Evaluation and Revalidation 2022/23

Briefing Seminar

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ulster.ac.uk

Programme

- Welcome and context
- Evaluation and revalidation
- Competition and Markets Authority Guidance
- Integrated curriculum design framework
- Experiences from both sides of the table
- Internal panel member
- Revalidation Unit Coordinator
- Faculty Partnership Manager
- Student perspective

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Standards Assurance

External

• National benchmarks – the Quality Code

• New subject benchmarks - the first which will incorporate consideration of how practice within disciplines addresses wider social goals, comprising:

•equality, diversity and inclusivity

•education for sustainable development

•the requirements of disabled students

•enterprise and entrepreneurship.

• PSRBs

Internal

• Committees

• Rules and regulations

• Approval processes

• Staff appointment and development

• Monitoring (CAQE)

• External examiner

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University Context Strategic Plan

– Excellence in Teaching

… provide students with a high-quality, challenging and rewarding learning experience … equips them with knowledge, skills, and confidence 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

The student experience will be enhanced through … well-designed, flexible, inclusive, relevant programmes and curricula.

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University Context Strategic Plan

- Teaching Objectives

• Define unique characteristics of Ulster graduate and 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

• Embrace the opportunities in emergent technologies to facilitate and complement teaching and learning practices

• Support and develop staff to deliver excellence in teaching and learning

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External Review

- Institutional Audit 2010

• QAA report published in July 2010 • Points for Commendation www.qaa.ac.uk - reviews and reports

Points for Commendation "… the course approval system is robust and rigorous whilst allowing innovation and creativity." "… the focus on academic standards is manifest …" "… comprehensive information … thorough reports … meticulous scrutiny … the Academic Office adds considerable value to the process.

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Internal Audit

- Course validation processes 2011
- Accreditation processes 2012
- Standards assurance and quality management 2015
- Substantial Confidence
- Annual Academic Assurance Report

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Programme Approval

- Aims of evaluation and revalidation
- Revalidation Units and Cycle
- Overview of revalidation process
- Panel membership
- Papers
- The Meeting
- Documentation
- Issues raised by Panels
- Issues raised by students
- Key changes

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Purpose

EVALUATION:

- accords with the University's purpose and core strategic aims;
- academic structure and content appropriate;
- accords with the University's scheme of qualifications; modular structure; credit framework and general regulations for the award;
- standard and student workload comparable to those of other programmes nationally;
- resources sufficient;
- evidence of reasonable employment and progression opportunities.
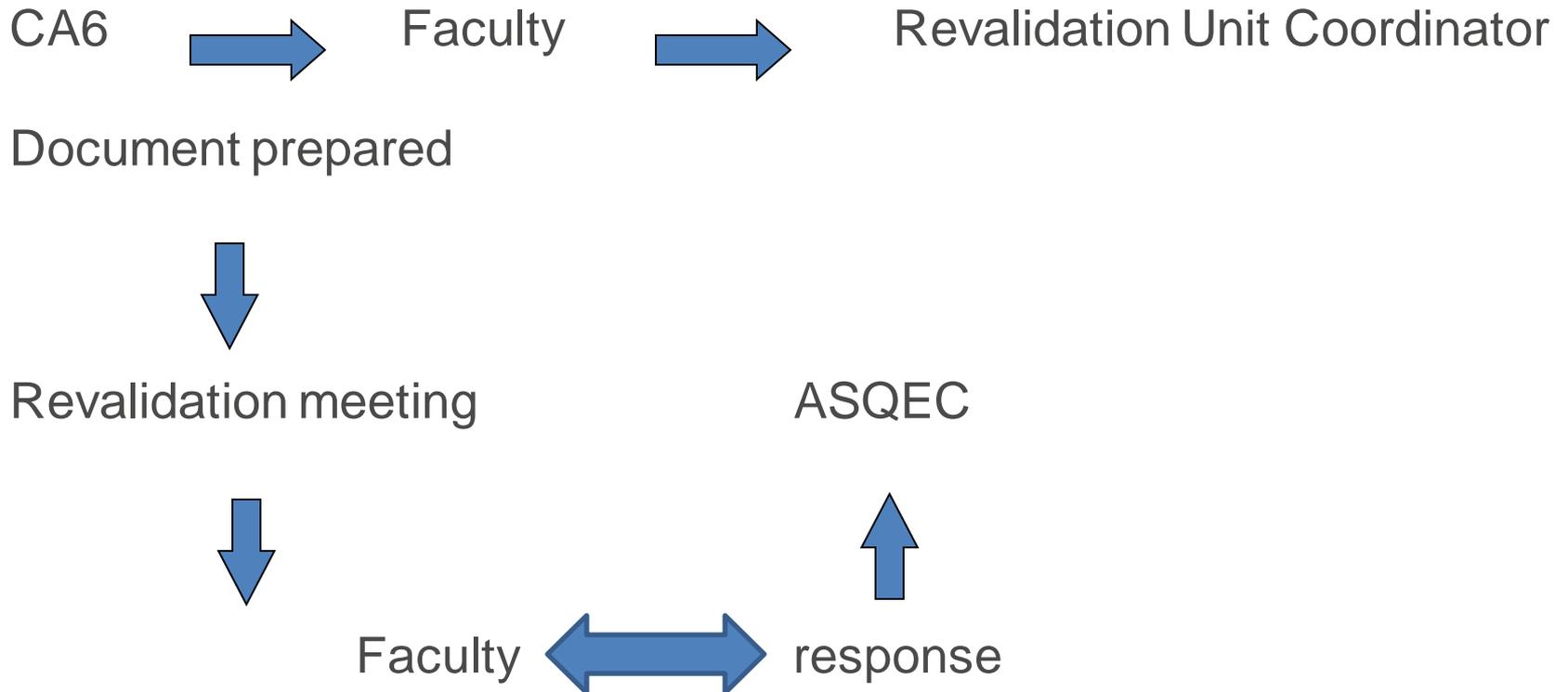
REVALIDATION:

