current and appropriate discipline-specific and pedagogic research and scholarship. Is there evidence of this? A Student Experience Principle expects students to develop skills of critical enquiry.   |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.7     | Creativity, Innovation and Good Practice  | Is there evidence of creativity and innovation in curriculum design and delivery?<br><br>This should take account, as appropriate, of course, school, faculty, University and national initiatives. Consider engagement with the University's Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice and the Higher Education Academy.   |
| COMMENTS |   |   |

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| B2.8     | Standards   | <p>What has the team's approach been to fulfilling the expectations about standards set out in the relevant subject benchmark statement? Are these met?</p> <p>Does each course meet the criteria for its associated award as defined in the University's qualifications and credit framework, reflecting the specification in the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications?</p> <p>Are the relevant PSRB requirements addressed? If applicable, is fitness to practise achieved? Have any concerns raised by external examiners been addressed?</p> <p>If necessary, have the reasons for particular entry standards, requirements or competences been explained? (See also B3 regulations.)</p>                                 |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.9     | Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies           | Are there appropriate working relations between the course/subject team and the relevant PSRBs? Do they inform course design and development?   |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.10    | Employability   | Has the team adequately addressed the points in the University statement on Employability in relation to the following: (B2.10.1 – 6)? (For revalidation, has the online Employability Development Opportunities Review Tool (EDORT) been used? – available in Employability web pages through the Staff Portal.)   |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.10.1  | Graduate Qualities and Principles of Student Experience | Has the team articulated its approach to meeting the University's expectations as set out in the Statement of Graduate Qualities and the Principles underpinning the Student Learning Experience? 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?   |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.10.2  | Widening Participation                                  | What support is provided to all students, including non-traditional entrants, to maximise their career potential?   |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.10.3  | Work-based Learning                                     | In Honours degrees, is provision made for work-based learning for all students? How does this help students improve their employability skills?   |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.10.4  | Personal Development Planning                           | How does Personal Development Planning support the development of key qualities for employability and career development, as well as supporting subject-related learning? (Policy under review.)  |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.10.5  | Entrepreneurship Training                               | Has the team identified clearly its approach to how students will be able to achieve the specified learning outcomes? Are the skills associated with entrepreneurship closely aligned with employability? (Additional guidance from <a href="http://qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/enterprise-entrepreneurship-guidance.pdf">qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/enterprise-entrepreneurship-guidance.pdf</a> .)   |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B2.10.6  | Career Opportunities, Development and Progression       | Are student and employer needs (regionally, nationally and internationally) and, as appropriate, government policy on skills adequately reflected? How do students gain the self-promotional and career management skills aspects of employability critical for graduates securing and maintaining employment? Is there evidence that relevant and worthwhile careers will be available to new graduates? Will the course support the career progression of students currently in employment? Will there be sufficient opportunities for the projected cohort? Are there opportunities for further studies, within or outside the University? Has there been adequate consultation with employers, the professions and other interested bodies? |
| COMMENTS |   |   |
| B3       | Regulations   | <p>Do course regulations accord with the requirements of the University's award regulations? (<a href="http://ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice">ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice</a> under Regulations)</p> <p>Are there any specific admissions requirements (academic, experience, age or competence)? Are they justifiable? (For age or non-academic competence, take account of Employment Equality (Age) Regulation (NI) Order 2006 and SENDO.)</p> <p>Do qualifications proposed for accreditation of prior learning/exemption match the content and level of the modules in question?</p>  |

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|          |   | <p>Are there modules in which the threshold standard must be met in both assessment elements? Is this reasonable, eg core modules?</p> <p>Are any departures from University regulations proposed?</p>   |
| COMMENTS |   |  |
| B4       | <p>Modules<br/>(For each module)</p> <p>CHERP has developed guidance on module design, including writing learning outcomes, reading lists, assessment briefs, criteria and rubrics.</p> | <p>Does the module title adequately reflect the content? Is the credit level properly assigned? Is it reflected in the outcomes?</p> <p>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)?</p> <p>Do the credit points accord with the notional student effort hours (10 hours = 1 credit point)? Do the hours give an adequate breakdown between the different forms of teaching used and independent study?</p> <p>Is there a clear relationship between the module and course rationale, aims and learning outcomes?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Are the learning and teaching and assessment methods appropriate to the intended learning outcomes at the level of the module and the fulfilment of Graduate Qualities and the Student Experience Principles?</p> <p>Is the syllabus content appropriate for the objectives of the module and course? Will it encourage the achievement of the knowledge, understanding, skills and other qualities identified? Is it current and relevant? Is it informed by current research and scholarship (including the research interests of staff), the subject benchmarks, and any changes in the relevant occupational or professional requirements?</p> <p>In an Honours degree in accordance with University expectation, is there a sustained project or dissertation module? Are the arrangements for project/dissertation supervision adequate? Is work-based learning provided?</p> <p>Is the assessment weighting between coursework and examination appropriate? Is the rationale for different assessment weightings between modules sound?</p> <p>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 new curriculum design principle?</p> <p>Is sufficient information provided about the forms of assessment (eg duration and format of examination, length of assignment, summary assessment criteria/marketing 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?</p> <p>Where a word limit is set, do penalties follow University's policy (2018)?</p> <p>Does the assessment of group work ensure that individual student achievement is recognised? The University expects that at least 25% of each student's assessment result in group work is based on his/her individual contribution in modules contributing to a final award, and significantly more where modules are wholly or mostly assessed by group work.</p> <p>Are the reading lists and other sources of information appropriate? Are the texts current editions? Are they available in the Library? Are the texts appropriately identified as required or recommended reading? Is the amount of reading realistic?</p> |

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|                              |                             | Are opportunities exploited within course design and delivery for internationalising the curriculum and embedding an international dimension? How is this achieved? (See guidance at TLC/13/14 and the relevant Student Experience Principle and advice from International Department.)   |
| COMMENTS                     |                             |   |
| 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?<br><br>Is there a renewal/updating policy for equipment?<br><br>Comment on the general appearance/condition of buildings and classrooms. Are there adequate study facilities for students?   |
| COMMENTS                     |                             |   |
| C2                           | Staff and Staff Development | Are the staff sufficiently qualified and experienced to deliver the course successfully at its qualification level? Are the staff numbers adequate? What is the balance between full-time and part-time staff? Will part-time contracts allow sufficient time to undertake expected duties?<br><br>Is adequate support provided for postgraduate teaching assistants, demonstrators and part-time lecturers and recognised teachers and their integration into the team? What arrangements are there for induction and mentoring of new staff? Have all recently appointed teaching staff received academic induction in line with University policy? <a href="http://staffdev.ulster.ac.uk/">staffdev.ulster.ac.uk/</a> Is there sound leadership in the course/subject and module teams? Are you confident that the staff can work together as an effective team?<br><br>Is there evidence of research or scholarship in staff profiles?<br><br>Is there adequate technical, administrative and other support staff?<br><br>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 in Higher Education Practice (or its predecessor), or are otherwise qualified in teaching in higher education? Is there evidence of participation in curriculum development (eg Higher Education Academy projects)?<br><br>Is there engagement with the Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice and the Office for Digital Learning? |
| 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?   |
| COMMENTS                     |                             |   |

[Supplement for Foundation degrees not included.]