

**PARTNERSHIPS HANDBOOK  
FOR  
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SUFFOLK**

**(PREVIOUSLY UCS VALIDATION HANDBOOK)**

**PROVISION LEADING TO JOINT AWARDS OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA  
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX**

**2011 / 2012**

# CONTENTS

1	<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	1
2	<a href="#">Management of UCS provision</a> .....	2
3	<a href="#">Institutional validation</a> .....	3
4	<a href="#">Institutional review</a> .....	9
5	<a href="#">Validation of new courses</a> .....	15
6	<a href="#">Periodic review of courses</a> .....	30
7	<a href="#">Revalidation of courses</a> .....	38
8	<a href="#">Approval and review of postgraduate research degree programmes</a> ....	46
9	<a href="#">Changes to validated provision</a> .....	52
10	<a href="#">Withdrawal of validated provision</a> .....	54
11	<a href="#">Temporary withdrawal of validated provision</a> .....	54
12	<a href="#">Self assessment, review and evaluation (SARE process)</a> .....	55
13	<a href="#">External examiners</a> .....	61
14	<a href="#">The student experience</a> .....	62

## Appendices

A	<a href="#">Glossary of terms</a> .....	63
B	<a href="#">UCS Joint Academic Committee terms of reference</a> .....	69
C	<a href="#">UCS Academic Board terms of reference</a> .....	72
D	<a href="#">Institutional validation documentation requirements</a> .....	75
E	<a href="#">Indicative agenda: institutional validation or review event</a> .....	77
F	<a href="#">Guidance notes for institutional review panel members</a> .....	78
G	<a href="#">Gantt chart: course planning and approval process</a> .....	82

H	<a href="#">Summary of CAT forms</a> .....	92
I	<a href="#">UCS publicity protocol</a> .....	95
J	<a href="#">Guidance notes for validation panel members</a> .....	98
K	<a href="#">Definitions of UCS module types</a> .....	105
L	<a href="#">Indicative agenda: course validation event</a> .....	106
M	<a href="#">Guidance notes for periodic review or revalidation panel members</a> ....	107
N	<a href="#">Indicative agenda: periodic review or revalidation event</a> .....	116

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides information and guidance on arrangements for the approval, monitoring and review of academic provision jointly validated by the University of East Anglia and University of Essex at University Campus Suffolk. The handbook draws on guidance in the [QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education](#), and represents a harmonisation of the two validating universities' quality assurance procedures to ensure a robust and mutually satisfactory approach to the management of academic standards at UCS.

A glossary of terms used in this handbook can be found in [Appendix A](#).

### 1.1 About University Campus Suffolk

University Campus Suffolk (UCS) is a joint venture agreement between the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the University of Essex (Essex), established on an equal 50:50 basis. It is managed by a company limited by guarantee, University Campus Suffolk Limited. There is a Company Board which has an equal number of members from each validating university and together these members always form a majority over the other members, who are drawn from groups representing the wider community and stakeholders.

Although UCS in many ways operates as a separate entity, it is not an independent university in its own right since it does not have its own degree awarding powers. Successful UCS students receive a joint award of the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex. It is the responsibility of the UCS Company Board to ensure that appropriate quality assurance mechanisms and procedures are implemented as required by the Senates of the two validating universities.

The UCS network encompasses a main campus hub in the Suffolk county town of Ipswich (UCS Ipswich) together with smaller centres (UCS Learning Network Centres) which are linked to further education colleges in the region. The institutions involved in the UCS network are:

- UCS Ipswich
- UCS Bury St Edmunds (at West Suffolk College)
- UCS Great Yarmouth (at Great Yarmouth College)
- UCS Lowestoft (at Lowestoft College)
- UCS Otley (at Otley College)
- UCS at Suffolk New College

The arrangement is underpinned by a Framework Collaboration Agreement between the two validating universities, UCS Ltd and the five colleges. Services Agreements between UCS Ltd and each of the five colleges outline arrangements for the mutual provision of services.

## **2 MANAGEMENT OF UCS PROVISION**

UCS has internal structures that enable it to plan and develop academic strategy and allocate resources in support of the plan.

### **2.1 UCS Joint Academic Committee (JAC)**

Academic matters relating to UCS are dealt with through a joint committee, the UCS Joint Academic Committee (JAC), which reports formally to the Senates of UEA and Essex. The JAC has primary responsibility for the development, maintenance and monitoring of the universities' quality assurance and enhancement framework in relation to UCS, and includes senior representatives from both universities.

The Chair of JAC alternates between UEA and Essex on an annual basis. No resolution of the Committee may be deemed to be carried that is not supported by the majority of university members present at the meeting. If there is disagreement within the JAC between its university members that cannot be resolved at the meeting, then the Chair will defer and seek resolution outside of the meeting. The decision of one university (i.e. the Senate of UEA or Essex) cannot be implemented in respect of any course leading to a joint award without the approval of the other.

The JAC's membership and terms of reference can be found in [Appendix B](#).

### **2.2 UCS Academic Board**

The Academic Board of UCS is a sub-committee of the JAC for the purposes of quality assurance (noting that the Academic Board also carries wider responsibilities within UCS for which it is responsible to the UCS governing authority under the UCS Board). Both validating universities are represented on Academic Board.

The Academic Board is an active body holding particular responsibilities for quality assurance and enhancement and academic development, and facilitates internal discussions within UCS about academic policies and procedures, curriculum development, academic strategy and learning, teaching and quality matters. The Academic Board brings forward to the JAC matters relating to the quality assurance of degree awards as determined by the terms of reference for the JAC and the linked terms of reference for the UCS Academic Board.

Academic Board's membership and terms of reference can be found in [Appendix C](#).

### **3 INSTITUTIONAL VALIDATION**

#### **3.1 Introduction to the institutional validation process**

Institutional validation is the initial approval of a potential UCS member organisation at institutional level as suitable for the conduct of higher education programmes leading to a joint award of the Universities of East Anglia and Essex. It is distinct from the validation of specific courses.

The JAC is responsible for making recommendations to the Senates of the two validating universities regarding the establishment of new UCS academic partnerships.

#### **3.2 Structure of the institutional validation process**

Institutional validation normally comprises three main stages:

- a) A proposal to establish the relationship in principle, subject to due diligence including financial soundness and an evaluation of the proposed UCS institution's existing policies and procedures, particularly in those areas which underpin the subsequent validation of individual academic programmes, such as quality assurance and enhancement systems, HE resources and student support systems. Consideration is given to the institution's capacity to implement any necessary changes and/or additions to existing processes or resources. Discussions involve senior staff from both the validating universities and UCS and a decision is typically made following a series of formal and informal meetings, one or more formal visit(s) to the prospective UCS institution and an institutional validation event, which is normally held at the prospective UCS member institution.
- b) The decision to establish a new UCS academic partnership is made by the UEA and Essex Senates following formal recommendation from the UCS JAC and the UCS Board, acting on its consideration of the report of the Chair of the institutional validation panel. The prospective UCS member institution simultaneously recommends to its governing body that the collaborative relationship be established.
- c) Formal collaboration agreements are drawn up between all parties concerned and are signed by the heads of the awarding and UCS institutions. The agreements are legally binding documents, normally reviewed every five years, which set out the rights and obligations of the parties, and include clauses on termination in order to safeguard the interests of students if a UCS institutional membership ends.