- re-affirmation of standards
- continuing currency and relevance of curriculum to University's Aims

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Revalidation Units and Cycle

- Subject units

- Groupings of cognate programmes for the efficient organisation of the re-approval process

- Reflect discipline and/or campus, level (UG/PG)

- Revalidation course listing

- Five year cycle

- Units/sub-units allocated to a specific year within the cycle (related to period of approval)

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Revalidation Process

CA6 → Faculty → Revalidation Unit Coordinator

Document prepared

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Revalidation meeting   ASQEC

↓   ↑

Faculty ↔ response

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Panel membership

- Associate Dean or HoS

- Associate Dean (or nominee) (collaborative provision only)

- One internal University member

- One Students' Union/student representative (revalidation only)

- Two external members (subject experts)

- Industry/employer representative (optional except for Fdn degrees)

- PSRB representatives (joint events only)

- In Attendance: Secretary (Academic Office)

    Faculty Partnership Manager (collaborative provision)

Papers for the Meeting

- Handbook for Panel members

- Guidelines for panels

- Aide Memoire

- Curriculum Design at Ulster (internal provision)

- Agenda and programme

- Contextual information e.g. benchmark standards, external examiner reports

- Course/subject documentation

- CHERP commentary on assessment rubrics

- Preliminary comments - CA7 (panel members)

- CA4 form (collaborative provision)

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The Meeting

- Introductions and tour of facilities
    - specialist teaching facilities
- Private Panel session

    - to exchange opinions on the provision
    - to plan the conduct of the meeting
- Meeting with Senior Faculty Team

    - to discuss higher level strategic issues

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The Meeting contd.

- Meeting with Students (revalidation only)

    - students' opinions – what's good and what's not so good

- Meeting with Course Team(s)

    - to consider the provision in detail

- Private Meeting of Panel

    - to reach a decision on the provision

- Meeting with Senior Faculty Team

    - to feedback conclusions and recommendations

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Documentation

- Section A: Introduction (programme context)
  - A1 Rationale and origins
  - A2 Projected intakes
  - A3 Contextualised Research and Analysis (includes standards and quality reference points)
  - A4 Stakeholder engagement
  - A5 Revisions and innovations
- Section B: Course/Subject Provision
  - B1 Programme Design (Commentaries)
  - B2 Programme Specifications (CMS)
  - B3 Regulations (Academic Office templates)
  - B4 Module Descriptions (CMS)
- Section C: Resources
  - C1 Physical
  - C2 Staff
- Supplementary Material: Assessment Rubrics.

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B1 Programme Design (Brief Commentaries)

B1.1 Subject/Course Philosophy

Education for Sustainable Development including ethical internationalisation, fostering 'global citizens' .

B1.2 Course Structure(s)

Sructure diagram(s), development of graduate qualities, Academic Progression, Internal Coherence and Opportunities for Student Choice, Transfer to and from Programmes

B1.3 Student Support and Guidance, Induction, Development of Study Skills

Overall wellbeing strategy, community building, staff-student partnership: through induction processes , transition in, engagement with UUSU; discipline-based societies; community projects.

B1.4 Information Literacy Skills and Digital Capabilities

B1.5 Learning and Teaching Strategy

The key delivery methods used to engage students, use of innovative learning technologies.

B1.6 Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy for the programme(s), variety of methods, inclusive design, exemplar assessment schedule and arrangements for feedback.

