
Quality Enhancement
Support Team
(QuEST)
Approval & Professional
Accreditation
Session 2019/20

CHAPTER 4 APPROVAL & PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

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PROCESS FROM PROGRAMME CONCEPTION TO APPROVAL



1 APPROVAL OF NEW OR SIGNIFICANTLY REDESIGNED PROGRAMMES

Introduction

One of the key ways in which institutions demonstrate their responsibilities for standards and quality is through the procedures for curriculum design, programme approval and programme monitoring and review.

Initial Concept

New programme proposals should be developed in line with the School and the Corporate Strategy. An initial idea paper should be raised at the Divisional Programme Board before the plan is discussed at the School Board. If other Schools are to be involved in the delivery of the proposed provision then it is important for all relevant programme teams to be involved in the initial consideration of the provision.

New Programme Proposal

When proposing a new programme, schools should complete the [New Programme Proposal form](#) available on the intranet. This form is designed to ensure proposals are based on a robust business case and the development is supported by and completed in partnership with relevant professional services. It requires a detailed, evidenced-based business case to be presented with input from several areas of professional services. The form has been created to ensure that the development and assessment of new programme proposals is:-

- Evidence-based: developed in an evidence-based manner to produce a clear rationale with consideration of areas including existing programme health data, indicators of viability, reflection on similar provision at other Higher Education Providers (HEP) and identification of Unique Selling Points (USP), and resources required;
- Transparent: decision making will be cross-school through NPP subgroup (Programme Approval and Review Group)
- Collaborative: Consultation with professional services is initiated at the outset of the proposal and continued throughout the process to approval stage.

This form should be used for all new named awards both of the University and potential validated programme developments.

Consultation

The NPP form must be completed in collaboration with the relevant professional services teams providing support, guidance, oversight and transparency of the programme portfolio. Drafting Teams are advised to engage with the following areas in developing their proposal:

External Stakeholders

Programme teams are encouraged to reflect on who the key stakeholders for the programme might be and utilise the best approach for engaging them in the process of design, review and approval. These stakeholders might include potential employers, placement providers and service users. They provide a useful indicator of how successful a programme is likely to be and whether the interest is sustainable or will be transient. Common practice within the sector involves establishing and engaging with Industry Advisory Boards. These can be formally or informally organised, to discuss programme developments at key stages during the design and approval process; liaising with professional body contacts and education teams to consider alignment to professional standards or requirements.

Students

Current students offer a barometer on what currently works well and what they would look for in a new programme. Guiding Principle 4 of the UK Quality Code on Course Design and Development expects providers to engage with students in the design, development and approval of programmes and Schools should ensure that the student voice is actively represented. Schools should consult with current students and alumni where possible. Programme teams should reflect on and be able to respond to questions on what contribution students have made to the design and development of their programme(s).

Widening Participation (Student Recruitment)

If the proposed programme has been developed to offer an articulation route from colleges (or could potentially be developed for this purpose), the expertise of Marketing and Student Recruitment is invaluable in managing this relationship and understanding the requirements of creating partnerships.

International Centre

The [International Centre](#) are integral in developing international articulation partnerships to recruit international students and build up UWS branding overseas through partnership. The IC can assist by highlighting international opportunities through market identification and development, and by identifying opportunities for all students to have an international experience during the course of their studies by managing Study Abroad and Exchange programmes.

International students

Where the proposed cohort for the new programme will include Tier 4 (non-EEA) students, Teams should ensure the student journey will comply with UKVI definitions of full time study. Further guidance can be provided by colleagues in Marketing and Student Recruitment .

Marketing

The University's [Marketing](#) and Communications department provides professional marketing advice to colleagues across the institution. Currently their input does not extend to market research, although they can signpost to available third-party providers and have provided a Quick Market Research Approaches Guide available from the [intranet](#).

Finance

[Finance](#) Business Partners can assist in completing the Finance Costing Model for the proposed programme, provide information on student fees and highlight areas that the drafting team may not have considered.

Library

Drafting teams are also encouraged to speak to the relevant Subject Librarian to discuss reading resources, journals and other relevant support texts. For programmes starting in September, the [library](#) requires to know of additional resource requirements by the end of February of the previous session. If additional library resources are required, drafting teams should ensure licensing and maintenance costs have been factored in to costing model.

Information Technology and Digital Services

If there are additional IT resources needed to support the provision, the drafting team should also liaise with the [Information, Technology & Digital Services \(ITDS\)](#) to highlight the need for specific software, hardware or other facilities, or any need to increase the number of licenses held, to ensure this new provision can be supported and funded.

QuEST

If drafting teams are daring to be different, a discussion with [QuEST](#) will establish what regulatory areas they may need to consider in offering an academically robust yet innovative programme. They can also offer expert advice on collaborative partnerships from franchise to validated models.

UWS Academy

[UWS Academy](#) support academic colleagues by offering advice on best practice in curriculum development and offer professional development programmes for new and existing colleagues.

Education Futures

[Education Futures](#) are experts in delivering learning technology services. In addition to bringing new ideas, approaches, and technologies, the team will also provide the 'building blocks' of digital education by providing a range of workshops and 'how to' for those who teach through the UWS Academy.

Supporting Documentation

To assist the schools in producing their proposals, the [intranet](#) has the following support information:

NPP – Programme Approvals Ready Reckoner Flowchart This spreadsheet-based decision maker enables the user to determine a timeline from concept to launch of a new programme.

Finance Costing Model Referred to in the NPP Form, this spreadsheet allows programme teams to calculate the likely cost of initial set-up and running costs for programmes. It should be submitted alongside the NPP form.

NPP Flow Diagram (Process from Programme Conception to Approval) This document shows the process from concept to launch. A copy appears at the start of this chapter.

NPP – Quick Market Research Approaches Referred to in the NPP Form, this is guidance from UWS Marketing that programme teams can use to assist in self-directed market research.

**New Programme Scrutiny Checklist* Introduced for session 2019/20, this is a revised version of the School Scrutiny Checklist. Through discussions at Academic Quality Committee, it was agreed that providing this checklist earlier to assist programme teams when preparing documentation for approval events would be more helpful than waiting until the final School Scrutiny event. This revised checklist whilst lengthy, addresses the typical requirements of a successful approval.

The supporting documentation is crucial in assisting schools in understanding the effort required to bring forward a new programme. Whilst it is entirely feasible to bring forward a programme in very short timescales, there will be implications on the scale of marketing and resources available. For example, to have a presence in the Undergraduate Prospectus, the programme must be approved by June of the previous year. However, should the programme only require a web presence, turnaround can be as little as a few days depending on the complexity of the request. Schools should be cognisant of the timescales required by supporting departments when proposing new programmes.

Approval of New Programme Proposals

It is expected that all NPPs are presented as part of operational planning on an annual basis. However, NPPs can and will be accepted at any point in the academic year. For proposals outside of Operational Planning, once the School Board is satisfied with the proposal it will be forwarded to the Secretary to the Programme Approval and Review Group for consideration at the next meeting. This sub-committee of EAC is chaired by the Vice-Principal Academic, meets at least three times a year and is composed of Deans of School, Professional Services and key colleagues from Academic Life. This subgroup has the authority to recommend that programmes proceed to approval on behalf of the University Leadership Team (ULT) which reports directly to Vice Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG).

The Approval Process

The model for programme approval firmly places ownership and responsibility for development of new provision and associated documentation with drafting teams. Final approval rests with Senate in line with the advice and guidance within UK Quality Code for Higher Education which recommends that ownership and oversight of the approval processes should be the responsibility of a senior academic committee. Senate has vested in the Approval Panel the authority to approve programmes.

The University's criteria for approval, below, are informed by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. (See www.qaa.ac.uk for more information.) Approval mechanisms have been designed to incorporate the Advice and Guidance from the relevant sections of the revised UK Quality Code.

- a) Schools are responsible for the consideration of proposed new programmes/amendments to existing programmes and for submitting these to Programme Approval and Review Group.
- b) Once confirmed by the Programme Approval and Review Group to proceed to an approval event, the School will be responsible for organising the event.
- c) An approval event MAY also be required where:
 - It is an outcome of Institution-Led Review (ILR);
 - **More than 30-credits of core provision at any level of the programme have been amended or replaced via the programme amendment process.** This is to safeguard the integrity of the level outcomes and associated awards of the University. The Divisional Programme Board should always consider the impact on programme specifications where modules are amended or replaced. Any greater volume of change to modules or level outcomes as identified above will require a full re-approval event;
 - Significant changes are being proposed to an existing programme, e.g. change of title, the addition of new modes of delivery including blended, online and face to face, schedule of delivery, or the addition of an Honours level.

Contact colleagues in QuEST for further advice.

