

## PROCEDURE FOR THE RE-APPROVAL OF EXISTING COURSES

### 1. Introduction to the course re-approval process

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- 1.1 Course re-approval is the formal process by which a course or group of cognate courses within the University of Suffolk or its partner institutions is reviewed and evaluated by an acknowledged group of experienced peers including internal and external academics, employer representatives and normally a student representative. The course re-approval process is aligned with the expectations, practices, advice and guidance within the principles of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).
- 1.2 The course re-approval process supplements the University's Risk-Based Monitoring and Enhancement (RiME) processes, which form the basis of the continuous review of course provision. RiME process outcomes inform the course re-approval process.
- 1.3 Course re-approval normally takes place every five years, usually early in the final year of the existing period of validation, and is the basis for re-approval with effect from the following academic year. The review process can be brought forward at the discretion of the Chair of the Quality Committee, for example where a major variation to a course is proposed, where there is a particular concern about the quality and/or academic standards of a course, or where this is necessary to meet the requirements of professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs).
- 1.4 The process usually involves a re-approval event where a panel of internal and external experts meet to discuss and re-approve the course based on:
  - their prior consideration of a standard set of course re-approval documentation compiled by the course team; and
  - meetings with the course team and with students registered (or previously registered) on the course, which form part of the event.
- 1.5 The purpose of course re-approval is:
  - a) to review the continuing validity and relevance of the stated aims and intended learning outcomes of the course(s), in accordance with relevant internal and external reference points including the [UK Quality Code](#), [QAA subject benchmark statements](#), [characteristics statements](#), and any PSRB requirements (for higher and degree apprenticeships, this should also include continued compliance with associated apprenticeship standards, assessment plans and funding rules)
  - b) to ensure equivalence in academic standards with comparable courses across the UK higher education sector
  - c) to ensure that course content continues to be current and engaging, providing students with opportunities to gain relevant knowledge, skills and experience within the discipline area

- d) to ensure that students continue to be provided with learning opportunities of an appropriate quality, in accordance with the expectations of the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and associated priorities
  - e) to ensure that course documentation (including handbooks) continue to provide a clear, accurate and accessible summary of the course for students and other stakeholders, reflecting the requirements of relevant consumer protection legislation
  - f) to enable external subject expert(s) to contribute advice on the course(s)
  - g) to identify good practice for wider dissemination
  - h) to identify areas for enhancement.
- 1.6 While the course re-approval process is ultimately designed to ensure that the course continues to be of an appropriate quality and academic standard to warrant a University of Suffolk award, an important element of the process is enhancement of the course through constructive discussion and debate with internal and external experts. All discussions as part of the course re-approval process are therefore expected to be conducted in the spirit of a 'critical friend', with an emphasis on securing ongoing enhancement.

## **2. Notification of course re-approval and consideration of intended material changes**

- 2.1 An annual schedule of courses requiring re-approval will be prepared by the Validation and Exams team and presented to the Quality Committee for information during the summer term, ensuring that course teams are provided with at least one full academic year's notice of impending review.
- 2.2 Individual course leaders will be formally notified by the Validation and Exams team of the requirement for re-approval (using a course re-approval form) and will be asked to confirm by an agreed deadline whether any PSRBs need to be involved in the re-approval event and whether any material changes to the course are planned as part of the re-approval process (for example in terms of course title, mode of delivery, location of delivery, entry requirements, PSRB accreditation, modules within the course structure, and/or significant changes to the overall balance of delivery or assessment methods). The deadline will allow time for the course team's response to be informed by the self-evaluation process (see Section 3).
- 2.3 If material changes to the course are planned, early discussions with other relevant academic schools and professional support departments (including Registry Services, External Relations, Finance and Planning, Learning Services and Quality Assurance and Enhancement) are important in terms of establishing whether the intended changes have any implications in terms of existing academic provision or existing academic regulations, policies and procedures.
- 2.4 It is also important that current students are consulted on any intended material changes at an early stage. Any students enrolled on the course during the preceding period of validation will be expected to continue on the original course unless the re-approval panel

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 arrangements to support continuing students to the end of their studies. All material changes should be communicated clearly to continuing students in a timely manner, in accordance with the requirements of current consumer protection legislation.