B1.7 Employability and Enterprise

Examples of effective practice that you would like to showcase to the panel e.g. curricular, co-curricular, extra curricular, work-based learning, outward mobility

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Examples of Issues Raised by Panels

Recruitment and Marketing

- That consideration be given to addressing the international dimension of the programme and exploring the potential for a fully online provision;
- The Panel noted that the course document identified two pathways, in business and management and also technology, and asked that the Course Team consider if the pathways should be reflected in the main or exit awards and to also clarify the standing and operation of these pathways in the course document.
- Amend projected student intake numbers in line with discussions with the panel.

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Content, Structure and Standards

- Review the module learning outcomes across the programmes to ensure that these reflect the level of learning within the respective module. Particularly to ensure that the international focus of the module x is made explicit in the module narrative and content;

- Keep the narrative around Medical Humanities and Inter-professional Education (IPE) under review to ensure that they are threaded throughout the course and clearly articulated and experienced by students;

- That a robust editing of the module descriptions be undertaken to ensure consistency in presentation;

- That the digital skills students will learn and the tools to be used, and where they will be used, be more clearly demonstrated in the revised document;

- The Panel welcomed the Course Team's efforts to enhance the range of employer partnerships and, further to comments from students, considered that the Course Team should determine how it might re-invigorate existing and new partnerships to ensure that a high level of employer involvement (co-design, WBL delivery and assessment) is maintained;

- That those issues highlighted during discussions (and including the presentation) with the Panel regarding curriculum design in line with the 'Integrated Curriculum Design Framework' relating to the embedding of entrepreneurship/enterprise, sustainability, leadership and critical thinking and critical analysis skills be included in the revised documentation;

- That a rationale for keeping the 15 credit point module structure for the MSc programme is added to the document.

- That additional information be provided on the APL mapping process for level 4 exemption from the Honours degree to include an example of how decisions would be taken;

- In the absence of a dissertation/project module at level 6 in the Honours programme, review programme level learning outcome 'P1' (also included in the Graduate Certificate) which relates to the achievement of skills and knowledge acquired through the design, planning and execution of research.

Learning and Teaching

- Bring consistency to the inclusion of teaching methods, within the learning and teaching methods section of each module, specifically in relation to the delivery format/hours, in that these should be included across all modules or removed and, for example, be included in module booklets;
- That the theoretical and pedagogical aspects underpinning the programme are given a similar emphasis as employability skills acquisition;
- Review where reflective practice sits within the course, and how students gain the skills to be effective reflective learners;
- Articulate the balance between on-campus and on-line learning to applicants, stakeholders and staff to manage expectations of on-campus contact time (that may be subject to change as a result of the external environment);
- Keep under review the concept of an 'active learning' referenced in the programme Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy to ensure consistency of approach and support future proofing of the curriculum and skills development;
- The students felt that the use of PowerPoints with voice overs was not very interactive and that the Blackboard virtual learning environment was not always intuitive;
- As part of the Level 6 Research Paper module, to ensure that students are made aware of and exposed to primary research in some format;
- To clearly articulate in an appropriate form, where sustainable development goals are embedded through the modules, in both assessment and taught curriculum;
- To reflect as a Course Team about where appropriate team teaching might add value to the student experience;
- That peer learning opportunities be further enhanced through observation outside the student's specialism;
- That students be encouraged to embed learning, knowledge and technological applications into their own practices.

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Assessment and Feedback

- Keep the assessment strategy under review to avoid overloading for staff and students and for particular focus on the roll-out of progress testing;
- That an Assessment Schedule be included in the revised document to clearly show in each year the type of assessment, weighting and submission deadlines for work;
- That feedback arrangements and when formative feedback is provided to students to enable them to develop be clearly articulated;
- Review the assessment strategy for the course to ensure that students are not over-assessed and there is an underpinning, strategic approach to all types of assessment, formative and summative;
- Reconsider the assessment strategy and structure for the WBL modules (including the use of 2x20 credit modules and the professional project) to allow students to receive early formal feedback on performance, and separate out tasks;
- Keep under review the level of assessment across modules taking account of University policy detailed in the 'Assessment Workload Equivalence Guide';
- That the word count in the modules' assessments in the Programme is reviewed and aligned with the Integrated Curriculum Design Principles, and that a rationale is provided in the document if there are instances where the word count has not been revised;
- That modules which are recorded as having only one item of assessment be reviewed to ensure these are accurately recorded vis a vis the number of assessments within;
- To provide clear evidence of adherence to Ulster's Learning and Teaching policies and procedures and, in particular, in relation to Ulster's Policy on Group Work;
- To ensure a consistent approach to feedback to include details of both formative and summative feedback in all module descriptions;
- To add clarity into the course document around where word counts and equivalences depart from University guidelines and the curriculum design principles;
- To ensure that all assessment requirements are made clear to students and in a timely manner including in the student handbook;
- To ensure that the assessment rubrics are clear and consistent across modules;
- To consider using recorded feedback (audio/visual) as a means of providing students with the opportunity to reflect further.