### **3.3 Evaluating a proposed new UCS institutional membership**

The universities may take into account any or all of the following factors in the early stages of determining whether to establish a new collaborative relationship through UCS:

- a) an explanation by the prospective UCS member institution of why it wishes to seek a relationship with the universities through UCS, or vice versa
- b) the views of existing UCS member institutions on the proposal
- c) an explanation by the universities of their policy and validation procedures for establishing partnerships through UCS, including information on existing relationships
- d) any other previous or existing partnerships entered into by the prospective partner organisation with any reasons for rejection, termination or proposed transfer of programmes
- e) aspirations of the prospective UCS member organisation about possible courses for validation and longer term ambitions
- f) sharing of information on what would be expected by all parties in the operation of the relationship at institutional and course level, including the management of courses, their monitoring, and the conduct of the assessment process, including the involvement of external examiners
- g) timetable for moving forward in the institutional validation process.

### **3.4 Documentation requirements**

The institutional validation process requires documentary evidence of the proposed UCS institution's existing policies and procedures. Material that is typically considered includes:

- a) external reviews such as QAA, HEFCE or Ofsted reports
- b) HE admissions policy and current entry qualifications
- c) AP(E)L submissions and AP(E)L policy
- d) student attendance, performance and progression rates and graduate destination data
- e) assessment procedures and examination arrangements
- f) resourcing, including IT and book/journal resources
- g) student support and guidance and information for students
- h) student satisfaction data
- i) student complaints and appeals
- j) staffing matters
- k) QA evidence such as annual course reviews, external examiner reports and course committee minutes.

A more detailed list can be found in [Appendix D](#).

The documentation should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the institutional validation event, along with sufficient hard copies for all panel members. A

briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to members of the institutional validation panel by the panel secretary in hard copy at least three weeks in advance of the event, and will typically contain:

- a list of panel members
- an agenda for the institutional validation event
- a summary of the institutional validation process
- guidance notes for panel members
- approval documentation submitted by the proposed partner institution
- travel information for relevant panel members
- fee claim forms/guidance for external panel members

### **3.5 Institutional validation panel**

An institutional validation panel will be formed, with membership typically comprising:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards) (Essex) and/or Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards) (UEA) or their nominees
- Dean of Academic Partnerships (Essex) and/or Director of Partnerships (UEA)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Resources) or nominee (Essex) and/or a senior representative of Library, Learning and IT Services (UEA)
- External academic with appropriate experience in collaborative provision
- One senior member of academic staff from UEA
- One senior member of academic staff from Essex
- UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee
- One member of senior staff representing the prospective UCS institution
- Head of the Partnerships Office (UEA) and Head of Academic Partnerships (Essex) or their nominees

The event will be chaired by a senior member of the panel from either UEA or Essex and will be serviced by an experienced university senior administrator. The exact membership of the panel for each event will be subject to approval by the JAC through joint Chairs' Action. In the absence of any panel members on the day of the event, the decision as to whether the validation event should proceed is at the Chair's discretion. There should be broadly equal representation from both universities.

### **3.6 Institutional validation event**

The institutional validation panel will meet at the prospective UCS member institution. The validation event usually takes place over a full day and the agenda is based on a template that may be modified if appropriate for a specific validation event. The institutional validation event will normally include a tour of relevant facilities and a meeting with students of the prospective UCS member institution. An indicative agenda is included in [Appendix E](#).

The Chair will normally commence by:



- explaining the purpose of the event
- inviting panel members to introduce themselves
- confirming the agenda
- explaining institutional validation procedures and the responsibilities of the panel
- identifying any collective or individual issues raised by panel members in relation to the validation documentation.

Members of the panel from the prospective UCS member institution are present for all the panel's discussions, except meetings with students of the institution under consideration.

The agenda will include one or more blocks of time in which the panel may discuss the proposed partnership in detail with members of the senior management team of the prospective UCS institution, and in which members of the prospective UCS institution will have the opportunity to respond to points raised. The Chair is responsible for highlighting positive aspects of the proposed partnership and raising issues in a constructive manner.

After debate, it is usual for the senior management team at the prospective UCS member institution to depart to allow the panel members to determine their recommendations. The Chair normally commences this second private meeting of the panel by summarising the issues and the prospective UCS member institution's responses and s/he will conclude the meeting by agreeing the outcome of the event with the panel before inviting members of the prospective UCS institution back for verbal feedback.

There are three possible outcomes of an institutional validation event:

- recommendation to approve the institution as member of UCS and a partner institution of UEA and Essex, with no conditions, requirements or recommendations
- rejection of the proposed UCS member institution
- recommendation to approve the institution as a member of UCS and partner institution of UEA and Essex with conditions, requirements and/or recommendations, in which case the institution provide evidence that the conditions and/or requirements have been met, and must respond to any recommendations, within the agreed timescales.

**Commendations** allow the panel a chance to congratulate the institution on aspects of good practice.

**Conditions** are those issues that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the validation panel prior to the institution becoming a member of UCS and partner institution of UEA and Essex, by agreed deadlines.

**Requirements** are those issues on which action will be expected once the partnership has started, by agreed deadlines, and progress will be monitored by the validating universities through the JAC.

**Recommendations** are those issues on which action is to be considered, possibly after the partnership has commenced.

A unanimous decision of the panel is normally required for the conclusion of the institutional validation event, but in the event that an individual panel member disagrees with the majority decision, then the Chair of the validation panel shall have a casting vote.

During the feedback session the Chair will announce the outcome of the event and notify the UCS institution of any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations for the UCS institution and/or the universities and/or the universities and the UCS institution jointly to action or to consider.

A deadline will be set by which conditions, requirements and/or recommendations should be met and/or responded to, and the Chair and Secretary will liaise to ensure that draft conditions and recommendations are circulated within five working days of the event.

### **3.7 Institutional validation report**

The Secretary to the validation panel will prepare a summary of the panel's discussions in the form of a report which will be circulated to panel members for confirmation. The validation report will be submitted to UCS Registry for onward circulation to the proposed partner institution, and will also be submitted to the UCS JAC for approval. The JAC will then make a formal recommendation to the UEA and Essex Senates for approval of the institution as part of UCS. The JAC will be responsible for monitoring subsequent progress against conditions, requirements and/or recommendations included in the validation report and reporting back to the two Senates.

### **3.8 Response to conditions, requirements and recommendations**

The institution should make a formal response to the institutional validation report by the agreed deadline(s), evidencing how specific conditions and/or requirements have been met and addressing any recommendations that were made. This response should be submitted to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) prior to the conditions deadline for onward submission to the validation panel Chair and both validating universities. Responses are monitored by the JAC.

The formal response should include:

- amended documents (using tracked changes to highlight any amendments)
- a brief summary of how each condition and/or requirement has been met with reference to the amended documents
- how each recommendation has been considered
- any other appropriate evidence.

Any revisions and amendments to the documentation should be mapped and cross-referenced to the new documentation, for example:

Condition	Page no (original document)	Page no (new document)	Details of amendment(s)
1	62	64	Addition of further information on student support mechanisms
2	71	73	Further information on professional development opportunities for academic staff within the institution

### 3.9 Approval of response to conditions, requirements and recommendations

The institution's response to any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations is normally signed off by correspondence under Chair's Action, drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the institutional validation event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair in liaison with representatives of both validating universities.

If it is decided that the conditions have been met the Chair will confirm institutional validation subject to final approval by the JAC and the Senates of the validating universities. If any condition has not been met or further evidence is required, the Chair will request additional documentation to address the outstanding issues. If the conditions cannot be met, the matter should be referred back to the joint Chairs of JAC to determine whether to request that the prospective UCS institution undertake further work on the proposal and proceed to a further institutional validation, or to withdraw.