- 2.5 Any intended material changes should be approved by the relevant Dean of School or Head of Higher Education (or equivalent) at partner institutions before they are notified to the Validation and Exams team. The proposed changes will be subject to initial review by the Chair of the Quality Committee, who will consider whether outline approval to proceed with the proposed changes should be granted. This is intended to ensure that the changes do not present any significant issues in terms of the integrity of the course and that they can be adequately dealt with through the course re-approval process. The Chair of the Quality Committee reserves the right to refer the proposal to the Quality Committee for more detailed consideration where necessary to benefit the decision-making process.
- 2.6 One of the key purposes of this initial stage in the process is to ensure that any publicity material relating to the course is updated to reflect anticipated material changes as part of the course re-approval process. Any anticipated material change must be flagged as subject to approval in publicity material until the course re-approval process is successfully completed. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) publication [UK Higher Education Providers – Advice on Consumer Protection Law \(2015\)](#) is a useful point of reference in terms of understanding the University’s legal responsibilities in communicating with both current and prospective students (see in particular section 4.10 for a definition of ‘material’ course information).

### **3. Engaging in critical self-evaluation**

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- 3.1 The course team’s own critical evaluation of the course and its delivery over the current period of validation is a crucial element of the course re-approval process. This should be facilitated by discussions with all relevant stakeholders, including teaching and support staff, current students, recent graduates, external examiners, employer representatives and relevant professional services staff (for example in Quality Assurance and Enhancement and in Learning Services).
- 3.2 Course teams should draw on the following documentation and performance indicators to inform the self-evaluation process, which will be made available to them at the point of notification of impending course re-approval:

#### *Documentation provided by the Validation and Exams team*

- a) current definitive course record(s)
- b) external examiner reports for the last three years

- c) RiME management information reports for the last three years showing student profiles, student retention and achievement, student survey results, award data and graduate destinations
- d) audit reports from any RiME risk alerts issued in the last three years
- e) recent PSRB reports (where relevant)
- f) a summary of approved changes since the previous validation or re-approval

Documentation provided by course team / course administrator

- g) course committee minutes and action plans for the last three years
- h) feedback obtained from students through module evaluation processes
- i) relevant internal and external reference points (including the University's Academic Strategy, QAA subject benchmark statements, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and any PSRB requirements, national occupational standards or apprenticeship standards).

3.3 In engaging in critical self-evaluation, Deans of School (or equivalent at partner institutions) should allow course teams sufficient time for collective, meaningful and objective consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. It is vital that the process is not merely regarded as a bureaucratic exercise, but as a valuable opportunity to step back and reflect on ways in which the course can be strengthened and the student experience enhanced in line with the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. In particular, teams should consider the following:

- a) the continued viability of the course and opportunities for growth in student numbers
- b) the continued currency of the curriculum in light of any changes in the external environment (for example developments in research or professional practice, changes in the employment market, or technological advances impacting on the discipline area)
- c) the effectiveness of course design and delivery, taking into consideration relevant performance indicators and stakeholder feedback, as well as developments in learning, teaching and assessment both internally and more broadly within the HE sector
- d) the adequacy of existing resources to support course delivery (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing)
- e) existing good and/or effective practice and the potential for its wider adoption
- f) potential developmental activity to address any areas of perceived weakness and to secure ongoing enhancement
- g) how the course team wish to see the course develop over the next five years.

3.4 While an individual member of the course team may lead the preparations for course re-approval and generate the associated documentation, it is important that all members of the course team and other key stakeholders (including students) are actively engaged in the self-evaluation process. To facilitate this within the University, a Developmental

Engagement meeting will be organised by the Validation and Exams team, typically during the second semester in the academic year before the reapproval is due. This should involve the course team, peers and key University stakeholders (such as Learning Services, Careers, Registry Services, Quality Assurance and Enhancement, student representatives and, where relevant, the Apprenticeships Business Development Manager). It may also be helpful to involve employer representatives or other external stakeholders. The purpose of this process is:

- to facilitate critical discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing course and the team's development plans
- to encourage course teams to effectively engage with the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and associated initiatives
- to identify support that would benefit the course team and how this might be provided
- to confirm arrangements for the completion of the documentation and preparation for the re-approval event.

