

## QUALITY FRAMEWORK

### VALIDATION (ANNEX 3)

#### UNIVERSITY VALIDATION PANELS (ONSITE AND COLLABORATIVE PROVISION)

#### CONSTITUTION, TERMS OF REFERENCE and CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION

Validation Panels have delegated responsibility for considering proposals for award-bearing provision and for making approval recommendations on behalf of the University. Validation Panels' recommendations are subject to endorsement by the University Teaching Quality Committee. All panel members are expected to be impartial and to have had no prior involvement in the preparation of proposals presented for validation.

#### 1 VALIDATION PANELS: CONSTITUTION

1. Chair\* - a senior member of University staff who is independent of, and external to the proposing faculty and the proposals
2. One internal member of University academic staff who is independent of, and external to the proposing department, faculty and proposals
3. One internal member of University academic staff from the proposing faculty but who is independent of, and external to the proposing department and proposals
4. One (or two) independent External Panel Member/s to be approved by the Chair (or Head of Academic Quality and Standards acting on the Chair's behalf). Nominations for External Panel Members must meet the relevant Criteria for Nomination
5. Secretary (officer from Academic Quality and Standards)

#### **Additional Membership, dependent on type of proposal**

6. **For Onsite Provision Only** - Student Panel Member<sup>+</sup> (normally the designated student representative from the proposing department)
7. **For Collaborative Proposals Only**: addition of a representative of Library and Student Support Services (L3S) from a designated pool of L3S staff

8. **For Distance / Flexible Learning Proposals Only:** addition of a Technology Enhanced Learning Specialist panel member from a designated pool of TEL specialists (applies to all provision where mode of study proposed is DL)
9. **For Work-based Learning Framework Proposals Only:** addition of an External Panel Member with expertise in work-based learning and experience of similar frameworks

Additional membership of a Panel may be agreed with the Panel Chair as appropriate for specific proposals, e.g. employer representatives, service users (healthcare provision), etc.

### **Typical Panel Size**

Onsite Provision: Chair and Secretary plus 4 to 5 panel members, including an external academic member and a student member

Collaborative Provision: Chair and Secretary plus 4 to 5 panel members, including external academic member and L3S representative

### **Quoracy**

Chair, Secretary plus 1 internal member and 1 external member

### **Notes on Panel Constitution**

1. *\*Panels considering proposals for Professional Doctorates will be chaired by a member of the Research Degrees sub-committee, nominated by the Chair of RDSC.*
2. *‡Student Panel Members are not required for Validation Panels considering collaborative proposals. However, students from the external partner organisation will be expected to participate in and contribute to the approval event, as determined by the Panel Chair.*
3. *For joint validation and accreditation events, representatives of the relevant accrediting body may be required to join the Validation Panel Membership.*
4. *Chairs and Members of Validation Panels may only be drawn from an approved, cross-faculty pool of staff who undertaken mandatory induction and training delivered by Academic Quality and Standards.*
5. *Depending on the scope and nature of individual proposals, the constitution of a panel may be supplemented by additional members if required by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards.*
6. *Standing Panels may be established where appropriate, to consider specific types of University provision, e.g. the Work-based Learning Framework Panel*

## **2 VALIDATION PANELS: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

To act on behalf of the Academic Board in the approval of award-bearing provision, to ensure:

1. All the University's academic, award-bearing courses will offer a high quality student experience.

2. That the course/s to be approved in alignment with the requirements of the University's Academic Awards Framework and Standard Assessment Regulations.
3. The academic course/s are designed in line with the appropriate and extant University policies, regulations and strategies, including those relating to assessment, employability, inclusive practice, equality and diversity, teaching and learning and research ethics. Proposals should be accurately and clearly described and should meet the University's requirements for compliance with consumer protection legislation as it applies to higher education provision.
4. The standards of University courses are clearly specified and meet all University, national and professional requirements<sup>1</sup>.

**For proposals involving collaborative provision to be delivered in partnership with external organisations, Validation Panels will consider, in addition to the above:**

5. The Institutional Approval of new collaborative partners.
6. That delivery / operational arrangements are appropriate to meet all University requirements for collaborative provision.
7. The learning and staff resources of collaborative partners are appropriate to support the delivery of the course/s in question.

