

University of Suffolk

PROCEDURE FOR THE RE-APPROVAL OF EXISTING COURSES

1. Introduction to the course re-approval process

1.1

agree, on the recommendation of the course team, that it would be beneficial for them to be able to transfer on to the revised course. If any students remain on the original course, a Course Withdrawal Form should be completed to ensure appropriate oversight of

relation to resource lists within module specifications. As a result of this review, feedback will be provided to the course team with suggestions for improvement or enhancement where appropriate.

- 4.6 Should this review raise significant concerns, the Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee will consult with the relevant Dean of School (or Head of Higher Education within partner institutions) and the Chair of the re-approval panel to decide upon an appropriate course of action, which may include cancellation of the event should the documentation have significant omissions and/or require significant revisions that cannot be undertaken within an appropriate timeframe.
- 4.7 A final version of all relevant documentation must be submitted to the Validation and Exams team (validation@uos.ac.uk) in an agreed electronic format at least three weeks in advance of the re-approval event. A longer timescale may be required when professional / accrediting bodies are involved.
- 4.8 For the re-approval event, a briefing pack is sent to members of the re-approval panel in hard copy at least two weeks in advance of the event. The briefing pack typically includes:
 - a list of panel members
 - an agenda for the event
 - guidance notes for panel members
 - course re-approval document and course handbook
 - travel information for relevant panel members
 - fee claim forms / guidance for external panel members
- 4.9 All other documentation is provided electronically via a file sharing site.

5. Course re-approval panels

- 5.1 The course re-approval panel includes a range of representatives who are able to judge the continuing academic integrity of the course in relation to relevant internal and external reference points. Within the panel as a whole there should be sufficient understanding of the subject matter and academic context to enable the panel to make a sound judgement. Panel members should not have been involved in the ongoing development and delivery of the course. Panel membership is subject to approval by the Chair of the Quality Committee.
- 5.2 Panel membership for re-approval of courses within the University typically comprises:
 - Chair (a member of University of Suffolk academic or academic

- 5.12 Where relevant, external panel members may also need to satisfy additional criteria set by PSRBs.
- 5.13 The appointment as an external panel member of anyone in the following categories or circumstances is not permissible:
- a) anyone who has been involved in the design, ongoing development or delivery of the course under review, or is intended to be involved in future course delivery
 - b) a member of the governing body of the University of Suffolk or its partner institutions
 - c) a current employee of the University of Suffolk or its partner institutions
 - d) a current or former external examiner appointed to a course at the University of Suffolk or its partner institutions, unless a period of five years has elapsed since the appointment ended
 - e) anyone teaching on a course where a current employee of the University of Suffolk or its partner institutions is appointed as the external examiner for the course
 - f) anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of the team involved in designing and delivering the course
 - g) anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative activities (including research) with a member of staff involved in the design or delivery of the course
 - h) former staff or students of the University of Suffolk or its partner institutions, unless a period of five years has elapsed since their employment ended or they completed their studies
 - i) anyone associated with the sponsorship of current or future students on the course or in a position to significantly influence the employment of such students.

Responsibilities of the panel

- 5.14 It is the duty of the re-approval panel to:

critically examine the re-approval documentation and undertake discussion with the course team, students and other relevant stakeholders in order to make a collective judgement as to the continuing quality and academic standard of the course(s) and to ensure that the award(s) conferred by the University of Suffolk are of an equivalent standard to comparable awards

decide, under the delegated authority of Senate, whether the course(s) should be re-approved.

- 5.15 A checklist setting out guidance for re-approval panel members (including a separate guide for student panel members) is available on the course approval, modification and review pages on the University website. These are sent out to all panel members with the re-approval documentation.

6. Course re-approval event

- 6.1 A course re-approval event normally takes place over a full day. In addition to private meetings of the re-approval panel, a meeting with students registered or previously registered on the course and with the course team form key parts of the event. Normally, a tour of facilities and specialist resources is included. An example of a typical agenda for a re-approval event may be found on the course approval, modification and review pages on the University website.
- 6.2 In exceptional circumstances, the re-approval event may be held virtually. In such cases, steps should be taken to ensure that a virtual tour is provided to panel members for courses where students require access to specialist facilities and/or resources. The event should also provide opportunities for the panel to meet virtually with members of the course team and student representatives.
- 6.3 The course team meeting with the panel should consist of key members of staff involved in the delivery of the course, normally up to a maximum of ten (with the approval of the re-approval panel Chair required if this maximum is to be exceeded).
- 6.4 During a private meeting of the panel at the start of the re-approval event, the Chair will:
- explain the purpose and nature of the event (including confirming the course titles, awards and modes of study to be considered by the panel)
 - invite panel members to introduce themselves

 - explain course re-approval process, the responsibilities of the panel and the possible outcomes of the event.
- 6.5 The Chair will then invite panel members to identify lines of enquiry suggested by the course documentati
meetings with students and with the course team, and to identify any particular questions relevant to the tour of facilities / resources.

Meeting between the panel and students

- 6.6 The agenda for the panel's meeting with students will typically include:
- introductions of all present, noting the course / mode / level of study of each student

 - general perceptions of changes they might wish to be made to enhance their course
 - perceptions of learning, teaching and assessment activities (including contact time and independent study, group learning, marking and feedback)
 - experiences of work-based learning (where relevant)
 - general course organisation, communication and management
 - perceptions of available facilities and resources, including teaching accommodation, library resources, IT resources and the VLE

what students intend to do after the course and how well-prepared they feel.

- 6.7 Guidance for students involved in this meeting is available on the course approval, modification and review pages on the University website.

Meeting between the panel and the course team

- 6.8 For the meeting with the course team, the Chair is encouraged to group issues and questions raised so that discussions follow a focused sequence, normally covering:
- the context, philosophy and rationale
 - course structure, aims and learning outcomes
 - learning and teaching strategies and rationale (including use of technology-enhanced learning and online learning, the development of an inclusive curriculum and strategies for supporting progression and graduate employability)
 - recruitment and admissions (including recognition of prior learning)
 - assessment strategy and coherence across modules
 - questions relating to specific modules
 - the student experience (including support mechanisms)
 - staffing and resources
 - course management and arrangements for ongoing quality enhancement
 - the student handbook.
- 6.9 The Chair will normally identify a panel member to lead questioning in each specific area. There may be some areas where the panel has identified no issues and has no questions. The agenda for the meeting with the course team may be revised in the light of the meeting with students (where relevant) and/or the tour of facilities and resources.

requirements should only be used in exceptional circumstances where the issue cannot reasonably be addressed prior to the start of the next academic year)

Recommendations are those issues where action is desirable and should be considered with a response provided.

- 6.16 The course team is then invited to return to receive feedback. The Chair will explain the overall outcome of the event and will notify the course team of any conditions, requirements, recommendations and/or commendations. A deadline will be identified

a brief summary of how