Scheduling

All new programmes/titles will be considered at an approval event by a panel acting on behalf of Education Advisory Committee (EAC) and including external peers. The approval of programmes should normally take place between October and March to ensure that programme data is confirmed by the University deadline of 31 March. This deadline ensures that the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) can be advised in good time, programme marketing put in place and programme information added to the Banner student record system and the Programme Specification and Module Descriptor (PSMD) catalogue.

The majority of events will be contained within one working day. It may also be possible to group related new programmes into one event. Approval events will normally be held at the campus where the programme will run. At the event, panel members have the opportunity to meet formally with senior staff of the University, usually the Dean of School, Deputy Dean and Programme Leaders, review relevant learning resources and staff concerned with the programme. Panel members welcome the opportunity to meet with students from existing programmes where this is relevant.

2 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Senate has confirmed the importance of a strong focus on programme development through the front loading of consultation and engagement with Professional Services, employers and individual representatives, students/graduates and Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB) (if appropriate). A key stage in programme development is the establishment of drafting teams which included consultation and engagement with the key stakeholders, employers / industry representatives, students

and Professional Services. The Approval Panel will seek assurance that the above have taken place and may wish to see evidence of how this has informed the development of the proposal.

The Drafting Team

The prime responsibility for the quality of new programmes lies with the drafting team. It is the responsibility of the School to appoint a Programme Leader / Programme Leader Designate and drafting team to prepare programme documentation. Careful consideration should be given to the criteria for programme approval, [New Programme Scrutiny Checklist](#) and the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) when drafting programme approval documents.

UWS Academy & Education Futures are available to assist in the drafting of various aspects of new programme documents including curriculum design and developments, drafting of learning outcomes, embedding employability, Virtual

Learning Environment (VLE) / Online developments and the Personal Development Planning (PDP) process). Separate Curriculum Design Guidance is available via the UWS Academy.

POSITIVE PRACTICE: SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES

Positive practice in the School of Health and Life Sciences includes the scheduling of a series of drafting team workshops all with specific focuses where invitations are extended to the relevant stakeholders and professional services depending on the areas being discussed. This input has moulded programmes that from the outset are collaborative, and responsive to the needs of the various stakeholders (e.g. students, employers and service users).

QuEST will ensure that this guidance is provided to Programme Leaders and drafting teams, and Schools should put in place support for academic staff developing new programmes who require mentoring, monitor developments and offer support to the drafting team.

Deans of School are accountable for ensuring programmes are presented in time for the agreed deadlines and that documentation, particularly learning outcomes, have been scrutinised well in advance of the deadline for circulation to the panel.

Drafting Team Membership

Drafting teams should include representation from colleagues from relevant Professional Services, for example, UWS Academy, Education Futures, Information, Technology & Digital Services (ITDS), Student Life and Library. There should also be involvement from professional/industrial colleagues on the programme development activities. Employer and PSRB input to curriculum design and other relevant benchmarking should be evident.

The experience of approval events at UWS is that it is of more benefit to have employer and industry involvement in the development of the programme rather than at the end of the process as a panel member. If the drafting teams can evidence their engagement with employers and industry as part of the pre-event activities, then an industrial representative would not be required on Approval Panels unless requested specifically by the School/accrediting body or PSRB.

Student Engagement in Approval Process

As part of the University system for the approval of new programmes, students should be consulted to ascertain their views on the new programme / programme amendment and its structure.

Schools should make arrangements in good time to include engagement with students during the drafting process. Graduates can also provide useful input and there should be a professional/industrial member on the drafting team to ensure their input into the development of the programme at the earliest point.

It is acknowledged that it can be difficult to seek students' views for completely new programmes and subject areas, nevertheless, due consideration should be given to the student view for any new addition to the School's portfolio. The drafting team are encouraged to facilitate feedback through Student/Staff Liaison Groups (SSLG), Divisional Programme Boards, cohort consultation meetings (including via VLE / video conferencing), wider student and alumni focus groups, individual engagement through systematic inclusion of students as members of design teams for new and existing programme developments, and through the systematic use of student feedback data. It is also good practice to include them on approval panels and review boards.

When approving significant amendments/additions to an existing programme, for example the addition of an Honours level, students on the existing programme will be invited to meet with the panel to provide their opinion on the proposed development and the implications for the student experience.

Where students participate in the programme approval process, this can be recorded in their Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) and the HEAR Activity Report Form is signed off by a member of QuEST.

CASE STUDY: SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE: STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN APPROVALS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROVISION

Prior to the approval event, students were engaged in co-creator focus group sessions where existing cohorts of students from all demographics talked openly about a range of issues including contact hours, assessment and assessment types. It became apparent from these meetings that students were keen to experience a mix of traditional and innovative learning and teaching approaches.

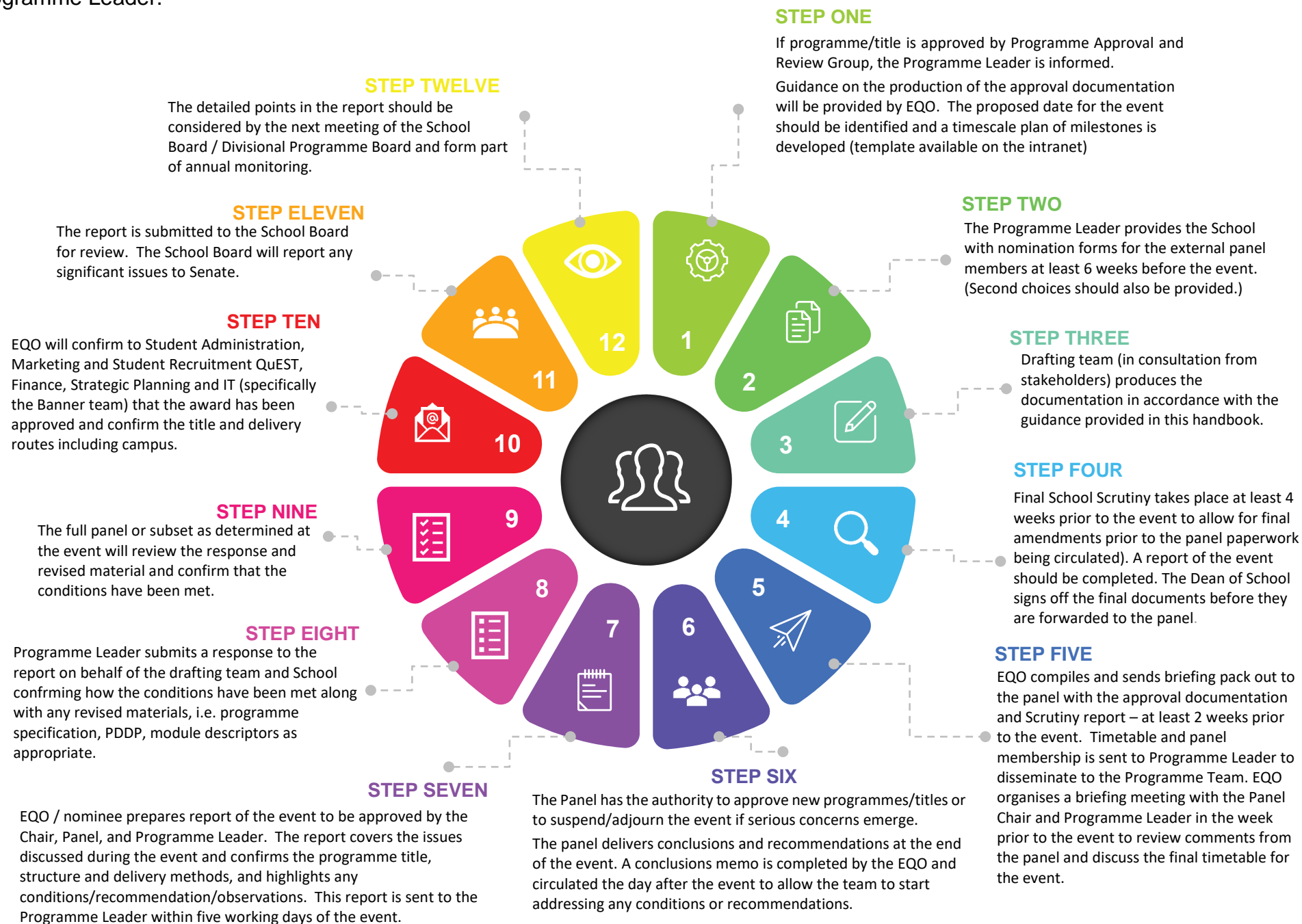
The feedback from these sessions informed the programme team's approach to the redevelopment of the undergraduate provision and led to the development of more choice in option modules, including greater use of 10 credit modules. It was hypothesised that these smaller modules would improve progression and retention as students would gain a sense of achievement over less time than the traditional 20 credit module.