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<sup>1</sup>

*For professionally-accredited programmes, the external accrediting organisation (PSRB) may take part in the University's validation process in cases where a joint validation/accreditation event and joint panel has been agreed.*

### **3 CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION: CHAIRS AND PANEL MEMBERS**

#### **3.1 CHAIRS OF VALIDATION PANELS: CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION**

Nominees for chairs of Validation Panels will be senior members of SHU staff who are able to:

- Demonstrate independence from the proposing faculty and from specific proposals
- Have significant prior experience of chairing meetings, at a senior level
- Demonstrate the ability to ensure that an impartial decision is made when reviewing proposals for new or revised provision
- Ensure there is opportunity for the validation panel to explore and debate proposals fully.

#### **3.2 INTERNAL MEMBERS OF VALIDATION PANELS: CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION**

Nominees for membership of Validation Panels will be able to demonstrate the following:

##### **Qualifications/Knowledge**

- a knowledge of higher education and an understanding of current learning, teaching and assessment practice
- an awareness of quality and standards, enhancement and management methods and systems
- an understanding of developments in higher education over the last five years, particularly around quality and standards management and national review methodologies

##### **Relevant Experience**

- a minimum of 3 years' experience of teaching in higher education or equivalent activity in industry, commerce or the professions
- experience of working within tight time scales and to strict deadlines
- experience of accreditation, validation, quality and standards audit/assessment, other quality enhancement and management, or a willingness to develop in these areas
- experience of liaison with staff at various levels in the University, with collaborative partner organisations or equivalent industrial/professional experience
- experience as an external examiner
- experience of planning and developing new provision or reviewing existing provision
- experience of student support and/or experience of learning resources management

##### **Skills and Abilities**

- an ability to review proposals and produce detailed and evaluative written comments / summaries of evidence
- an ability to arrive at shared judgements on the quality of new University provision, drawing on experience and where appropriate, subject expertise, and to produce a high quality assessment of submissions to a Validation Panel
- an ability to work as part of a team, contribute to Panel discussions and engage in dialogue with planning teams/proposers
- effective interpersonal and communication skills

### 3.3 EXTERNAL MEMBERS OF VALIDATION PANELS: CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION

Nominees for External Panel Membership **must**:

- be able to make impartial judgements on the comparability of a course, in terms of standard and content, with similar courses offered elsewhere in higher education in the UK, and be able to consider the course in a national perspective
- be familiar with current developments in the field of study or discipline and/or have relevant experience of industry, commerce, public service or the professions
- understand current practice and developments in teaching, learning and assessment in HE
- for the scrutiny of proposals for new collaborative partnerships and/or provision, be familiar with approaches to the management of quality and standards when working with others, as are typically applied by HEIs in the UK sector.

Nominees for External Panel Membership **must not**:

- be invited to comment on proposals to which they have contributed during any part of the development or planning process
- be invited to join a validation panel if they have been employed by the University either as an external examiner, or in a regular teaching, research or consultancy capacity, or been involved with as a former student, within the previous two years before the date of the validation exercise
- Occasional 'guest' lecturers may be nominated as an external panel member, provided they have not contributed to the development and planning process and provided they have not been employed by the University on a routine and regular basis during the past two years leading up to the date of the validation exercise.

#### Use of the Same External Panel Nomination for multiple proposals

Where possible, to ensure impartiality and breadth of expertise, the same external panel member should not comment on more than one proposal within an academic session. However, with the agreement of the Validation Panel Chair, external panel members may be invited to comment on more than one related proposal within an academic session where there is a strong rationale for doing so, especially if such involvement would:

- provide a useful background and context for their consideration of further, related proposals *or*
- The subject area/field of study is sufficiently small that it is not possible to find another individual with appropriate expertise to comment on the proposals.

NB: Nominations for Chairs and Members of Validation Panels are subject to approval by the Chair of the Validation Panel or by the University's Head of Academic Quality and Standards, acting on behalf of the Panel Chair.

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