3.5 Partner institutions are encouraged to adopt a similar approach, and are welcome to invite University stakeholders to attend the Developmental Engagement meeting where relevant. Advice on Developmental Engagements within partner institutions can be obtained from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team.

#### **4. Documentation for course re-approval event**

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4.1 Course re-approval documentation should include the following:

*To be provided by the course team*

- a) Developmental commentary document (discussing the key considerations of the team through the developmental engagement process and providing details of, and justifications for, any proposed substantive changes to the provision)
- b) Student course handbook (including module specifications), updated for use in the academic year following re-approval
- c) Where relevant, any additional student handbooks covering particular aspects of the course (for example work-based learning, professional practice or study abroad)
- d) For higher or degree apprenticeships, an employer handbook outlining how the course is delivered and managed from an employer's perspective
- e) Access to online module learning areas from current or recent provision to illustrate the course team's approach (normally one per level of study)
- f) Mapping of modules to course learning outcomes for each intended award, updated as necessary
- g) For higher or degree apprenticeships, mapping of the course against the relevant apprenticeship standard and a copy of the template to be used for recording the outcomes of the initial needs assessment process

- h) Staff CVs
- i) Feedback received from external academics and/or other external stakeholders consulted as part of the re-approval process

*To be provided by the Validation and Exams team as background information for the re-approval panel*

- j) External examiner reports for the last three years
  - k) Course committee minutes and action plans for the last three years
  - l) RIME management information reports for the last three years showing student profiles, student retention and achievement, student survey results, award data and graduate destinations
  - m) Audit reports from any RiME risk alerts issued in the last three years
  - n) Summary of approved changes since the previous validation or re-approval
  - o) Details of any PSRB accreditation, including recent PSRB reports and course team responses.
- 4.2 In writing the re-approval document, course teams should avoid repetition of descriptive information about the course already included in the course handbook or other course documentation. The focus should be on reflection, evaluation and enhancement, with critical commentary cross-referenced to relevant supporting documentation. It can be helpful if the document identifies areas the course team would find it particularly helpful to explore in greater depth with the re-approval panel.
- 4.3 Templates for all key documents are available on the course approval, modification and review pages on the University website, and further guidance on producing re-approval documentation is available on the website and from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team. For courses at Ipswich, the Course Administration Team within Academic Services are able to provide support to course teams in terms of collating and formatting re-approval documentation.
- 4.4 Care should be taken to ensure that all documentation is subject to thorough proof-reading to remove any inconsistencies, errors or inaccuracies before it is submitted for circulation to the re-approval panel. This should be overseen by the relevant Dean of School (or nominee) or by the Head of Higher Education or equivalent within partner institutions, who should be provided with a copy of the documentation for review prior to submission.

*Timescales for submission of documentation*

- 4.5 The Validation and Exams team will notify course teams of key milestones and deadlines in the re-approval process, including deadlines for submission of documentation. At least six weeks prior to the re-approval event, a draft version of the documentation should be submitted to the Validation and Exams team ([validation@uos.ac.uk](mailto:validation@uos.ac.uk)) for review by a member of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team, and by Learning Services in

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](mailto: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**

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- 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-related staff)
  - at least one external academic subject expert (selected by the University in liaison with the relevant academic school)
  - at least one employer representative (nominated by, but not closely associated with, the course team)
  - PSRB representative(s), where relevant

- at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from a cognate discipline area but outside the relevant academic school)
- student representative (from outside the subject area under consideration and on an equivalent level course, i.e. undergraduate or taught postgraduate)
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement representative
- Learning Services representative.

5.3 Panel membership for re-approval of courses within partner institutions typically comprises:

- Chair (a member of University of Suffolk academic or academic-related staff)
- at least one external academic subject expert (selected by the University)
- at least one employer representative (nominated by, but not closely associated with, the course team)
- PSRB representative(s), where relevant
- at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from a cognate discipline area)
- one member of senior staff from the partner institution (with no direct responsibility for the proposed provision)
- student representative (from outside the subject area under consideration and on an equivalent level course, i.e. undergraduate or taught postgraduate)
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement representative
- Learning Services representative.

5.4 All re-approval panels will be serviced by a member of the Validation and Exams team or a senior University administrator.

5.5 In the absence of any panel members on the day of the event, the decision as to whether the re-approval event should proceed is at the Chair's discretion. Normally, at least half of the panel should be present, including the Chair and the external academic subject expert(s).