The institution's subsequent response to any requirements should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) by the agreed deadline(s) for onward submission to the Chair and both validating universities. Responses are monitored through the JAC.

### 3.10 Final approval

The JAC consider the outcomes of the institutional validation process and makes a formal recommendation to the UEA and Essex Senates that the institution be approved as a partner institution of the two universities for a given period of time, normally five years.

## **4 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW**

### **4.1 Introduction to the institutional review process**

Institutional review is the process by which UCS institutions are reviewed at institutional level in the final year of the existing period of validation, to ensure that they remain suitable for the conduct of Higher Education programmes leading to a joint award of the Universities of East Anglia and Essex. The process is distinct from the revalidation of specific courses.

Institutional review typically comprises four key elements:

- a) A self-evaluation report prepared by the UCS institution
- b) An evaluation report prepared by the validating universities on the operation of the partnership
- c) An institutional review event convened to evaluate the above evidence, which should include a meeting with HE students studying on validated courses at the partner institution
- d) An institutional review report and action plan agreed by the review panel

#### **Note**

*The institutional review process does not include consideration of the financial basis of a partnership except where financial issues might impact on academic quality and standards, for example in relation to the provision of learning resources. The UCS Board is responsible for the financial operation of UCS.*

The validating Universities reserve the right to scrutinise students' work and observe teaching.

The process for the review of UCS Ipswich will differ in some respects from the review of UCS Learning Network Centres, in that it will have a broader scope, incorporating a review of the central coordination and management of UCS by the Ipswich hub.

### **4.2 UCS institution's self-evaluation report (SER)**

Templates for the SER are available on Wolsey. There are separate templates for UCS Ipswich and for the UCS Learning Network Centres.

The SER should provide an evaluative commentary on the period under review, reflecting on the UCS institution's HE operational management and quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms and demonstrating to the review panel how students continue to be provided with learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and standard. It is important that the report provides an honest appraisal of both aspects of good practice and areas for enhancement.

It is expected that most of the documentary evidence to support the evaluative commentary will already be available within the institution, and that the SER will summarise the Self-Assessment, Review and Evaluation (SARE) data provided since the previous institutional validation or review.

The evaluation should draw upon a wide range of evidence including statistical data, feedback from students, employers and external examiners and any relevant PSRB or other external review reports. A template for the SER is available on Wolsey.

The guidance notes for institutional review panel members ([Appendix F](#)) provide further information on the type of questions the panel may ask, and therefore the range of information the panel will be expecting to find in the SER.

The SER should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the institutional review event, along with sufficient hard copies for all review panel members. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to members of the institutional review panel in hard copy at least three weeks in advance of the event, and will typically contain:

- a list of panel members
- an agenda for the review event
- a summary of the institutional review process
- guidance notes for panel members (see [Appendix F](#))
- the validating universities' evaluation report (see 4.3 below)
- the self-evaluation report prepared by the UCS institution under review
- travel information for relevant panel members
- fee claim forms/guidance for external panel members.

#### **4.3 Universities' evaluation report**

The validating universities (UEA and Essex) will prepare an agreed evaluation report which summarises and reviews the operation and management of the collaborative partnership and which evaluates the effectiveness of the structures, procedures and mechanisms which support the academic quality and standards of awards delivered at or by the UCS institution.

The report will reflect the views of a range of staff from both institutions involved in the day-to-day operation of the partnership, and will identify key themes for consideration by the institutional review panel. The draft report will be sent to the partner institution for comment prior to circulation.

#### **4.4 Consultation with students and, where relevant, employers**

Members of the universities' academic and senior administrative staff will consult with a representative sample of HE students drawn from the whole HE student body at the UCS institution, including both full-time and part-time students from a range of subject areas. Former students who have recently graduated from the UCS institution may also be included in the consultation process. Where appropriate, staff might also meet with a range of employers. This will typically form part of the institutional review event, and any themes emerging from the discussions will be considered by the review panel.

#### **4.5 Institutional review panel**

An institutional review panel will be formed, with membership typically comprising:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards) (Essex) and/or Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards) (UEA) or their nominees
- Dean of Academic Partnerships (Essex) and/or Director of Partnerships (UEA)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Resources) or nominee (Essex) and/or a senior representative of Library, Learning and IT Services (UEA)
- External academic with appropriate experience in collaborative provision
- One senior member of academic staff from UEA
- One senior member of academic staff from Essex
- UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee
- One senior member of staff representing the UCS institution
- Student representative (normally currently registered on a course within the UCS institution, although a recent graduate may alternatively be appointed)
- Head of the Partnerships Office (UEA) and Head of Academic Partnerships (Essex) or their nominees

The event will be chaired by a senior member of the panel from either UEA or Essex and will be serviced by an experienced senior university administrator. The exact membership of the panel for each event will be subject to approval by the JAC through joint Chairs' Action. In the absence of any panel members on the day of the event, the decision as to whether the review event should proceed is at the Chair's discretion. There should be broadly equal representation from both universities.

Guidance for panel members is available in [Appendix F](#).

#### **4.6 Institutional review event**

The institutional review panel will meet at the UCS institution. The review event usually takes place over a full day and the agenda is based on a template that may be modified if appropriate for a specific review event. The review event will include a tour of relevant facilities. A typical agenda is included in [Appendix E](#).

The Chair will normally commence by:

- explaining the purpose of the event
- inviting panel members to introduce themselves
- confirming the agenda
- explaining UCS institutional review procedures and the responsibilities of the panel
- identifying any collective or individual issues raised by panel members in relation to the review documentation.

Members of the panel from the UCS institution under review are present for all the panel's discussions, except meetings with students of the institution.

Normally a meeting with students and a tour of facilities and specialist resources will be included in the programme.

The agenda will include one or more blocks of time in which the panel may discuss the partnership in detail with members of the senior management team of the UCS institution, and in which members of the UCS institution will have the opportunity to respond to points raised. The Chair is responsible for highlighting positive aspects of the partnership and raising issues in a constructive manner.

Towards the end of the event, the panel will meet to determine their recommendations. The Chair normally commences this meeting of the panel by summarising the issues and the UCS institution's responses and s/he will conclude the meeting by agreeing the outcome of the event with the panel before inviting members of the UCS institution back for verbal feedback.

There are two possible outcomes of an institutional review event:

- recommendation to approve the UCS institution for a further period of time, usually five years, with no conditions, requirements or recommendations
- recommendation to approve the UCS institution for a further period of time, usually up to five years, with conditions, requirements and/or recommendations, in which case the institution must provide evidence that the conditions and/or requirements have been met, and must respond to any recommendations, within the agreed timescales.

**Commendations** allow the panel a chance to congratulate the institution on aspects of good practice.

**Conditions** are those issues that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the review panel prior to the institution being re-approved as a partner institution of UEA and Essex, by agreed deadlines.

**Requirements** are those issues on which action will be expected beyond the start of the next academic year, by agreed deadlines, and progress will be monitored by the validating universities through the JAC.

**Recommendations** are those issues on which action is to be considered, possibly after the start of the next academic year.

A unanimous decision of the panel is normally required for the conclusion of the institutional review event, but in the event that an individual panel member disagrees with the majority decision, then the Chair of the review panel shall have a casting vote.