Students involved in these sessions were subsequently invited to present at the approval event. The input from students set a very positive tone and provided a genuine flavour for the panel of the business student at UWS. The student input had created an inspiring atmosphere.

Post-approval communications with the students had shown that they had valued being involved in shaping the future of the programme.

The Approval Process

The approval process is organised by the School in consultation with the Programme Leader.



For more information on any stage of approval process, please contact your EQO.

Responsibilities of the Programme Leader

Programme Leaders are responsible for providing nominations for external panel members to the Dean of School as soon as possible after the Programme Approval and Review Group authorisation is received.

Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the documentation is prepared in line with the requirements of this handbook and relevant external organisations (such as PSRB or UKVI), submitted for scrutiny, and printed in sufficient quantities to supply the panel, programme team and the relevant Dean of School and the EQO. The Dean of School is responsible for confirming the quality of the final version of the document and fit with University Regulations before it is forwarded to the panel not less than two weeks before the event. Where panel members have a complaint about the process it is usually that insufficient time is allowed for reading the documentation and preparing for the event so if documents are not submitted in time to allow two clear weeks ready time the event is likely to be cancelled.

The Programme Leader is supplied with copies of all the briefing information sent to the panel by the EQO and is responsible for circulating these to the programme team for information.

The Programme Leader is responsible for identifying and inviting the appropriate members of teaching staff and students (if there is a related existing programme) and others to the event and advising them of the times of appropriate meetings. The programme team should include the programme and subject leaders and should cover all the specialist areas taught.

In making the arrangements for the event, the EQO will normally liaise directly with the Programme Leader who should ensure that the Dean and Deputy Dean are fully appraised of all arrangements.

Multi-location Delivery of a Programme

Individual programmes can be delivered across multiple locations; the panel will consider this as part of their discussions around the student experience. The programme specification and prospectus should make explicit the delivery approaches for each programme, with a more detailed breakdown provided for the panel to consider. This detailed breakdown should also be included in the student handbook.

Whilst teams can develop programmes for delivery across multiple locations it is important for students to be associated with a single campus for programme management purposes. The importance of clear information in the programme specification and prospectus is vital to allow Schools to manage student expectations. Detailed information on programme delivery is to be made available to students in advance of enrolment.

3 DOCUMENTATION FOR PROGRAMME APPROVAL

Introduction

There are a number of documents required in the programme approval process:

- Programme Design and Development Plan (PDDP);
- Programme Specification(s);
- Module Descriptors;
- Report from the Final School Scrutiny;
- Specific documentation to satisfy the requirements of PSRBs.

Programme specifications and module descriptors should be completed online via PSMD <http://psmd.staff.uws.ac.uk/>. Exceptionally, (for example where the programme is being developed with a partner who does not have access to PSMD), teams may use the templates available on the QuEST [intranet](#) site.

These documents are detailed on the following pages.

The panel will also be provided with the most recent appropriate Institution-Led Review report.

The School should ensure that:

- the documents are fully subject to a scrutiny process and signed off by the Dean of School;
- all documents are page numbered and include a contents page;
- a final proof check for typographical and spelling errors has taken place prior to printing;
- each document has a front cover with the following information included - University logo, name of the document, title(s) of the award(s) including single/major/joint/minor, name of School and the date of the event;
- watermarks do not appear on the documentation as this can interfere with the recipient's ability to read the text;
- the Programme Leader has provided the EQO with an appropriate number of hard copies of materials for the panel in line with timescales.

Circulation to the Panel

The EQO will ensure a briefing pack for all panel members is circulated which will include:

- An event programme;
- Panel membership;
- A briefing note for panel members;

- Background information on UWS;
- Expenses claim information;
- A campus map.

Programme Design & Development Plan (PDDP)

The PDDP describes how the proposed programme is to be introduced and developed to enable the panel to fully understand the drafting team's intention and how the provision links to aspirations of the Corporate Strategy. The programme specification is incorporated within this document.

The following information should be included within all PDDP documents:

- The standard front page;
- A programme structure table for each title outlining full and part-time journeys as appropriate and in line with UKVI requirements as necessary;
- Rationale for the title and level of the programme, with reference to the subject benchmark statement and the market for the award. The title should be consistent with University Regulations (Chapter 1), UWS Awards and SCQF, in that the name given to any qualification should represent appropriately the level of achievement, reflect accurately the field(s) of study, and not be misleading;
- Confirmation of the use of external reference points including Benchmark Statements, PSRB requirements, employer and graduate feedback;
- Delivery approaches including blended learning and single cohort delivery on multiple locations;
- A matrix to show the mapping of module outcomes and content to the programme learning outcomes should be included in the documentation;
- A mapping of assessments to ensure that assessment load has been considered and mitigated against;
- Confirmation that the proposal has taken full account of the Corporate Strategy, Enabling Plans, Regulatory Framework, Quality Handbook, Assessment Handbook, Graduate Attributes (I AM UWS) and relevant UWS policies, e.g. Copyright;
- Information relating to resources such as physical and lab space, equipment and consumables, the library and computing facilities;
- Where a programme is to be offered at more than one campus, the PDDP should articulate how the equivalence of student experience would be managed;
- Inclusivity in the curriculum;
- Internationalisation of the curriculum
- Management of the student experience including references to annual monitoring, student feedback opportunities and the specific needs of

part-time/online blended learning. Arrangements and support for direct entrants via RPL/APEL/admission requirements;

- Staff CVs / Pure Profiles.

Presentation to the Panel

Each event will start with a meet and greet to allow the panel to meet the Programme Leader and drafting team over coffee before the event commences formally. Following on from the meet and greet there should be a presentation by the School to provide a clear introduction to the proposal and focus the panel onto the development. If the presentation covered the following issues it would remove the need for them to be covered explicitly in the PDDP:

- Background to the development;
- Introduction to the Drafting Team;
- Programme development activities (stakeholder & student engagement);
- Staff expertise and resourcing;
- Research underpinning strategy;
- Student support and guidance;
- Future Plan and 5 Year Development;
- Link to the UWS Corporate Strategy.

Following the presentation the panel will be invited to ask any questions or discuss what they had heard from the School.

The programme for each event will provide an outline of what issues would be considered at each meeting to allow the School to ensure appropriate attendance and representation.

Programme Specifications

Programme specifications are required for all programmes and titles of the University.

Teams should note that the programme specifications will be public documents made available to potential students, employers and other stakeholders via PSMD. It is imperative that Programme Specifications and linked documentation complies with the [Competitions and Markets Authority guidance to HE providers](#).

Exit awards (CertHE/DipHE/Degree/Grad Cert/Grad Dip/PgC/PgD) may be included in the programme specification for the higher level award but learning outcomes should be delineated for each award.

Learning outcomes for each title and each award should be explicit, clearly articulated and distinct.

The programme specification will contain detailed information on:

- Admissions requirements;
- Teaching, learning & assessment approach;
- Employability, Graduate Attributes and PDP;
- Work Based Learning (WBL)/ Placement opportunities;
- Engagement and Attendance;
- Equality and Diversity;
- Pointers to further study.

Teams are reminded of the importance of the specifications containing detailed accurate information on the above as this will no longer be addressed in the PDDP.

- Guidance on Programme Specifications
- All programme specifications for Honours programmes should make reference to the appropriate Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark (see QAA website for most recent version);
- Schools should ensure that Programme Specifications are explicit with regards to progression and award criteria including any fall-back awards available. This is particularly pertinent given the future further automation of assessment boards;
- Cognisance should be taken of the SCQF, with particular attention to Level Descriptors, which set out the characteristic outcomes, which would be expected to be found at each level of study;
- Academic support for developing all areas of the Programme Specification including the wording of level specific learning outcomes is available from UWS Academy and Education Futures;
- Further guidance on completing PSMD, can be found on the programme approvals area of the intranet.

Module Descriptors

Module descriptors should be included as part of the programme approval documentation in a separate bound document. This includes existing and new modules. The drafting of all modules should be completed via PSMD. It is not necessary to include all option modules open to prospective students, although recommended option modules should be included. Others should be available if requested by the panel.

The panel will review the core modules for the title/programme, both existing and new modules. New modules should be considered by the Divisional Programme Board before the event. The panel will provide the required external input.

Guidance on Presentation of Module Descriptors in Programme Approval Documentation

To enable the panel to easily navigate through the module descriptors submitted for approval it is recommended that:

- The modules be ordered by level and then by core/option. It would also be useful if any new modules could be easily identified either by making bold or underlining the titles;
- The learning outcomes stated in the module descriptors are appropriate for the level of the programme and in keeping with the expectations of the SCQF and include all exit awards;
- Programme teams should consider carefully the use of pre-requisites within their programme structure and module specifications as this can prevent student progression;
- References and reading lists are up to date;
- Academic support for developing all areas of the module descriptor including the wording of Learning Outcomes is available from UWS Academy and Education Futures.