5.6 A peer from the University or one of its partner institutions may be invited to attend a re-approval event as an observer (including shadowing the panel chair), to facilitate the observer's staff development and the sharing of good practice, subject to the agreement of the Chair.

#### Criteria for the appointment of re-approval panel chairs

5.7 The University will establish a pool of re-approval panel chairs. Chairs within the pool should:

- a) be a member of University of Suffolk academic or academic-related staff with continuing, substantive involvement in course delivery and/or in the management of learning, teaching and assessment
- b) have appropriate experience and demonstrable competence in chairing meetings



- c) have knowledge and understanding of University of Suffolk quality assurance and enhancement processes
  - d) have undergone relevant training on chairing course re-approval events (including engaging in shadowing opportunities wherever possible).
- 5.8 The Quality Assurance and Enhancement team will liaise with Deans of School to agree potential candidates for inclusion in the pool of re-approval panel chairs, and these will be subject to approval by the Quality Committee.
- 5.9 In allocating chairs to particular re-approval events, independence and impartiality will be a key consideration. The Chair should be from a different academic school to the course under review, or from a different academic discipline in the case of courses within partner institutions.

Criteria for the appointment of external panel members

- 5.10 External academic panel members are identified and appointed by the University and should be able to demonstrate:
- a) appropriate competence and experience and continuing active involvement in the relevant subject discipline(s)
  - b) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications, normally to at least the level of the qualification being presented for re-approval, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
  - c) knowledge and understanding of relevant external reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
  - d) competence and recent experience relating to the design and delivery of programmes of study within the relevant subject discipline(s) to at least the level of the qualification being presented for re-approval
  - e) for provision at FE partner colleges, preferably familiarity with delivery of higher education within the FE sector
  - f) for higher or degree apprenticeships, preferably familiarity with delivery of apprenticeship programmes.
- 5.11 Employer representatives on the panel are nominated by the course team and appointed by the University and should:
- a) be an employer or professional representative of the sector in which graduates might be expected to work
  - b) be of an appropriate level of seniority or have significant recent professional experience within the relevant field
  - c) possess sufficient experience within the sector to be able to comment on the relevance of the course for those wishing to gain employment in the sector.

- 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

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- 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
  - confirm the day's agenda
  - 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 documentation, in order to enable the Chair to construct agendas for the panel's 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
  - students' general perceptions of the strengths of their course
  - 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.

6.10 The Chair will normally commence the meeting with the course team by:

- explaining the purpose and nature of the re-approval event (including confirming the course titles, awards and modes of study to be considered by the panel)
- inviting all present to introduce themselves
- explaining the re-approval process, the responsibilities of the panel and the possible outcomes of the event
- outlining the agenda for the meeting and inviting relevant panel members to lead on particular lines of enquiry.

6.11 The Chair is responsible for highlighting positive aspects of the course and for ensuring that issues are raised in a critical but constructive manner in order to enhance the course. A successful course re-approval event will be characterised by constructive dialogue, structured around the course's teams own self-evaluation. The re-approval panel should conduct its discussions in the spirit of being a 'critical friend', but should also be aware of its role in judging whether, and the extent to which, the course continues to offer a high quality learning experience for students that meets internal and external expectations in terms of academic standards. In particular, the panel would expect to be assured that

issues identified through RiME processes, including the comments of students and external examiners, have been adequately addressed.