During the feedback session the Chair will announce the outcome of the event and notify the UCS institution of any conditions and/or recommendations for the UCS institution and/or the universities and/or the universities and the UCS

institution jointly to action or to consider. A deadline will be set by which conditions and/or recommendations should be met and/or responded to, and the Chair and Secretary will liaise to ensure that draft conditions and recommendations are circulated within five working days of the event.

#### **4.7 Institutional review report and action plan**

The Secretary to the review panel will prepare an institutional review report and action plan, which will be circulated to all panel members for confirmation. The report and action plan may contain matters for the UCS institution and/or the validating universities and/or the UCS institution and universities jointly to action or to consider.

The report and action plan will be submitted to UCS Registry for onward circulation to the partner institution, and will also be submitted to the UCS JAC for approval. The JAC will then make a formal recommendation to the UEA and Essex Senates for approval of the continuation of the partnership within UCS. The JAC will be responsible for monitoring subsequent progress against the report and action plan and reporting to the two Senates.

#### **4.8 Response to conditions, requirements and recommendations**

The UCS institution should make a formal response to the institutional review report by the agreed deadline(s), evidencing how specific conditions and/or requirements have been met and addressing any recommendations that were made. This response should be submitted to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) prior to the conditions deadline for onward submission to the review panel Chair and both validating universities. Responses are monitored by the JAC.

The formal response should include:

- amended documents (using tracked changes to highlight any amendments)
- a brief summary of how each condition and/or requirement has been met with reference to the amended documents
- how each recommendation has been considered
- any other appropriate evidence.

Any revisions and amendments to the documentation should be mapped and cross-referenced to the new documentation, for example:

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Page no (original document)</b>	<b>Page no (new document)</b>	<b>Details of amendment(s)</b>
1	35	35	Addition of further information on tutorial system
2	54	55	Further information on implementation of peer observation



3	61	63	Inclusion of student entry survey outcome data, and accompanying analysis
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#### **4.9 Approval of response to conditions, requirements and recommendations**

The institution's response to any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations is normally signed off by correspondence under Chair's Action, drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the institutional review to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair in liaison with representatives of both validating universities.

If it is decided that the conditions have been met, the Chair will confirm the continuation of the partnership within UCS, subject to final approval by the JAC and the Senates of the validating universities. If any condition has not been met or further evidence is required, the Chair will request additional documentation to address the outstanding issues. If the conditions cannot be met, the matter should be referred back to the joint Chairs of JAC to determine whether to request that the UCS institution undertake further work and proceed to a further institutional review.

The institution's subsequent response to any requirements should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) by the agreed deadline(s) for onward submission to the Chair and both validating universities. Responses are monitored through the JAC.

#### **4.10 Final approval**

The JAC consider the outcomes of the institutional review process and makes a formal recommendation to the UEA and Essex Senates that the institution continues to be approved as a partner institution of the two universities for a given period of time, normally five years.

## 5 VALIDATION OF NEW COURSES

### 5.1 Introduction to the validation process

The validation process allows for a new or significantly revised course to be examined by an acknowledged group of experienced peers including internal and external academics and employer representatives. The same broad principles that govern the validation of University of East Anglia and University of Essex awards delivered on their main campuses apply to the validation of courses at collaborative partners of the universities. Validation policies and procedures follow the principles of the QAA Code of Practice (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/code-of-practice/Pages/default.aspx>) and are informed by guidance from the Council of Validating Universities, including its *Handbook for Practitioners: The Quality Management of Collaborative Provision*.

New courses for delivery within UCS are the responsibility of the JAC, which makes recommendations regarding validation of new courses to the UEA and Essex Senates. The universities may make an academic contribution to the design and development of curriculum proposals from an early stage, either through the use of internal subject expertise or the appointment of external academic advisers.

The purpose of the validation process for a new course is to ensure:

- the provision of a high quality HE experience to students at an appropriate level
- equivalence in academic standards with comparable courses across the Higher Education sector
- compatibility with the existing UCS curriculum portfolio
- alignment with any relevant external reference points (including the QAA Academic Infrastructure, which is available online at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/AcademicInfrastructure/Pages/default.aspx>)
- compliance with the requirement to promote equality of opportunity and diversity, particularly in relation to learning, teaching and assessment
- compliance with internal academic regulations
- appropriateness of course documentation including handbooks
- appropriate rationale (including market demand, sustainability and graduate employability)
- appropriate staffing
- appropriate resourcing.

A gantt chart showing the course planning and approval process can be found in [Appendix G](#).

### 5.2 Proposal of a new course

Initial proposals for new courses go through agreed UCS planning and consultation procedures prior to being presented to the JAC for approval to

proceed to publicity and validation. The proposed course title is initially approved by the validating universities via the completion of a CAT 0 initial proposal form which can be found on Wolsey (see [Appendix H](#) for further information on CAT forms).

The more detailed 'Proposal to Proceed to Publicity and Validation' CAT 1 or CAT 2 form provides information on the proposed new course for approval by JAC. Where the proposed new course is intended to run at a single UCS centre of delivery, the course team should complete the CAT 1 proposal form, which can be found on Wolsey. Where the proposed new course is intended to run at more than one UCS centre of delivery, or where an existing course is to be extended to another UCS centre of delivery, a Course Coordinator should be appointed across all centres of delivery and s/he should coordinate the completion of the CAT 2 proposal form for multi-centre provision, which can be found on Wolsey. A summary of all CAT forms forming part of the course approval and tracking process can be found in [Appendix H](#).

The purpose of this JAC outline approval stage is to allow the validating universities to be assured of the quality of the proposal and to permit initial publicity of the award. In order for the proposed course to be submitted to UCAS for coding and listing in the UCAS Directory, and for the course to be included in the UCS prospectus as 'subject to validation', the relevant CAT form should be submitted electronically to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) for internal approval by the UCS Course Approvals Group prior to submission to the autumn term meeting of the JAC in the relevant academic year.

Course teams should note that the prospectus deadline is normally two years in advance of the academic year to which the prospectus relates; thus, a proposed new course with an anticipated start date of September 2014 should be submitted for outline approval via the relevant CAT form in autumn 2012, in order to be included in the 2014 entry prospectus. Where there is a need to take forward a new initiative in a shorter timeframe, for example in response to a strong business need or employer demand, the relevant CAT form should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) before the autumn term meeting of JAC in the academic year prior to the commencement of delivery. The proposed course should not be publicised (in the prospectus or through any other medium) until JAC approval to proceed to publicity and validation has been obtained.

The following information will be considered by the JAC when considering the proposal to proceed to publicity and validation:

- basic information such as course title, delivery mode, anticipated start date, location(s) of delivery and anticipated demand
- brief outline of course structure and content
- links with existing UCS curriculum portfolio
- adequate staffing resource to ensure students have exposure to a range of appropriately qualified academic staff with a variety of experiences and backgrounds
- any subject-specific resources required before delivery can commence
- internal UCS authorisations.

Confirmation of approval to proceed to publicity and validation by the JAC allows proposed new courses to be publicised and to go forward for validation. All references to the proposed new course, including any information given to prospective students (whether verbally or in writing), must make clear that the proposal is subject to validation.

The Publicity Protocol for publicising all aspects of UCS courses validated by UEA and Essex is available in [Appendix I](#).

The JAC reports to the UEA and Essex Senates on proposed courses that have received approval to proceed to publicity and validation.