Module Descriptors – Assessment Detail

To ensure that module descriptors are responsive to change, it is recommended that the detail on assessment is kept **minimal** and that the specific assignments are detailed in the module handbooks. As module handbooks are understandably not usually available for approval events, this can make the process of understanding the assessment strategy difficult for panels. It is therefore recommended that a summary of the assessments is provided for panel members separate from the module descriptor.

For example,

- What is the balance of formative and summative assessment?
- How will formative assessment take place?
- What kinds of summative assessments will students encounter on the module (written? practical? presentation? project? individual? group?) and why are these assessments the ones that are used?
- Is assessment staggered across the module's delivery, or does it all take place towards the end?
- How will assessments support the learning that takes place within the module?
- What innovative or novel types of assessment are being used within the module?

Whilst it is recommended that module descriptors do not detail the assessment, if the module descriptor simply states "Assignment 1", it is difficult for the panel to establish what and how the assessment enables the student to meet the learning outcomes. Therefore, within the descriptor there should be some detail, but not enough to make the module static E.g. Specify an essay of 2000 words, but not the

specific essay question. It can be helpful to provide an example of a module handbook to reassure the panel that students are provided with appropriately detailed information.

School Scrutiny

All programme documentation will be subject to scrutiny before being circulated to the panel. It is recommended that continual scrutiny occurs during the different phases of programme development and a final scrutiny should take place at least four weeks before the event to allow for timely circulation to the panel. The importance of timely, effective scrutiny should not be underestimated. It is recommended that a final scrutiny event is chaired by a senior member of the School and that the Programme Leader, drafting team, academics from outside of the immediate drafting team and other staff from within the School as appropriate are invited to attend. The EQO will attend the scrutiny meeting to advise on regulatory matters and will write a report documenting the revised requirements prior to the approval event.

Schools are responsible for the completeness, accuracy, integrity and quality of programme documentation. Schools are urged to take advice from the range of support services available on early drafts of documentation and use the [New Programme Scrutiny Checklist](#) to guide their developments. If final scrutiny raises any reservations about the proposal proceeding at this stage these should be raised immediately with the Head of QuEST via the Deputy Dean (ADE) or EQO in order that a decision can be taken as to whether the event should be postponed. Deans of Schools are responsible for signing off the documentation before despatch to the panel and for confirming resources and academic planning within Schools are in place as required to support the new programme and that the School is satisfied with the quality of the submission.

The [New Programme Scrutiny Checklist](#) is available to assist programme teams in meeting the typical requirements for an approval event. It is recommended that this is used early in the programme development in addition to the [Criteria for Programme Approval](#). Recent thematic reviews of programme approvals have highlighted that the majority of conditions resulting from events relate to documentation revisions.

A copy of the scrutiny report should be made available for the panel to review.

4 PROGRAMME APPROVAL EVENTS

Panel Membership

The panel is convened by the School on behalf of Senate and is usually chaired by a senior academic member of University staff. Internal members (University staff) are not normally specialists in the discipline under consideration but will usually have experience of programme approval and quality assurance systems. The panel will normally comprise two externals (two academics) and three internals including the Chair. A senior member of QuEST will be present to advise on regulations and the

academic infrastructure. There may be different panels for events that include professional body accreditation.

External members are invited to participate on the basis of their subject expertise as an academic or professional. There should normally be a minimum of two externals though the School or professional body may request additional panel members to cover the specialisms brought forward for approval.

The Programme Leader is asked to make external nominations to the panel using proformas at least six weeks in advance of the event. Second choices should also be identified. If nominations are not submitted by this deadline, the event may be cancelled. There is no honorarium for panel members but expenses are covered and overnight accommodation can be provided.

While existing External Examiners may make helpful comments at various stages of curriculum design and review, they may not be involved as members of Approval Panels.

The panel membership is balanced to reflect the nature and objectives of the event and the characteristics of the programme.

Panel members require to receive the full programme documentation, an outline programme and briefing notes three weeks in advance of the visit. They are invited to highlight issues to be raised during the event in advance to assist the Chair in preparing for the event.

Format of the Event

Approval events are normally held over a full day (e.g. 9.30am to 4.00pm) to give the panel appropriate time to meet with senior staff, to hold discussions with the programme team, review the facilities and possibly meet with students and other stakeholders.

There are some events where it may be appropriate to hold a half day event. This would usually be considered for awards where the panel was considering six modules or less such as:

- addition of an honours level;
- graduate certificate or diploma award;
- postgraduate certificate or diploma award.

However, if the provision constitutes a new subject area for the institution then this would still normally require a full day event.

The length of the visit and timing may also be influenced by the requirements of any professional and accrediting bodies involved in the approval.

Criteria for Appointment of Panel Chairs

The Chair of the panel has a key role in managing the agenda for the day, directing questions and ensuring all members of the panel have the opportunity to participate fully in discussions.

Consequently, there are certain minimum criteria which Senate would normally expect to be satisfied by panel chairs. Chairs will normally be able to demonstrate at least two of the following characteristics:

- 1 Be a member of EAC and therefore conversant with the national and internal policies and activities supporting the enhancement-led agenda;
- 2 Have experience as a University Programme Leader who has taken one or more programmes through the approval process;
- 3 Be a trained QAA or PSRB Reviewer;
- 4 Be a Dean, Deputy Dean, Divisional Programme Board Chair or Senior Lecturer at the University of the West of Scotland, or a Director or Deputy Director or Head of a Professional Service Department.

All panel chairs will be expected to participate in the training event provided by QuEST before chairing an event for the first time.

Criteria for Appointment of External Panel Members

Nominations for external panel members should be submitted to the School at the earliest opportunity to ensure that availability of first choice externals is maximised. There should normally be a minimum of two externals, though the School or professional body may request additional panel members to cover the specialisms brought forward for approval. The School should scrutinise the nominations proposed by the programme team, taking into account the following:

- It may be prudent not to choose someone from a close or competitor institution;
- The full breadth of the programme's provision must be covered by the externals;
- At least one external panel member should have experience of programme development and leadership in HE;
- Engagement with an AdvanceHE Subject Centre and/or QAA Subject Benchmarking activity would be an advantage.

Once external panel members are identified, the programme team should not consult with them. The EQO or nominee will be responsible for inviting external panel members to be involved in the approval event.

Those precluded from the nomination process include honorary professors, visiting lecturers, Recognised Teachers of the University (RTU), or any person deemed to be in current employment of the University. In addition external examiners, former members of staff or persons who have previously been members of Approval Panels cannot be nominated unless it has been more than four years since their previous appointment. Panel members should not be from areas where UWS currently has colleagues acting as External Examiners within the specific subject/programme area under review. Retired professionals/academics cannot normally be considered after 12 months has elapsed since their employment in the subject/HE, unless exceptional circumstances exist and continuing practice within the sector can be evidenced.

Selection of Internal Panel Members

The internal panel members will usually include the following:

- An internal Chair who meets the criteria noted above;
- Two members of staff from outwith the School proposing the new programme, at least one of whom is an academic who has experience of programme development and/or leadership;
- A senior member of QuEST will be in attendance at all events.

Criteria for Programme Approval

The following criteria are drawn to the attention of Approval Panel members, Schools and drafting teams and will be explored during the event:

- a) The programme team should understand the principles, philosophy and processes underpinning the programme. There should be evidence of external reference points having influenced the curriculum and, where appropriate, there should have been industrial/professional input in the drafting process and exploration of the likely demand for the programme. They should have thought through the intellectual development and the planned experience of a student taking the programme and they should have addressed the implications for direct entrants into the programme via RPL. The rationale for the future development of the programme should be clear.
- b) The programme should be able to realise its educational aims and intended learning outcomes and meet the framework set out in the appropriate QAA Subject Benchmark Statements. Learning outcomes for each level and exit award proposed should be explicit.
- c) The curriculum should be coherent, realistic and of comparable academic standard to similar programmes and awards of other UK Higher Education providers. The content of the programme should be relevant to its title and outcomes. There should be an appropriate balance between academic and practical elements. The sequence, level and progression of content should be appropriate and in line with the SCQF and appropriately articulated in programme and module learning outcomes at each level. The balance between the depth and breadth of the curriculum should be appropriate to the award.
- d) The programme should be suitable for a range of learners in addition to full-time students. Consideration should have been given to equality and diversity matters. Programme Specifications and Module Descriptors should be complete and clear to their intended audiences, including students.
- e) The title and content of any exit awards including minor/joint specifications must be addressed by the panel and discussed in the report of the event. These should be in line with the SCQF and Chapter 1 of the University's Regulatory Framework.
- f) The intended methods of teaching, learning and assessment should be explicit, appropriate and effective.