#### Concluding meeting of the panel

- 6.12 The Chair will normally commence the final private meeting of the re-approval panel by asking each of the panel members to give a view on whether the course should be:
- a) re-approved outright for a given period of time (normally five years) with no conditions, requirements or recommendations (in which case no further action by the course team is required)
  - b) re-approved for a given period of time (normally five years) with conditions and/or requirements and/or recommendations (in which case the course team must provide evidence that the conditions and/or requirements have been met and must respond to any recommendations within the agreed timescales)
  - c) in exceptional circumstances, not re-approved (in which case the course team will be required to either (i) undertake a major revision to the course within agreed timescales, for consideration under the course validation procedure, or (ii) phase out and withdraw the course).
- 6.13 If the course is not re-approved, in accordance with (c) above, the panel should make provisions to ensure that the interests of current students and applicants are protected while the course is either subject to major revision or phased out and withdrawn, extending the current period of validation accordingly (and possibly conditionally) to cover the transitional phase. In both cases (major revision and withdrawal), this should include a requirement for the course team to complete a course discontinuation form in accordance with the procedure for withdrawal of validated provision, which should outline plans for protecting student and applicants' interests.
- 6.14 A unanimous decision of the panel is normally required for the conclusion of the re-approval event, but in the event that an individual panel member disagrees with the majority decision, then the Chair of the panel will make the final decision.
- 6.15 Where the panel decides to re-approve the course, they will proceed to identify and formulate commendations, conditions, requirements and/or recommendations, giving due consideration to clarity of wording.
- Commendations allow the panel a chance to congratulate the course team on aspects of exemplary practice (i.e. practice that significantly exceeds normal expectations). A particular focus here should be on exemplary practice that has the potential to be transferable to other courses.
  - Conditions are those issues that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the panel before the start of the next academic year.
  - Requirements are those issues that must be addressed by an agreed date after the start of the next academic year to the satisfaction of the Quality Committee (note:

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 (typically six to eight weeks after the event) by which any conditions must be met and recommendations responded to, and the Chair will identify whether the course team's response will be considered by correspondence or, in exceptional circumstances, by a conditions meeting.

6.17 The Chair and Secretary will liaise to ensure that draft conditions, requirements and/or recommendations are circulated to the course team within five working days of the event.

## **7. The course re-approval report**

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7.1 A report on the re-approval event will be produced by the Secretary in liaison with the Chair. The report summarises the panel's discussions and provides an official record of the outcome and any associated commendations, conditions, requirements and/or recommendations.

7.2 Once approved by the Chair, the draft re-approval report is circulated to the full panel for review before the final version is circulated to the course team, normally within four weeks of the re-approval event. The re-approval panel may not set further conditions or requirements after it has reported.

7.3 The re-approval report will be submitted to the Quality Committee for information. The Quality Committee reports to Senate on all courses that have been successfully re-approved (including confirmation of the agreed period of re-approval, which is normally five years).

## **8. The course team's response**

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8.1 The course team should make a formal response to the panel's report by the agreed deadline(s), evidencing how specific conditions and/or requirements have been met and addressing any recommendations that were made. This response should be submitted to the Validation and Exams team ([validation@uos.ac.uk](mailto:validation@uos.ac.uk)) by the agreed deadline, for onward submission to the re-approval panel Chair. Responses are monitored through the Quality Committee.

8.2 The course team's formal response should include:

- amended documents (using tracked changes to highlight any amendments)

- a brief summary of how each condition and/or requirement has been met with reference to the amended documents
  - how each recommendation has been considered
  - completed definitive course record
  - any other appropriate evidence.
- 8.3 The course team's response to any conditions and/or recommendations is normally signed off by correspondence by the re-approval panel Chair, drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the re-approval event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair.
- 8.4 If it is decided that the conditions have been met and the recommendations adequately responded to, the Chair (acting under delegated authority of Senate) will confirm that the re-approval process has been successfully completed and that the course is re-approved, subject to any requirements being adequately addressed by agreed deadlines. A course re-approval outcome form (provided by the Validation and Exams team) will be signed to evidence this. Confirmation of the completion of the re-approval process allows any 'subject to approval' statements relating to proposed changes to be removed from any course publicity material. The Quality Committee will maintain oversight of the course team's response to any outstanding requirements.
- 8.5 If any condition or requirement has not been met by agreed deadlines or if further evidence is required, the Chair (or the Chair of the Quality Committee in the case of requirements) will request additional documentation to address the outstanding issues. If the condition or requirement is not able to be met, the matter is referred to the Quality Committee to determine an appropriate course of action. In such circumstances, protecting the interests of prospective and/or current students should be of paramount importance. It is vital that applicants and/or current students are consulted and kept informed of developments, so that they are clear about their options.

## **9. Definitive course documentation**

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- 9.1 The Validation and Exams team maintains definitive course documentation which incorporates all approved amendments to the documentation as part of the course team's response to any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations. This includes a Definitive Course Record, which is published online and sent to applicants. Definitive course documentation is stored within the relevant [course file](#) on MySuffolk.