### **5.3 Validation panel**

A validation panel comprises members who are able to judge the academic integrity of the course in relation to UCS regulations as approved by the validating universities, and the national standards expected of the type of award, and who can evaluate the course in terms of its structure and content. A variety of experience and views should be available amongst the panel members. Members will not have had close involvement with the detailed development of the course. Within the panel as a whole there must be sufficient understanding of the subject matter and academic context to enable the panel to make a sound judgement.

Panel membership is approved by the JAC through joint Chairs' Action and typically comprises:

- Chair from UEA or Essex
- at least one academic subject expert, external to the two validating universities and their partner institutions
- relevant employer representative(s) (not closely associated with the course team)
- professional, accrediting and/or statutory regulatory body representative(s) as appropriate to the award(s)
- a member of academic staff from UEA and/or Essex (or their partner institutions other than UCS), where possible from a cognate discipline area
- one member of the academic staff of UCS, where possible from a cognate discipline area
- UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee
- an appropriate senior officer of the UCS institution(s) delivering the course, not normally drawn from the course team
- senior administrator from the Partnerships Office (UEA) and/or Academic Partnerships (Essex)

The validation panel will be serviced by a senior administrator from UCS, UEA or Essex.

The validating universities are responsible for identifying the external academic expert(s) and internal non-UCS members of the validation panel. The UCS institution concerned is responsible for nominating all other members of the

validation panel, including the employer and/or professional body representative. These nominations should be submitted to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) for onward submission to the validating universities at least six weeks in advance of the validation event, and are subject to approval by the JAC through joint Chairs' Action.

The course team should normally consist of key members of staff who will be involved in the delivery of the proposed course, normally up to a maximum of eight (with the approval of the validation panel Chair required if this maximum is to be exceeded).

Where relevant, panel members may meet with students on a related course during the validation event (for example where the proposed new course incorporates a significant number of existing modules already validated as part of another programme).

In the absence of any panel members on the day of the event, the decision as to whether the validation event should proceed is at the Chair's discretion.

A peer from UCS may be invited to attend a validation event as an observer, to facilitate staff development and the sharing of good practice, subject to agreement by the Chair.

#### **5.4 Duties of the panel**

It is the duty of the validation panel to:

- critically examine the validation documentation and undertake discussion with the course team in order to make a collective judgement as to the quality and academic standard of the proposed course and to ensure that the award to be conferred by the Universities of East Anglia and Essex is of an equivalent standard to comparable awards
- recommend to the validating universities whether the proposed course should be validated.

A checklist setting out guidance for validation panel members is available at [Appendix J](#) and is sent out to all panel members with the validation documentation.

#### **5.5 Validation documentation**

The validation documentation provides the formal record of the course(s) to be offered to students. Care should be taken to ensure that it is subject to thorough proof-reading to remove any inconsistencies, errors or inaccuracies prior to validation. This should be overseen by the relevant Head of School or Centre Head of HE.

The course team is required to submit all relevant documentation to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) in an agreed electronic format at least three weeks in advance of the validation event, along with sufficient hard copies for

all panel members. A longer timescale may be required where professional or accrediting bodies are involved.

At least seven weeks prior to the validation event, a draft version of the documentation should be submitted to the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee who will carry out a critical appraisal to identify any problems. Should this appraisal raise significant concerns, the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee will consult with the Chair of the validation panel to decide upon an appropriate course of action, which may include cancellation of the event should the documentation have significant omissions and/or require significant revisions that cannot be undertaken within an appropriate timeframe.

In certain circumstances, for example when a course team is inexperienced in the validation process, an internal mock validation process may be held two weeks prior to the draft submission, to prepare the course team and identify ways in which the proposal can be enhanced. The UCS Course Approvals Group identifies the need for a mock validation event when considering the initial CAT form. The mock event will normally be held at least two weeks before the final validation documentation submission date to enable any final adjustments to be made.

For the final validation event, a briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to members of the validation panel in hard copy two to three weeks in advance of the event.

The validation pack typically includes:

- a) a list of panel members
- b) an agenda for the validation event
- c) an explanation of the UCS validation process and procedures
- d) guidance notes for panel members
- e) course documentation (see below)
- f) travel information for relevant panel members
- g) fee claim forms/guidance for external panel members

The course documentation is normally compiled by the course team, with other validation documentation being provided by senior staff at the UCS institution and at the universities.

Course documentation must include all of the following:

- a) the proposed title(s) of the award(s)
- b) course rationale, aims and learning outcomes
- c) full programme specification (template available on Wolsey) for each named award on which a student can enrol, including evidence of engagement with relevant external benchmarks (see: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/AcademicInfrastructure/Pages/default.aspx>)
- d) course structure for all modes and combinations

- e) module specifications for each module (template available on Wolsey and definitions of UCS module types available at [Appendix K](#))
- f) mapping exercise showing relationship between course and module learning outcomes (template available on Wolsey)
- g) where the course to be validated builds upon a previously-approved course (e.g. a level 6 progression route for an existing Foundation degree course), full documentation on the existing course must be included in the validation documentation
- h) mode(s) of delivery, location of delivery, course duration and proposed date of commencement
- i) recruitment and admissions information including target market(s) and estimated student numbers
- j) selection and admissions criteria, including minimum entry requirements, non-standard entry, AP(E)L, and rationale for additional selection processes such as interviewing
- k) a general statement on the teaching and learning strategy for the course
- l) assessment strategy, assessment criteria, assessment schedule and assessment regulations
- m) details of work-based learning or placement arrangements
- n) evidence of how equality of opportunity and diversity are promoted (including evidence of how the needs of disabled students have been taken into consideration in the design of the course)
- o) information on progression and articulation routes for Foundation degrees (including evidence of liaison with relevant institutions where these routes are not internal to the UCS institution concerned)
- p) course management and staffing including staff CVs in an agreed format (template available on Wolsey)
- q) existing subject-related resources and those required in order for the course to commence
- r) evidence of employer engagement, including confirmation of demand
- s) details of employment prospects on graduation (both locally and further afield)
- t) feedback received from academic experts consulted during curriculum development
- u) Student Course Handbook (template and guidance available on Wolsey).

Guidance on documentation requirements for the validation of multi-centre provision is included in Sections 5.7 and 5.8 below.

Guidance on the use of existing modules in new course proposals is available in Section 5.9 below.

The validation documentation template, with accompanying guidance, is available on Wolsey. Further guidance for course teams preparing for validation is available in the UCS Academic Staff Handbook (also on Wolsey) and from the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement.

## 5.6 Validation event

A course validation event normally takes place over a half day or full day depending on the size and nature of the award(s) being validated. The agenda is based upon a standard programme that may be modified as appropriate for each event. Normally, a tour of facilities and specialist resources is included in the programme. A meeting with students on related programmes may also be appropriate where there is significant overlap in modules. An example of a typical agenda for a validation event may be found in [Appendix L](#).

The Chair will normally commence the validation event by:

- explaining the purpose and nature of the event
- inviting panel members to introduce themselves
- confirming the day's programme
- explaining validation procedures for UCS courses, the responsibilities of the panel and the possible outcomes of the event.

The Chair will then invite panel members to identify lines of enquiry suggested by the course documentation, in order to enable the Chair to construct agendas for the panel's meeting with students (where appropriate) and meeting with the course team, and to identify any particular questions relevant to the tour of facilities/resources.