- g) The regulations regarding student admission, programme structure, progression, assessment and examination should be those of the University Regulatory Framework. Any deviations that are identified at scrutiny should be brought to the attention of the University Secretary. The scheme of assessment should make it possible to test the extent to which students have achieved level and programme outcomes.
- h) The level of study proposed in the final stage of the programme should be appropriate in relation to the award to which it will lead. There should be distinct outcomes for single/major/joint and minor awards at all levels.
- i) The facilities and resources should be sufficient to support the programme adequately and appropriate resource planning in place with any risks identified and addressed. Staff development and research should be ongoing at an appropriate level. Staff CVs/Pure profiles are included in approval documentation.
- j) Learning and teaching strategies should be compliant with equal opportunities policies and promote a critical understanding of discrimination, diversity and other related concepts in the context of education and society.
- k) There should be appropriate student support systems in place.
- l) Clear mechanisms should be in place for the maintenance of the standard of the award(s) and the continuing enhancement of the quality of the students' programme of study.
- m) The objectives and integration of sandwich or other work-based learning or professional placement arrangements should be articulated.
- n) How employability skills and graduate attributes, including the principles of Global Citizenship and PDP, are integrated into the programme and how information on career opportunities is communicated to students should be included.
- o) There should be clear systems in place to gather and respond to student feedback and for broader student engagement in learning, teaching and assessment.
- p) Embedding of research skills and relevant underpinning should be evident across all programmes.

The extent to which particular issues will need emphasis will vary according to the event in question. The panel will also take cognisance of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education on [Course Design and Development](#).

The panel has the authority to approve the proposal on behalf of Senate where the criteria for programme approval have been adequately addressed and to specify any conditions which require to be met before the programme can commence as well as any recommendations and observations to enhance the programme and the student experience. The panel is also invited to highlight elements of good practice.

Alternatively, the panel may reject the proposal if it has serious reservations about its structure, content, quality or standard. The Chair may request an adjournment of the

programme approval process at any point during the proceedings if it looks unlikely that the panel will be able to reach a positive outcome.

Outcomes of the Approval Event

During the final private meeting of the panel, it is essential that the main points of agreement or disagreement are identified, and decisions reached about the future action required. Guidance is available from the senior QuEST panel member, if required. There are several possible decisions which the panel may agree on behalf of Senate:

- **Adjournment:** the Chair has authority to adjourn the event at any point during the day if the proposal is not of the standard or quality required to achieve approval but the panel has confidence that this can be rectified in the short-term and is willing to reconvene at a later date to consider a revised proposal;
- **Approval for a period not exceeding six years subject to University monitoring and review procedures:** thereafter the programme will normally be incorporated in the University's periodic Institution-Led Review which operates on a six-year cycle;
- **Conditional approval:** approval may be made conditional upon the fulfilment of certain requirements by a specified date. The panel should agree and specify how such conditions will be met. If however, there appears to be a large number of conditions emerging then the panel, directed by the Chair, should consider if the programme can be approved at this stage or if the event should be adjourned. This would be appropriate for example if more than **four conditions** appeared necessary;
- **Approval for a limited period:** exceptionally, the panel may decide that approval should be limited if there remain particular concerns that have not been fully satisfied by the programme team. In such cases the panel should make a recommendation on the process to achieve a full approval when the specified period is concluded. This decision is also appropriate for programmes jointly approved with professional bodies or for collaborative provision;
- **Refusal of approval:** approval may be refused if there is evidence that the programme does not meet minimum acceptable standards and the panel does not have confidence that this can be rectified in the short-term.

There will normally be "**Recommendations**" (which require a response from the **School**) and "**Observations**" attached to the report - these may highlight areas of good practice and/or be issues to draw to the attention of parts of the University outwith the programme team.

Appeals against Approval Decisions

If a drafting team wishes to contest a decision made by an Approval Panel it should first seek to resolve the issue at the level at which the decision was originally made

by contacting the Head of Quality Enhancement Support Team (QuEST). The drafting team may escalate an appeal to EAC, the decision of EAC shall be final. An appeal to EAC should be regarded as a last resort.

Conditions Relating to Programme Approval

Chairs will summarise the approval conditions and recommendations upon which the panel have agreed: this will form the basis of the report of the event. Once these statements are agreed by the panel, they are communicated orally to the Programme Leader by the Chair at the conclusion of the event.

If conditional approval is given to a programme, Chairs are asked to establish the mechanisms and timescales by which the conditions are to be met:

- Where the documentation requires substantial revision, it is appropriate for the whole panel to approve the amendments;
- Where minor amendments are required to a programme, it is appropriate for the Chair, with or without other panel member(s), to approve the amendments;
- Where conditions have been set, the School is required to provide assurance that these have been satisfactorily addressed within the required timescale.

It is a requirement that programme teams address the conditions made at approval stage urgently and produce revised programme documentation if required by the deadline specified by the panel.

If conditions are not met by the deadline set by the panel, the programme may not commence.

Procedures after the Event

Conclusions Memo

The panel gives its conclusions and recommendations verbally at the end of the event and a conclusion memo is completed by the EQO – see [template](#) and circulated to the panel, programme team and School the day after the event to allow the team to start addressing any conditions or recommendations.

The Report

The EQO or nominee also compiles a detailed written report of the event outlining:

- The presentation by the School;
- Rationale for development and target audience;
- Confirmed programme structure and student journey;
- Confirmed title and delivery mode;
- The discussions which took place including the conclusions recommended by the panel;
- Outline any conditions and/or recommendations set by the panel & context.

Approval reports demonstrate the University's public accountability for the standards achieved by their programmes. Peer groups' academic judgements, and the evidence on which they are based, must be substantiated and accessible through reports.

Approval of the Report

- The draft report must be approved by the Chair of the Panel and checked by the Programme Leader for accuracy before circulation to all members of the panel. The panel's comments are returned to the School for incorporation into the draft.

Programme Leader Response to the Report

- The Programme Leader is responsible for providing a brief response to the report on behalf of the drafting team and the School to address how conditions/recommendations have been/will be addressed, this will be attached to the report and confirmed by signature of Chair of panel.
- EAC may review any report and consider the Programme Leader response having reviewed the annual summary of programme approval outcomes report which is prepared by QuEST.

Circulation of Approved Final Report

- The approved report is circulated to the Programme Leader. The School also notifies Admissions / Student Recruitment, QuEST, Strategic Planning, Marketing & Communications, Finance, Banner and colleagues in Student Administration that the programme(s) has/have been approved and conditions met and provides copies of revised materials if requested;
- The Programme Divisional Board should review the report in detail on behalf of the School Board and take forward and record longer term issues for enhancement;
- The first Programme Monitoring Report prepared following the approval event should address the issues in the report.

Final Programme Documentation

The University is required to have on file the documentation relating to each programme as it is currently being taught and administered.

One copy of the approved PDDP is required by QuEST. Copies of previous programme documents which relate to former versions of programmes will be stored for future reference on the PSMD catalogue.

Student Handbook

Following the approval event the Programme Leader will ensure a student handbook is drafted. Core text for this is provided by the Court & Senate Office.

EAC and Senate Overview

Annually QuEST will prepare a report for EAC and Senate providing an overview of recommendations and conditions to ensure Senate has a complete understanding of the approvals and the range of issues arising at approval events. UWS Academy and Education Futures will use this information in taking forward staff development to support future approval of programmes.

5 PROGRAMME APPROVAL FOR ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMMES

The normal approval procedures will apply to online learning programmes in terms of new programme proposal requirements, guidance and submission paperwork which are addressed above in this handbook. Programme Leaders will be expected to follow the timescales for submitting external panel member nominations, submitting documentation etc. The EQO or nominee will be responsible for organising the internal panel, and preparing the report.

Approval issues specific to online learning to be addressed are noted below:

Online Learning Programme Development

- 1 Before any online learning programme is developed, consultation should take place between the drafting team, Education Futures and ITDS to test the viability, scope and necessary development investment relevant to the proposed programme.
- 2 If the proposal is considered viable, the School should process the proposal via the normal new programme proposal procedures – Programme Approval and Review Group should also be advised of the proposed new mode of delivery for the programme even if the proposal is to deliver an existing programme via online delivery and the development and ongoing support activities require to be fully costed.

There should be clarification on whether:

- there will only, or mainly, be the use of online learning materials;
 - communication and academic support of students is to be wholly, or mainly, online;
 - the support of a local agent is to be used for students to access resources, academic support or administrative functions.
- 3 Education Futures can provide advice and guidance on online learning and the use of Moodle and Mahara. The production of programme materials and student handbooks is the responsibility of the drafting team and the School.
 - 4 The team is asked to take cognisance of the relevant expectations of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and provide a clear commentary within the PDDP.

Quality Assurance

The principles for the quality assurance of online learning programmes are identical to those covering the planning, development and approval of all other taught programmes at UWS.

[UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education should be used by all developers of online learning programmes.

This should include comment on the following:

- Arrangements for learner support, academic guidance, online tutoring and supervision of any research element;
- Resources to support the programme including how online learning students will access them;
- Specification of the requirements that need to be met by prospective students to enable them to study e.g. Computer Hardware & Software Specifications.

Approval Panel for Online Learning Programme

The membership of the panel, unless otherwise recommended at the earlier stages of the approval process, will be the same as specified in section 4 of this handbook, with the additional proviso that there should be at least one external academic panel member from another UK Higher Education Provider experienced in the operation of an online learning programme, normally, in an area cognate to the proposed programme.

Additional Materials

Before the event the external panel members will receive the documentation (Programme Specification, PDDP and Module Descriptors). The panel members should also be enrolled onto Moodle and therefore have access to the VLE and have an understanding of the facilities students will be able to access should the programme be approved. The team should have at least one fully developed online module available for the panel to review to be able use as an example of the approach being taken to the teaching, learning and assessment, and student support. This will enable the panel to confirm the appropriateness of the approach being taken for this online programme and to protect and enhance the student experience. Where an online route is being developed from an existing blended or fully face to face programme that is already approved, the panel would need clear evidence of how the team have ensured equivalence of experience, access to resources, and learning and assessment methods.

The drafting team and School should also have prepared a plan with clearly identified timescales for the preparation of the programme materials to ensure that the materials are ready in time for the programme to commence and, where possible, have exemplar materials for the panel to review. The panel may also decide as a condition of approval that the final materials are circulated to all members of the panel to review.

The Event

The event will follow the usual University format for the approval/review of programmes but should also include a demonstration of Moodle for the panel (or alternative VLE/format if that is to be used), especially for any members of the panel who have little or no previous experience of working with a VLE. It is the responsibility of the drafting team to facilitate this demonstration.

Outcomes of the Event

The outcomes for an event of an online learning programme are the same as those for any blended/face to face taught programme.

6 POSTAL APPROVAL (Modules & Programmes)

There are occasions where it may be appropriate to undertake a postal approval rather than an event-based approval. This type of approval typically requires the current external examiner to review the revised or refreshed module(s) / programme and complete a postal approval report (template available from QuEST). The external will be paid a set fee of £150.00 (subject to tax and NI) for completing the postal approval report. There are a number of scenarios where a postal approval may be the most efficient and effective approach – please note this list is not exhaustive:

- When the team wish to make a change to a programme that is more significant than that permitted through the amendment process and the programme has recently been subject to an ILR;
- Where the programme team wish to change a small number of core modules associated with the requirements for award but where the programme learning outcomes are not significantly affected;
- Where the team wish to add in an additional bracket or named specialism to an existing programme framework;
- Where the team wish to make a number of changes to a suite of cognate modules due to professional body or accreditation requirements.

Please consult with colleagues in QuEST to explore other options where a postal event may be appropriate.

Process for Postal Approval

Once it has been agreed to review and refresh the programme/module(s) the programme leader/module co-ordinator should consult with their EQO and QuEST to determine if a postal approval event is appropriate. QuEST will review the postal approval template and adjust the content to ensure the focus of the reporting is targeted as appropriate and will send to the EQO.

The programme leader/module co-ordinator will identify the relevant external examiner and the EQO will send an invitation to ascertain if the external would be willing to support a postal approval. If the external agrees to undertake the review they should be sent a copy of the documentation and given a deadline for submitting

the completed postal approval report template. The EQO should be identified as the first contact for the external to speak to should they require any further support or information. Once the report has been received and any subsequent required action has been undertaken to the external's satisfaction, the EQO will raise the fee for the external. The postal approval event has the same status as an approval report from an event and should be reviewed by the School Board and considered at annual monitoring. The postal report should be retained by the School and copy sent to QuEST.

Documentation for a Postal Event

Depending on the changes being considered by the postal approval event the documentation will vary accordingly, obviously the external will wish to understand the changes that are being proposed so the following material will be required:

- Current approved version of the module descriptors/programme specification;
- Revised version of module descriptor (s)/programme specification;
- Overview document outlining the rationale for the change;
- Tailored postal approval template (available from QuEST);
- [Postal Approval Briefing Note](#) (available via the [intranet](#)).

Additional material such as PSRB approval requirements, outcomes of ILRs or Divisional Programme Board minutes may also help support the proposal.

Please contact QuEST if you have any questions or queries regarding postal approval.

7 APPROVAL OF WORK-BASED LEARNING CREDIT BEARING PROVISION

In line with the Education Enabling Plan, approval panels will explore with drafting teams how they are recording and supporting work-based learning and placement opportunities within their programmes for all students whether in the UK or abroad.

The University recognises a range of work-based and placement learning – the [University procedure](#) should be reviewed and adhered to.

8 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SHORT COURSES (NON-CREDIT BEARING) AND EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION

Short courses are defined as non-credit bearing and which do not lead to a University award.

Approval of Short Courses

The School Board will be responsible for the approval and monitoring of any short courses within their portfolio, i.e. those covered by the SCQF.

The School Board will establish mechanisms for the approval of such courses. Approval by the School Board will normally be sufficient unless the short course leads to a University award, in which case, it will be subject to the normal University approval process.

Annual Monitoring of Short Courses

School Boards are responsible for the annual monitoring of any short courses within their portfolio including those which do not lead to a SCQF award of the University.

School Boards should decide what method of annual monitoring is most appropriate for each short course and to confirm the ongoing quality of provision in the learning and teaching. Consideration of any short courses should form part of the Divisional Programme Board annual monitoring processes. There may also be additional annual monitoring requirements as determined by professional bodies.

NMC Approved Short Courses

Such cases must be jointly approved by the University and NMC requirements. Normally a representative from EAC will represent the University at these joint approval events.

9 PROGRAMME CLOSURE/ WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PORTFOLIO

When a School wishes to close a programme for whatever reason the following procedure will normally apply:

- a) The School Board prepares a report outlining the following:
 - Rationale for closure;
 - Proposed date for closure;
 - Arrangements for students currently on the programme – at all levels of the award and campuses/sites of delivery/students on suspension/ students enrolled as resit only;
 - Consideration of part-time/direct entry students;
 - Impact of closure on other provision within the School/other Schools;
 - Any potential Equality Impact should be considered through the agreed procedure;
 - Implications on staffing resources;
 - Professional Body Associations that may need to be informed of the closure;
 - External Examiner appointments which may need to be terminated early (or may need to be extended for resits of last cohort);
 - Explanation of transitional arrangements, particularly for part time students and proposals for ongoing resit/reassessment needs.

- b) The School will then submit the report to Programme Approval and Review Group which will make a recommendation to EAC on programme closure. EAC will report this recommendation to Senate.
- c) Once EAC has approved the closure of the programme, the School should undertake a formal consultation with all affected students highlighting the options they have in terms of completing the programme or transferring to other awards if they desire. Transitional arrangements for part-time students or students who receive a resit decision in the final year of operation should be discussed. The written agreement of students wishing to transfer to another programme should be obtained. All students currently enrolled on the programme should have the opportunity to exit with the award. The School should inform Admissions that the award is being withdrawn; they will then inform UCAS. The Admissions Office will also produce letters for students offering alternative programmes.
- d) The School should then inform Recruitment / Admissions, Strategic Planning, Information Technology and Digital Services, Student Administration and QuEST that the programme is being withdrawn from the portfolio and that there will be no new recruitment to the award. The School should outline when the programme will finally be withdrawn from the portfolio and programmes having taken into account part-time student completion times and any resit/re-assessment issues.

10 PROGRAMME AMENDMENTS

Amendments to existing Programme of Study

Divisional Programme Boards are responsible for agreeing changes to programmes on behalf of the School. At the beginning of each session, Schools should review the PSMD Catalogue.

When processing programme amendments, the following should be noted:

- A [Programme Amendment Form](#) should be completed. Pro-forma available from the QuEST staff portal site. Schools should retain completed forms;
- All programme amendments must be considered and approved by the Divisional Programme Board with current responsibility for the programme. It is recommended that programme amendments are considered annually by the Divisional Programme Board, usually in March;
- The EQO must be consulted regarding all proposed programme amendments. It is recommended that consultation with the EQO takes place prior to the Divisional Programme Board where approval of the programme amendment is being sought to allow any quality assurance matters and regulatory matters to be highlighted and resolved in advance;

- Consultation with School Assessment Board External Examiners to the programme(s) should form part of the process for all programme amendments;
- Any change to programme title, structure, significant content or assessment regulations, which will affect progressing students, will require formal consultation with affected students;
- In cases where the programme structure and requirements are to be amended, module co-ordinators for modules involved in the changes (i.e. modules to be removed or added, modules to alter core/option status change to learning outcomes) must be consulted. Other affected Divisional Programme Boards must also be consulted in these instances;
- Consultation with the School Board and QuEST is necessary where proposed changes will result in more than one core module at each level of the programme being amended or replaced. The impact on the programme specification must be addressed when modules are amended or replaced. Any greater volume of change to modules, level outcomes or programmes will require a full re-approval event.
- When a change to an existing programme title is proposed, the Programme Approval and Review Group must be consulted
- Following approval of all programme amendments, revised programme specification(s) must also be lodged on the PSMD Catalogue for reference purposes;
- Relevant Professional Services (e.g. Strategic Planning, QuEST, Student Administration, Marketing & Communications and Student Recruitment / Admissions) will thereafter be notified of any pertinent changes.