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Support for Students

- Review the Fitness to Practise policy in light of Panel comments set against University Ordinances within the context of the programme;

- Set out in a flowchart academic and pastoral support for students and when this is linked or unlinked with academic staff;

- That the revised document clearly shows the pastoral support in place and how this is implemented from the start of the programme;

- The panel noted that competing workload priorities was a significant matter for students and considered that the Course Team continues its close engagement with students on workload issues ;

- That the course team strengthen the regular formal mechanisms to gather and consider student feedback, particularly during placement;

- That the course team consider further ways to consolidate the sense of cohort identity for students during placement;

- That consideration be given to ways in which low level concerns can be proactively and formally sought while students are on placement, from supervisors;

- That greater attention be paid to the ways in which the student voice can be acknowledged, documented and incorporated within formal cycles of feedback and improvement;

- Consider introduction of student wellbeing sessions and utilisation of USU training for class representatives.

Examples of Issues Raised by Students

<u>Organisation and Delivery</u>

- The students stated that they preferred face-to-face learning but found the support from their tutors during remote learning to be very good. Emails were sent out after online classes by the Course Director to find out how the students had found the online learning experience. The students appreciated being asked if everything was going ok with them. The students informed the Panel that the pastoral care support was excellent;

- Off-campus experience – practical skills? In the absence of practice, provided with videos, data etc. Motivated to engage in greater study of the scientific methodology behind the practice, being more inquisitive, discovering more through self-learning. Did not feel disadvantaged being off-campus;

- At the onset of the pandemic students felt there was a lack of communication and were of the opinion that more communication from staff during placement could be helpful;

- Support during placement year could be improved – only had contact from the placement tutor "once, maybe twice" during the year. Had not met the tutor "before or since";

- Some students felt under pressure from both working from home and studying from home;

- Staff were very approachable and were available as required for any issues but the Panel noted from discussions that clarity and formality was needed around their main point of contact;

- In relation online delivery, the fact that a number of different platforms were used rather than just one standard, proved challenging for students. Students advocated the streamlining of online platforms to have one standard platform for all online delivery.(HTMI)

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Assessment and Feedback

- Conflicting advice between workplace and Ulster staff regarding assessment requirements (word count for written assignments);
- One negative comment was that on occasion, students' marks were not posted online (which was beneficial to students). (CAFRE);
- The assessment weighting of only 15% for the practical event piece in the XXX module was raised – students felt that this did not equate to the time and effort involved for such a low percentage of the overall module;
- Students noted some disparity of assessment weighting across modules which could be a challenge, although it was manageable;
- Some students noted that they were not given adequate notice for some assessments and for multiple articles to be submitted

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Resources

- The students described inconsistency in experiences while on placement in terms of level of engagement and quality of interaction with the supervisor, as well as technical aspects such as IT access which was being offered on some placements but not on others;
- Library: Insufficient sockets (for charging) in quiet areas. Extended opening hours in the evening would be welcomed (current closing time 9.00 pm).
- Catering facilities "wound down" from late afternoon";
- There was an ongoing issue in relation to the availability of library resources, in particular e-books and a wider range of texts and journals. Students sought increased availability of e-books and a wider range of texts and journals over and above the main prescribed books currently available;
- Access to the studio space was severely lacking for those with a physical disability, not least the very heavy doors and the space in which to move around once inside;
- Physical resources on campus were generally adequate but a lack of sockets for students to plug in their own devices had been raised.

Key Changes

2017/18

- Curriculum Design Principles

  - Standardisation of 20 point module size

  - Typically no more than 4 learning outcomes and two assessments

  - Guide to student assessment load equivalence

2018/19

- Curriculum Design Framework

- New degree and integrated Masters classification algorithm

2019/20

- Assessment rubrics included in documents

2020/21

- Whilst Resourcing Plans will not be required for all programmes to undergo revalidation in 2021/22 there is an expectation of robust examination of courses to go forward for revalidation- dashboard.

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Academic Office Web-site:
http://www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice

- Assessment Handbook
- Committees (Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee/Academic Planning Advisory Group)
- Course and Subject Management
- Documents and forms
- External Examiners
- Policies (A – Z)
- Programme Approval / Revision
- Regulations templates
- Regulatory Framework
- Staff
- Standards

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