### ***Meeting between the panel and students (where appropriate)***

The agenda for the panel's meeting with students will typically include:

- introductions of all present, noting the course/mode/year of the students
- students' general perceptions of the strengths of their course
- general perceptions of changes they might wish to make
- general course organisation
- perceptions of learning and teaching activities
- experiences of work-based learning
- perceptions of available facilities and resources, including teaching accommodation, library and IT resources and the VLE
- responses to the style and loading of assessments, pre-assessment guidance, marking and feedback
- what students intend to do after the course and how well-prepared they feel.

### ***Meeting between the panel and the course team***

For the meeting with the course team, the Chair may group issues and questions raised so that discussions follow a focused sequence, normally covering:

- the context, philosophy and rationale
- course aims and learning outcomes
- course framework



- admissions and AP(E)L
- the student experience
- assessment
- resources
- course management and quality
- questions relating to specific modules
- the student handbook.

There may be some sections where the panel has identified no issues and has no questions. The agenda for the meeting with the course team may be revised in the light of the meeting with students (where relevant) and the tour of facilities/resources. The Chair will normally identify a panel member to lead questioning in each specific area.

The Chair will normally commence the meeting between the panel and the course team by:

- explaining the purpose and nature of the validation event
- inviting all present to introduce themselves
- explaining the validation procedure for UCS courses, the responsibilities of the panel and the possible outcomes of the event.

The course team may give a short presentation or introduction to the course. The Chair will then outline the agenda for the meeting and invite relevant panel members to lead on particular lines of enquiry. The Chair is responsible for highlighting positive aspects of the course and for ensuring that issues are raised in a constructive but critical manner. The validation panel should conduct its discussions in the spirit of a 'critical friend'.

### ***Concluding meeting of the panel***

The Chair will normally commence the concluding meeting of the validation panel by asking each of the panel members to give a view on whether the proposed course should be recommended to JAC as:

- a) approved outright with no conditions, requirements or recommendations
- b) approved with conditions, requirements and/or recommendations
- c) not approved.

In the case of (b), the panel will then proceed to identify and formulate conditions, requirements and/or recommendations, giving due consideration to clarity of wording. The panel will also identify and formulate any commendations that it wishes to record.

A unanimous decision of the panel is normally required for the conclusion of the validation event, but in the event that an individual panel member disagrees with the majority decision, then the Chair of the validation panel shall have a casting vote.

The course team is then invited to return to receive feedback. The Chair will explain the overall outcome that the panel has decided to recommend to JAC and will notify the course team of any conditions, requirements, recommendations and/or commendations. A deadline will be identified (typically six to eight weeks) by which date any conditions must be met, and the Chair will identify whether the course team's response to the conditions will be considered by correspondence or by a conditions meeting. The course team's responses should normally be submitted at least one week before the expected date of sign-off by the Chair, and both these dates should be made clear at the conclusion of the validation event.

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

### **5.7 Validation of multi-centre provision**

Where a course is proposed to run at more than one UCS centre, JAC will confirm when granting approval to go to validation whether the course will be validated at a single event or separate events for each UCS centre. Where a single event is held the panel may, at the discretion of the Chair, hold separate discussions with course teams from each UCS centre of delivery. Where separate events are held, continuity in panel membership for each event will be sought wherever possible.

The validation documentation prepared by the course team should clearly show the relevant resources available at each UCS centre, including the structure and CVs of the course team responsible for delivery at each centre, presented separately as a section for each centre. Validation documentation for all multi-centre provision should provide information on any intended collaboration between the centres in the delivery of the course and explain clearly how the course will be managed across all sites, including the identification of a Course Coordinator.

It is expected that the course learning outcomes, content and assessment will be consistent across all centres, although this does not preclude different centres offering alternative optional modules where the course structure allows this, for example to meet local employer demand.

### **5.8 Approving a course validated to run at one UCS centre for delivery at an additional UCS centre**

If a course has been approved to run at one UCS centre and another UCS centre wishes to deliver the course as validated – that is with the same learning outcomes, content, framework, mode, module specifications and assessment framework (including any CAT 3 modifications that have been approved) – then the sole consideration at validation is whether the new centre or centres have the human and physical resources to successfully deliver the course.

Approval to run an existing course at additional UCS centres may only be for the lifetime of the existing validation and a subsequent re-validation event would involve all UCS centres offering the course.

The new course team should submit the approved course document, together with centre-specific details on:

- arrangements for student support and study skill support
- arrangements for local work-based learning, if appropriate
- staff resources including leaders and contributors for each module, staff CV's and staff development pertinent to the course
- physical resources including teaching accommodation, library, IT and any specialist facilities
- arrangements for management of the course including the name of the Course Coordinator across all centres
- local external agency/employer involvement
- a localised student handbook.

The validation panel will normally discuss the course with the new course team in order to establish the new team's readiness to deliver the course. The Course Coordinator and, where appropriate, other members of the wider course team from other UCS centres are expected to attend this meeting.

Where the existing validated course structure includes optional modules, the new centre of delivery may put forward new module specifications for alternative optional modules.

The validation panel established to consider delivery of an existing validated course at a new UCS centre of delivery will typically comprise:

- Chair
- a member of academic staff from UEA and/or Essex, from a cognate discipline area wherever possible
- one member of academic staff from UCS, from a cognate discipline area
- local employer representative, where appropriate
- UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee
- senior administrator from the Partnerships Office (UEA) and/or Academic Partnerships (Essex)

The panel will be serviced by a senior administrator from UCS, UEA or Essex.

## **5.9 Use of validated modules in new course proposals**

When a new course is proposed it must first be ascertained whether the relevant framework requires the inclusion of existing core modules which have been designed to use across a range of courses. Core modules can be either variable or non-variable, and are defined as follows:

- **Non-variable core module**  
A module that has been validated to be used across a number of courses, for example interprofessional learning modules. Such modules may not be

customised except in terms of the examples used during delivery and the assessment focus.

- **Variable core module**  
A module that must be contained in a series of courses, but which can be customised for each course. For example each Foundation degree course must have a personal development module, but the exact nature of this can vary across courses.

In certain other circumstances, a course team may wish to use existing validated modules in new course proposals. This may be considered when, for example, a new pathway is being introduced on an existing course, or where a new course is being developed in a subject area where there is some overlap with existing provision.

The existing module must have integrity in the new course, and if this is not the case the course team may wish to modify and re-name the module to make it coherent.

Course teams should indicate clearly in their validation documentation where existing modules are being used in a new course proposal (e.g. with an asterisk in the module framework grid). The validation panel will normally accept that this is an approved module and concentrate on the newly designed ones, but will retain the right to ask questions about existing modules and to make recommendations for changes. In doing so the panel will need to be cognisant of the implications for existing courses in which the module is used.

In exceptional circumstances the panel may decide that it has to set a condition or requirement relating to an existing module. Any such outcome must be closely monitored by the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement in order to ensure that appropriate action is undertaken by all leaders of courses in which the module is used through the course modification (CAT 3) process.

## **5.10 Paper-based validations**

In certain very exceptional circumstances, course validations may take place via a paper-based exercise without a validation event. This may take place when, for example, a new pathway is introduced on an existing course, incorporating a significant number of modules that have already been validated. The decision to proceed with a paper-based validation is taken by the joint Chairs of JAC on behalf of the Committee.

For paper-based validations, panels are convened in the same way as for standard validation events (as outlined in section 5.3 above) and include external academic and employer representation.