Proposed Programme Changes

The procedure for amendments to programmes as described indicates that Divisional Programme Boards are responsible for agreeing changes to programmes on behalf of the School and must complete a Programme Amendment Form. However, where significant changes to an existing programme are being proposed such as more than one core module being changed per level, changes to the title, philosophy, content or learning outcomes - or the addition of new modes of delivery such as significant online learning or WBL elements, or addition of an Honours Level - it is likely to be appropriate to formally review the programme via a re-approval event. Due to the prominence of the Corporate Strategy and the desire to maximise honours provision, these may be classed as new titles and require New Programme Proposals to be completed.

New UWS Campus/Mode of Delivery

Where a School wishes to offer existing provision at another campus or via a new mode of delivery, programme leaders must consult with key partners across the institution, students, external examiners and PSRBs where required. A form has

been created to support this activity which removes the requirement to undertake a formal approval event.

The “**Additional Delivery Form – campus/mode**” can be found on the [intranet](#). The form should be completed by the programme leader and signed off by the School Board and confirms that all relevant steps have been completed and all affected stakeholders have been consulted. This removes the requirement to undertake a formal approval event.

If the approval of additional campus(es) results in the withdrawal from another campus(es) this **needs** to be addressed separately to ensure that the students’ rights under **consumer law** are protected and to confirm the appropriate support and transition arrangements have been developed.

If Tier 4 students (non-EEA) are to be taught on additional campus(es) it is **essential** that consultation with the **UWS UKVI Key Contact and Compliance Officer** has been conducted before teaching commences. All new teaching sites for Tier 4 students **must** be registered in advance with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

Once the additional campus/route for delivery has been approved by the School Board, the programme leader is responsible for updates of all relevant documentation and materials such as the programme specification, module descriptors, student handbooks and Moodle sites. The programme leader is also responsible for advising Student Administration, Marketing and Recruitment, ITDS, Strategic Planning, affected students and the relevant external examiner of the approved changes.

Blended Learning, Face to Face and Online Approval

Programme leaders should follow the standard programme amendment process for the additional of a blended learning route to an approved face to face or online programme. However, for the creation of a wholly online or wholly face to face route for an approved programme, an internal approval event will be required to consider the learning and teaching approaches, assessment methods, supporting resources and the student journey and experience.

Change to Existing Programme Titles

Where a new programme title is proposed for an existing programme, EAC approval (on behalf of Senate) will be required due to potential resource and strategic planning implications even if the award comprises all or mostly existing modules. Ultimately Senate must ensure it has an overview of the University’s portfolio of awards.

In such instances, submission of a Programme Amendment Form approved by the Divisional Programme Board and School Board, comprising rationale in support of the proposal is required for submission to the Programme Approval and Review Group for consideration. The group will then make a formal recommendation to EAC. A draft of the updated Programme Specification should also be submitted with this form.

Programme Specification and Module Descriptor (PSMD) Catalogue and Ownership of Material

The source for published version of programme specifications will be the PSMD Catalogue.

Ownership of the definitive electronic version of material lodged on the PSMD Catalogue will be retained by the School.

11 APPROVAL OF NEW MODULES/MODULE AMENDMENT

Module Amendment Process

At the start of each academic session, the Module Structure Database Administrator will provide Schools with a module spreadsheet for consideration. The spreadsheet of modules is submitted to the Divisional Programme Board for consideration during the academic session by the School Executive Manager. Any module amendments are recorded on the spreadsheet (including a description of the change being made) and noted in the Divisional Programme Board minutes. The responsibility for the approval and recording of module amendments remain with the relevant Divisional Programme Board.

Module amendments should be clearly articulated in the spreadsheet and captured in the Divisional Programme Board minutes and then formally noted on the Module Review forms which are completed on an annual basis as part of the annual monitoring cycle.

It is recommended that EQO check the list of amendments against the reporting in PSMD to establish accuracy.

Major/Minor Amendments to Modules

For minor module amendments (i.e. updating of reading lists or a change to module moderator), no additional detail would be required in the Divisional Programme Board minutes, but for major changes (see below), a rationale should be noted in the minutes to capture the deliberate steps being taken to enhance the student experience as part of the subject development:

- Change of Divisional Programme Board;
- Module title;
- Credit level of the module;
- Credit points of the module;
- Methods of assessment/weighting of assessment;
- Learning outcomes.

Major changes to LTA approaches or learning outcomes should involve consultation with the relevant External Examiner and other appropriate stakeholders e.g. students and regulatory bodies.

N.B. These amendments may be made locally within the School; however it should be highlighted that such changes will therefore **not** be reflected on the PSMD Catalogue until the next formal update.

External Examiner Module Allocation

If the School wish to make changes to the allocation of an external examiner or add an external examiner to a new module, this must go through the approved process and the appropriate reallocation form should be submitted to QuEST.

Module Amendment Process



New Module Approval & Module Amendment Guidance

The procedures below take full cognisance of the University's commitment to quality assurance and enhancement and that the approval process ensures that the credit level of new modules is given appropriate consideration in line with SCQF.

As of the current session, new modules should be created directly on the PSMD Catalogue instead of using the old Module Descriptor template. The approval and quality assurance procedures for new modules/amendments will remain the same. If you have any questions or queries about using PSMD with regards to the new module creation on the PSMD Catalogue, please contact your EQO in the first instance. There is also guidance available on the intranet to assist in using PSMD.

- 1 Before the start of each session, the Module Structure Database Administrator will supply each School with a spreadsheet summarising the modules approved for delivery in the forthcoming academic session. This master spreadsheet will be a list of all approved modules together with information about the School Assessment Board and Divisional Programme Board to which they are attached and the date they were last amended.
- 2 In September, the School will confirm the allocation of Divisional Programme Boards and School Assessment Board Panels to the modules as being correct for the forthcoming session.
- 3 During the period from September to February, Schools will amend the spreadsheet to update the status of modules for the forthcoming academic session. The spreadsheet will record module descriptors which remained unchanged, those with amendments and those to be deleted. New modules will be added.
- 4 For module amendments the spreadsheet will specify the changes made. The School should check the spreadsheet for accuracy against the reports available in PSMD.
- 5 Approval for new modules and amendments to existing modules will be the responsibility of the Divisional Programme Board. The Divisional Programme Board Chair's signature will confirm module additions and amendments. Where new modules are proposed as part of an approval programme, the panel acts as the external input to the process. However these should first be processed through the Divisional Programme Board in the same way as all other new modules and module amendments.
- 6 Input by external advisers and students is a key component in the approval of new modules or major amendments.
- 7 When the Divisional Programme Board has approved new modules and amendments, the overall spreadsheet will be signed off by the School Board. In particular, new modules should be brought to the attention of School Board.
- 8 New and updated material should be lodged onto the PSMD Catalogue. Any withdrawn modules should be removed and archived appropriately within the

PSMD Catalogue. This task should be undertaken by the designated School Administrator(s).

- 9 The completed spreadsheet will be returned to the Module Structure Database Administrator, who will access relevant new and amended module descriptors from the PSMD Catalogue.
- 10 The deadline for submission of the School module spreadsheets and updating module descriptors on the PSMD Catalogue will be **31 March**.
- 11 The allocation of module codes is the responsibility of the Module Structure Database Administrator.
- 12 Where modules (new or amended) will lead to a change greater than one core module being amended or removed per level, this must be flagged to the EQO as a formal re-approval may be required.
- 13 Ownership of the definitive electronic version of material lodged on the PSMD Catalogue will be retained by the School.

Timescales for Approval

In order to ensure modules are confirmed for the following session, approval of all new and amended modules must take place by **31 March annually**.

12 PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION OF UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES

Professional accreditation is the official recognition awarded by a PSRB as a result of the University meeting specific standards or criteria. Alongside University approved programmes, the aim of professional accreditation is to secure for students a high quality of academic and professional experience and also to provide enhanced opportunities for graduates entering their chosen profession, either through confirmation of fitness to practice exemption from professional examinations or fast-tracking towards chartered or similar status.

Agencies such as SFC annually request information regarding programmes that have been accredited by professional bodies and the issues raised. This information is also relevant to ILR and annual monitoring. Details of accredited programmes therefore need to be held by Schools.

