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? (Note New Subject Benchmark Statements incorporate the following: equality, diversity and inclusivity; education for sustainable development; the requirements of disabled students and enterprise and entrepreneurship.) 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: PSRBs Graduate Attributes	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? Are there appropriate working relations between the course/subject team and the relevant PSRBs? Has the team identified appropriate attributes and skills which meet the University's broad expectations as set out in the Graduate Attributes Framework 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) projects or with the University's Learning Enhancement Directorate?
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 Curriculum Enhancement and Approval, Centre for Digital Learning Enhancement, 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)? Which SDGs does the course address? (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 and are they inclusive by design? 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 key 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 Attributes? 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 Centre for Digital Learning Enhancement 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? How does your programme/s promote the equitable, ethical and inclusive use of AI for assessment to benefit students? Are inclusive assessments and feedback methodologies the norm? 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?

	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.	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? 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 attributes 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 Graduate 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? (**www.ulster.ac.uk/learningenhancement/ccea/regulatory-framework**) 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) Guidance has been developed on module design, including writing learning outcomes, reading lists, assessment briefs, criteria and rubrics. https://www.ulster.ac.uk/learningenhancement/cppe/resources/assessment-and-feedback	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 Graduate Attributes including employability, global citizenship, education for sustainable development, internationalisation (see B1.1, 1.7)? Which of the UN SDGs and Graduate Attributes are aligned to and supported in the module? 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?

	Course teams upload assessment rubrics as a supplementary document in CMS (appears in the rear of the main document).	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 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 (e.g. 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 www.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 for a substantial proportion of modules?
COMMENTS		

[Supplement for Foundation degrees not included.]