Validation documentation (as outlined in section 5.5) is circulated to all panel members either electronically or in hard copy, and panel members are normally expected to return their written comments by e-mail to the validation panel Secretary within three weeks of receipt. The Chair will review all comments and decide, in liaison with the Secretary, whether any points need further investigation with the course team or further discussion with panel members. In

some cases a virtual meeting of the panel, possibly involving the course team, may be appropriate to discuss any emerging themes.

When the panel's review of the validation documentation is complete, the Secretary will draft a validation report on behalf of the Chair (as outlined in section 5.11 below), which will be circulated to all panel members for their approval before being passed to the course team, via UCS Registry, for their response.

### 5.11 Validation report

The validation report summarises the panel's conclusions and specifies any conditions that are to be met before the course may commence. The panel will specify the date by which the conditions and/or requirements must be met, which is normally within six to eight weeks of the validation event, and will recommend the period of validation, which for most courses is five years. The validation report template is available on Wolsey.

There are three possible outcomes of a validation event, one of which will conclude the report:

- recommendation to validate the proposed course, in which case no further action by the course team is required
- rejection of the proposed course, in which case no further action is required
- recommendation to validate the proposed course with conditions, requirements and/or recommendations, in which case the course team must provide evidence that the conditions and/or requirements have been met, and must respond to any recommendations, within the agreed timescales.

In exceptional circumstances the report may recommend suspension of the validation process whilst the course team undertakes a major revision to the proposal.

**Commendations** allow the panel a chance to congratulate the course team on aspects of good practice.

**Conditions** are those issues that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the validation panel prior to a course's commencement, by agreed deadlines.

**Requirements** are those issues on which action will be expected once the course has started, by agreed deadlines, and progress will be monitored by the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement and JAC.

**Recommendations** are those issues on which action is to be considered, possibly after the course has commenced.

The validation panel may not set further conditions and/or requirements after it has reported. The JAC may recommend validation of a course to the two Senates only on the grounds of a recommendation from a properly constituted validation panel. The JAC may in exceptional circumstances amend the

conditions and/or requirements set by the panel or set further conditions and/or requirements although this would be very unusual. In such a case, these amendments or additional conditions/requirements would over-ride the conditions/requirements set by the validation panel and the UCS member institution would be obliged to adhere to them.

## 5.12 Course team's response

The course team should make a formal response to the panel's validation report by the agreed deadline(s), evidencing how specific conditions and/or requirements have been met and addressing any recommendations that were made. This response should be submitted to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) prior to the conditions deadline for onward submission to the validation panel Chair. Responses are monitored through the UCS Academic Board and reported to the JAC.

The course team's formal response should include:

- amended documents (using tracked changes to highlight any amendments)
- a brief summary of how each condition and/or requirement has been met with reference to the amended documents
- how each recommendation has been considered
- any other appropriate evidence.

Any revisions and amendments to the documentation should be mapped and cross-referenced to the new documentation, for example:

Condition	Page no (original document)	Page no (new document)	Details of amendment(s)
1	47	48	Addition of paragraphs 2-4 on p48 to explain the examination process in more detail
2	57	61	Paragraphs 3-4 on original p57 replaced with new paras 3-4 clarifying the library resources information
3	throughout	throughout	Document checked throughout for typographical errors and proof-read

## 5.13 Approval of response to conditions, requirements and recommendations

The course team's response to any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations is normally signed off by correspondence under Chair's Action, drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the validation event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair in liaison with representatives of both validating universities.

If it is decided that the conditions have been met, the Chair will confirm validation and sign off the course validation outcome form (provided by UCS Registry and available on Wolsey) to evidence this. If any condition has not been met or further evidence is required, the Chair will request additional documentation to address the outstanding issues. If the conditions are not able to be met, the matter is referred back to the joint Chairs of JAC to determine whether to confirm the validation; to request that the course team undertake further work on the proposal and proceed to a further validation; or to request that the proposal is withdrawn altogether.

The course team's subsequent response to any requirements should be submitted to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) by the agreed deadline(s). These are considered by the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement and are monitored by the validating universities through regular reports to the JAC. If a requirement is not adequately addressed by the agreed deadline, the matter will be referred to the joint Chairs of JAC to determine an appropriate course of action.

#### **5.14 Final validation**

The JAC consider the outcomes of the validation process and makes a formal recommendation to the UEA and Essex Senates that the course(s) be validated for delivery at the specified UCS centre(s) for a given period of time, normally five years.

Each UCS institution is represented on the JAC and minutes of the JAC are circulated to all UCS institutions as a record of the validation process and any follow-up actions required.

A new course is finally validated once it has been signed-off by the validation panel Chair, recommended for approval by the JAC, and the two University Senates have each confirmed JAC's recommendation that the new course be approved.

#### **5.15 Definitive course documentation**

The course team must submit one hard copy and one electronic copy of the definitive course documentation to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) within ten working days of Chair's sign-off. The definitive course documentation should incorporate all approved amendments to the original validation documentation.

UCS Registry makes the records available to the Partnerships Office (UEA) and Academic Partnerships (Essex) via Wolsey, to facilitate the ongoing management of the quality and standards of provision at UCS institutions.

### **5.16 Serial validation / franchising**

Following successful validation, the course may be delivered only at those specified locations approved at the time of validation. The UCS institution must not offer the validated course(s) (and thus the universities' awards) in collaboration with its own partner organisations and is not permitted to sub-contract the course to other educational providers unless it has been formally sanctioned to do so. As stated in the section of the QAA Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning (Sept 2004), such serial arrangements "limit the awarding institution's ability to control the academic standards and quality of the provision which leads to its awards" (Precept A11 and paragraph 20 of the Introduction).



## **6 PERIODIC REVIEW OF COURSES**

### **6.1 Introduction to the periodic review process**

Periodic review is the formal process by which a course or group of courses is evaluated and the validating universities assured of the continuing quality of the provision. The process normally takes place every five years and is the basis for reapproval with effect from the following academic year. The review process can be brought forward at the discretion of the joint Chairs of the JAC, for example where there is a major variation to a course or where either the UCS institution or the universities have a particular concern. Internal and external peer review is a normal part of periodic review, as it is of the initial validation process.

In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate for a course or group of courses to be subject to revalidation rather than periodic review, for example where there has been a major variation to a course and the academic content requires more detailed scrutiny, or where a course has given rise to significant concern. The UCS Course Approvals Group is responsible for recommending to the UCS Joint Academic Committee whether a full revalidation event would be more appropriate than a periodic review, via the CAT1R or CAT2R form. Further information on the revalidation process is provided in [Section 7](#) below.

The purpose of periodic review is:

- to review the continuing validity and relevance of the stated aims of the course(s) and the intended learning outcomes, in accordance with QAA guidelines
- to ensure that students continue to be provided with learning opportunities of an appropriate quality
- to enable an external subject expert or experts to contribute advice on the course(s)
- to identify good practice for wider dissemination
- to identify areas for enhancement
- to audit the procedures of UCS institutions for quality assurance and enhancement and the maintenance of academic standards as they apply to the course(s) under review
- to report to the two University Senates via the JAC with a specific, reasoned recommendation about the future of the course(s).

Where substantial changes are being made to a course undergoing periodic review, any students enrolled on the course during the preceding period of validation will be expected to continue on the original programme, unless the review panel indicate that they should be able, if they choose, to transfer on to the revised programme. If any students remain on the original programme, a CAT4 form should be completed to ensure appropriate oversight of arrangements to support continuing students to the end of their studies.