The development and drafting of documents for submission to PSRBs (both before and after accreditation visits) is the responsibility of the School.

Responsibility of the School

The responsibility for coordinating and monitoring the process of professional accreditation lies with the School. Schools are also responsible for ensuring that the accreditation documents meet the requirements outlined in the Key stages flowchart,

in conjunction with the quality and standards and the deadlines prescribed by the PSRB.

As part of the School Board remit for overseeing and developing its portfolio of programmes, information on all programme accreditations by PSRBs is normally reviewed early in the academic session. The School will use this information to maintain the School-wide data on professional accreditation and the calendar of visits to inform the SFC response.

For existing programmes, Schools should be aware of when accreditations expire as they are responsible for ensuring programmes remain accredited. Schools are responsible for making all arrangements concerned with accreditation and to ensure that the stages of accreditation have been followed.

Responsibility of the Programme Leader

The Programme Leader (or Programme Leader designate for new programmes) will normally take the lead in the preparation of accreditation documentation, for correspondence with the PSRB and for making the arrangements for an accreditation visit where necessary. Where it is hoped to incorporate the professional accreditation with the initial or re-approval, this should be flagged in the New Programme Proposals form. The Programme Leader is responsible for keeping the School Board and the Divisional Programme Board informed of all PSRB activity.

Care should be taken to ensure that the appropriate documents take into consideration the range of issues to be addressed in submission documents and address recommendations made during the accreditation.

Responsibility of Deputy Dean

The Deputy Dean will be advised by the programme leader of all matters relating to professional accreditation and will ensure appropriate monitoring in line with the University's annual monitoring system.

The Deputy Dean will inform and advise the School Board on issues arising from PSRB visits and reports as appropriate.

Responsibility of the Divisional Programme Board

Divisional Programme Boards are the bodies responsible for monitoring programmes. Divisional Programme Boards will have an oversight of matters relating to and arising from professional accreditation activities and reports and will comment on such in the annual Programme Monitoring Report (formerly Programme Annual Report).

Responsibility of the Quality Enhancement Support Team (QuEST)

QuEST has an advisory role in relation to professional accreditation. The Team is able to offer guidance on University Regulations, quality assurance and enhancement approaches and, can attend the accreditation event in an advisory capacity, if required.

Responsibility of the School Education and Quality Officer (EQO)

The EQO can comment on both the draft accreditation document in terms of any reference to regulations and quality provided, and the draft School response to the report as outlined in the key stages below.

The EQO will also seek information from colleagues in the Schools on the schedule of forthcoming accreditation visits. This information will be used to collate the annual SFC response (September) and ensure EAC is kept informed of issues raised by PSRBs.

Responsibility of School Board

The School Board has oversight of professional accreditation and will sign off the final version of the accreditation documentation prior to it being sent to the PSRB. EAC will maintain an overview of matters raised and any issues for ILR and staff development.

Details of Professional Accredited Provision at UWS

The School is responsible for maintaining a schedule of accreditation status for all relevant awards and for providing this information annually to QuEST as required for the Annual report to the Scottish Funding Council. This facilitates not only the tracking of accreditations due, but also the monitoring of existing accreditations, and a University-wide understanding of the issues being raised by professional accrediting panels.

PSRB reports provide valuable feedback on the quality of the University's provision which can usefully be shared more widely.

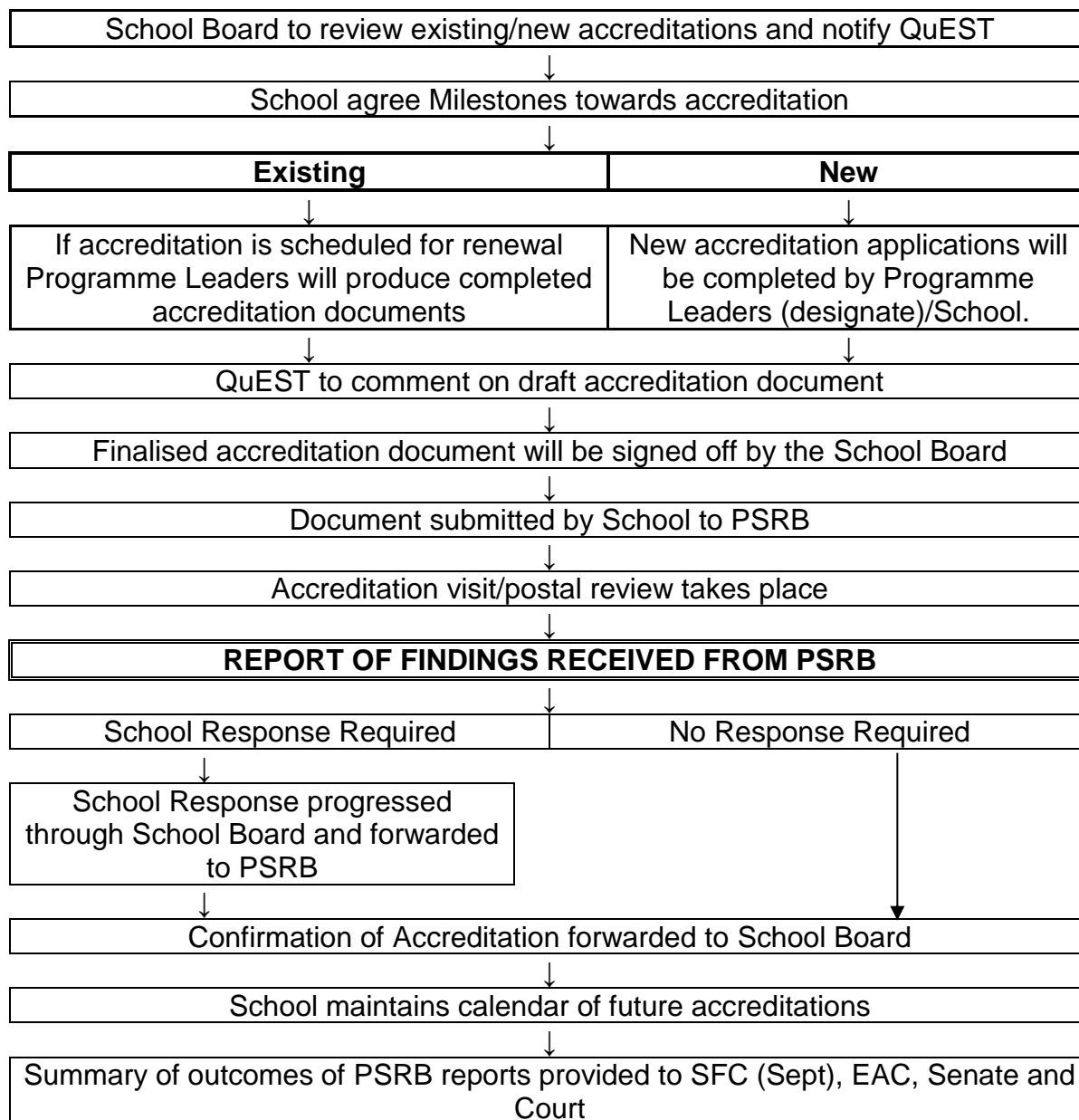
Professional Accreditation Processes

There are a range of accreditation arrangements offered by PSRBs. For certain programmes the accreditation process involves a formal visit to the University while for other programmes the arrangements are less formal and can be updated by post. EAC has agreed the importance of the University being able to track all accreditation activities.

EQO will liaise with the Deputy Dean at the end of each academic year to confirm the professional visits due to take place in the following session, together with any new proposed professional accreditations. The first School Board of the session should consider the list of professional accreditations for the year ahead.

The EQO or nominee will support the development of milestones for submission of paperwork to the PSRB, incorporating the required review of draft documentation and final sign off by School Board. Programme accreditations should be clearly flagged to the first meeting of School Board and QuEST each session.

KEY STAGES FOR APPROVAL/REAPPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION



Professional Accreditation Document

The EQO should be asked to comment on the draft documentation before its submission to the PSRB and can consult with colleagues in QuEST if necessary. Once agreement is reached, School Board will sign off the documentation. The School will then be responsible for submitting the documentation to the PSRB.

Professional Accreditation Event

Arrangements for the accreditation visit will be managed by the School in consultation with the PSRB. The EQO can attend such events if required to advise the panel on quality and enhancement arrangements. However, in all cases, Schools are asked to advise QuEST of the dates of all accreditation events on request.

Professional Accreditation Responses

Following the accreditation process, the School will be responsible for authoring a response (if appropriate) to the PSRB report. School responses to the accreditation/PSRB report should be progressed through School Board before the final version is forwarded to the PSRB. School Board will receive both the final report/correspondence from the PSRB and the agreed School response.