

Validation Process and Role of Panel Members on RAU Validation and Revalidation Panels

Thank you for agreeing to act as Panel Member of the Royal Agricultural University Validation and Revalidation Panel.

It is essential the panel will work collegially as a team to ensure the programme(s) and award(s) are at an appropriate academic standard and level, consistent with QAA <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks> and that learning opportunities enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The outcomes of the validation/review will be a collective judgement of the panel reached by consensus.

Aim and Purpose of Programme Validation

Programme validation is a formal process which enables new programmes to be launched to the university students. All new programmes are scrutinised before their introduction, to assure standards and enhance the quality of the proposal. As part of the validation process the programme teams and panels will consider/review:

- Rationale, aims and objectives of the programme
- Appropriateness, currency and relevance of the structure and content
- Alignment to other programmes on offer and University mission and strategy
- Standards set for the level of award
- Programme competences and adherence of the programme to any appropriate subject benchmark statement(s)
- Appropriateness and adequacy of the assessment strategy to measure the learning outcomes of the programme overall and the stated learning outcomes for each module
- Balance and variance of assessments methods offered on the programme if they show progression and an appropriate learning experience, including formative assessments
- Suitable physical, learning and knowledge resources to support programme
- Student experience including employment and further study opportunities
- Facilitation to ensure programme supports and encourage diversity and innovation and that all students can maximise their potential
- Arrangements and supervision for any placement/collaborative activity
- Proposed academic and professional/service staffing is adequate and appropriate to the programme of study

Roles and responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair is a senior member of University staff and from a different Subject Area to that of the programme(s) under consideration. Before the event, the Chair is expected to inform the Academic Quality Team if they have any issues or concerns about the event. They are expected to work with the Academic Quality Team to confirm the panel and set the agenda, as well as reading the documentation and prepare discussion points/questions for event.

At the validation event, the Chair chairs the meetings with the different stakeholders and ensures that all members of the panel are able to contribute to the discussion and further explore themes with the programme team, and students in review events. They are also expected to:

Privat Panel Meeting:

- set the agenda for the private panel meeting
- provide a brief overview of the University's processes and its outcomes, noting which areas need to be covered, using the Code of practice as guidance
- ensure that the external academic advisor understands the process
- clarify and enable the role of any PSRB representative(s)
- confirm the questions for the validation meeting and assign panel members to areas of questioning

Validation Meeting:

- ensure that the event runs smoothly and to time
- direct additional questions to panel experts as required
- ensure there is sufficient evidence that the indicators listed in the validation report checklist have been addressed appropriately
- elicit and evaluate panel members conclusions
- identify and record areas of good practice
- in conjunction with the Validation Officer, compose the panel's commendations, conditions and recommendations and ensure that they are clear and achievable
- check that the panel agree with the conclusions
- confirm the deadline for conditions
- feedback the outcomes to the programme team at the conclusion of the event

After the event the Chair is expected to approve the email to the programme team listing the conditions as approved at the validation event.

Once the Validation Officer produced the validation report, approve the report for dissemination to the Dean of Subject and programme team.

Once the Validation Officer has received the response to conditions and updated the validation report, approve the updated report for consideration by the AQSC and Academic Board.

Roles and responsibilities of the Internal Panel Member

The internal panel member will act as a critical friend to the Validation Panel and will give consideration to the validation proposal or programme review received. They will provide an objective view, highlighting any weaknesses and commending areas of good practice.

Before the event, the internal panel member is expected to carefully read and evaluate the documentation and prepare discussion points/questions. At the event, they must engage in discussion with the stakeholders and assess whether the programme design and its competences are realistic, attainable and set at an appropriate level, as well as providing an excellent student experience. Internal panel members are also expected to:

- Consider proposed organisation (*collaborative provision only*)
- Advise the University whether the programme complies with University Regulations and the relevant Codes of practice
- Evaluate coherence and curriculum of programme including assessment processes
- Review progression, completion and award data, identifying actions to support student achievement and progression
- Help identify any areas of good practice
- Contribute to the panel's conclusion about the approval of programme

Conditions of validation must be met before the proposal can be put forward to AQSC, and will only normally be set:

- if any regulatory issues are likely to endanger the standards of provision;
- where there is a clear omission of required information;
- where aspects of the provision may cause serious concern for students;
- where it is unclear how programme delivery is to be achieved

Recommendations will normally include issues and advice not related to standards, and these do not have to be met in order for a programme to gain approval, but programme team may consider them in future.

Roles and responsibilities of Student Panels

The University uses student panels at programme review events as part of its quality assurance processes. Student panels will be nominated by the Programme Leader and will include students studying at each level of the degree programme. The student panel will assist the Validation panel in gaining a view of how the programme is delivered in the classroom, the student experience overall with feedback on likes, dislikes and proposals for improvement or sharing of good practice.

Participating in quality processes as a Student Panel Member provides students with an opportunity to actively engage in the development and improvement of the University's programmes. The principal role of the student member will be to bring to the process the student perspective. At the event, they must engage in discussion and assess whether the

programme design and its competences are realistic, attainable and set at an appropriate level, as well as providing an excellent student experience. Student panel members are also expected to:

- consider arrangements for the student voice to be heard (student rep system, tutorials, surveys etc.)
- review how student feedback is being considered and listened to through the National Student Survey (NSS) and Mid-Module Evaluations
- review information available to students in support of their studies and whether this is accurate, complete and effective. This includes the arrangements for supporting students to progress and achieve as well as personal tutoring.
- review learning opportunities and resources

Summary of validation process

Programmes are normally validated for a period of five years and the validation schedule is coordinated by the Academic Quality Team. For new partners and programmes, the validation period is three years in the first instance.

- Programme leader prepares a Business Case for Programme Development or Programme revalidation for approval at ASPC (4 meetings per year)
- Programme leader meets with Academic Quality to discuss approval timeline
- Programme leader nominates External Academic Advisor
- Programme leader develop programme documentation
- Academic Quality Team and External Academic Advisor scrutinise documents and provide feedback (usually 6-8 weeks prior validation event)
- Programme leader reviews documentation incorporating feedback
- Academic Quality Team prepare final documentation and agenda to validation panel (2 weeks prior event)
- Validation panel meeting*
- Academic Quality team write the validation/review report
- Programme team responds to conditions
- Final check by Academic Quality
- Sign off by Chair of validation panel
- Sign off by AQSC
- Sign off by Academic Board

* **Panel members:** Chair of the validation panel (senior member of academic staff), Head of Academic Quality, External Academic Advisor, Internal Panel member, Learning Technologist, Academic Quality Officer (Validation Officer)

Programme team representatives: Dean of Subject or nominee, Programme Leader, Module Leaders,

Student representatives

Collaborative provision representatives

Outline of the programme validation meeting

The meeting provides the opportunity for the panel to discuss specific points with the programme team and other representatives from the faculty.

Themed Agenda:

- Internal private panel discussion (to agree priorities for discussion)
 - Welcome and introductions
 - Presentation by programme team (overview)
 - Student meeting
 - Themes of discussion: programme development, programme delivery and student support, marketing and student recruitment, staffing and resources, work-based learning
 - Internal panel discussion
 - Feedback to programme team / conditions
- Conditions** – action points to address issues of a serious nature, which must be resolved prior to the start of the new programme;
- Recommendations** – points for the programme team to think about in terms of the future development and improvement of the programme;
- Deadline for conditions

Following the review, a report will be drafted for the approval of the Chair before circulation to the programme/faculty team and to the others within the university.