## **6.2 Periodic review panels**

Periodic review panels are appointed by the JAC through joint Chairs' Action and typically comprise:

- Chair from UEA or Essex
- at least one academic subject expert, external to the validating universities and their partner institutions
- relevant employer representative(s) (not closely associated with the courses under review)
- professional, accrediting and/or statutory regulatory body representative(s) as appropriate to the award(s)
- a member of academic staff from UEA and/or Essex (or their partner institutions other than UCS), where possible from a cognate discipline area
- UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee
- an appropriate senior officer of the UCS institution(s) delivering the course, not normally drawn from the course team
- student representative (normally currently registered on the course, although a recent graduate may alternatively be appointed)
- senior administrator from the Partnerships Office (UEA) and/or Academic Partnerships (Essex)

The review panel will be serviced by a senior administrator from UCS, UEA or Essex.

The validating universities are responsible for identifying the external academic expert(s) and internal non-UCS members of the review panel. The UCS institution concerned is responsible for nominating all other members of the panel, including the employer and/or professional body representative. These nominations should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) for onward submission to the validating universities at least six weeks in advance of the review event, and are subject to approval by the JAC through joint Chairs' Action.

The course team should normally consist of key members of staff involved in the delivery of the course(s) under review, normally up to a maximum of eight (with the approval of the review panel Chair required if this maximum is to be exceeded).

In the absence of any panel members on the day of the event, the decision as to whether the review event should proceed is at the Chair's discretion.

A peer from UCS may be invited to attend a periodic review event as an observer, to facilitate staff development and the sharing of good practice, subject to agreement by the Chair.

## **6.3 Duties of the review panel**

It is the duty of the review panel to:

- critically examine the review documentation and undertake discussion with the course team in order to make a collective judgement as to the continuing quality and academic standard of the course(s), and to ensure that the award(s) conferred by the Universities of East Anglia and Essex are of an equivalent standard to comparable awards
- recommend to the validating universities whether the proposed course(s) should be reapproved.

A checklist setting out guidance for review panel members is available at [Appendix M](#) below and is sent out to all panel members with the review documentation.

#### **6.4 Review documentation**

The course team is required to submit review documentation in an agreed electronic format to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) at least four weeks in advance of the review event. A longer timescale may be required when professional/accrediting bodies are involved. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to members of the review panel two to three weeks in advance of the event.

The periodic review pack typically includes:

- a list of panel members
- an agenda for the review event
- an explanation of the UCS periodic review process and procedures
- guidance for panel members
- a self-evaluation document prepared by the course team(s) under review (including the last three years' SARE reports and external examiner reports as appendices)
- an up-to-date course handbook for students, including the programme specification and all relevant module specifications (as posted in the course files on Wolsey on an annual basis).

The periodic review documentation is normally compiled by the course team(s) under review, supported by senior staff at the UCS institution and at the universities.

#### **6.5 The self-evaluation document**

The self-evaluation document is a crucial part of the review process and should take the form of a critical commentary cross-referenced to any other documentation provided and should identify those issues the course team would find it helpful to explore in greater depth. The structure of the reflective document should correspond to the broad agenda themes for periodic review and should include the following information:

- a list of courses to which the report applies

- b) details of any professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation (with any recent PSRB reports and course team responses included as appendices)
- c) details of any course that includes study abroad, work placement or work-based learning
- d) the main characteristics of the course(s) covered by the review – a short (no more than two paragraphs) comment about the distinctive features of the provision, including what distinguishes it from provision at other institutions
- e) the last validation or revalidation/periodic review report, accompanied by a summary of follow-up action taken
- f) a self-evaluation of the course(s) under review, drawing on recent SARE reports and including major developments since initial validation or the last review. The evaluation should include, in summary, a reflective account of the quality of the provision under review and an indication of how the course team see the provision developing over the next few years.

The evaluation should draw upon a wide range of evidence including statistical data, feedback from students, feedback from external examiners and PSRB reports, and should be structured under the following headings:

- curriculum (including evidence of how any relevant QAA subject benchmark statements have influenced the courses under review)
  - learning, teaching and assessment (to include issues arising from work-based learning, placement learning or study abroad, and the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity)
  - student recruitment and student entry profiles
  - student retention, progression and achievement and graduate destinations
  - student support mechanisms
  - learning resources
  - staffing (with staff CVs included as appendices)
  - staff development activity (including engagement with UCS academic communities and scholarly activity)
  - employer engagement
  - any other issues
- g) A summary of the key themes for consideration at the review event, identifying those issues the course team would find it particularly helpful to consider as part of the review. These should be drawn from issues arising from the more detailed evaluation of the course(s) and/or SARE reports.

On receipt of the review documentation from the course team, the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee may carry out a critical appraisal. Should this raise significant concerns, the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee will consult with the Chair of the review panel to decide upon an appropriate course of action, which may include cancellation of the event should the documentation have significant omissions and/or require significant revisions that cannot be undertaken within an appropriate timeframe.

## 6.6 Periodic review event

A periodic review event normally takes place over a half or full day depending on the size and nature of the award(s) being reviewed. The agenda is based upon a standard programme that may be modified as appropriate for each review event. An example of an indicative agenda for a review event may be found in [Appendix N](#).

The Chair will normally commence the event by:

- explaining the purpose of the event
- inviting panel members to introduce themselves
- confirming the agenda
- explaining periodic review procedures and the responsibilities of the panel
- identifying any collective or individual issues raised by panel members in relation to the review documentation.

The agenda will include one or more blocks of time in which the panel may discuss the course(s) in detail with the course team, and in which the course team will have the opportunity to respond to points raised. The panel will need to be assured of the continuing rationale for the course(s) concerned and that the course team has the necessary resource base for the continued successful running of the provision. In addition, the panel would expect to be assured that issues identified through the SARE process, including the comments of students and external examiners, have been addressed.

The Chair is responsible for highlighting positive aspects of the course(s) under review and raising issues in a constructive but critical manner. A successful review event will be characterised by constructive dialogue, structured around the self-evaluation document provided by the course team under review.

A meeting will normally be held with a group of students registered (or previously registered) on the course under review (avoiding students who are also members of staff at the UCS institution wherever possible). The course team will not be present for this part of the review. Guidance for students involved in this meeting is available in [Appendix M](#) below. Where appropriate, a tour of facilities and specialist resources will also be included in the programme.

After debate, it is usual for the course team to depart to allow the review panel members to determine their recommendations. The Chair normally commences this second private meeting of the panel by summarising the issues and the course team's responses and s/he will conclude the meeting by agreeing the outcome of the event with the panel before inviting the course team back for verbal feedback. A unanimous decision of the panel is normally required for the conclusion of the review event, but in the event that an individual panel member disagrees with the majority decision, then the Chair of the review panel shall have a casting vote.

During the feedback session, the Chair will announce the outcome of the event and notify the course team of any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations that should be addressed or considered. Deadlines will be set by which conditions and/or requirements should be met and

recommendations should be responded to (usually within six to eight weeks of the event) and a decision made by the Chair as to whether the conditions should be met via a conditions meeting or by correspondence. The Chair and Secretary will liaise to ensure that draft conditions, requirements and recommendations are circulated to the course team within five working days of the event.

## 6.7 Periodic review report

The periodic review report summarises the panel's conclusions and specifies any conditions that are to be met to successfully complete the reapproval process. It is usual for the panel to specify the date by which the conditions and/or requirements must be met and to recommend the period of reapproval, which for most courses is five years.

There are normally two possible outcomes from a periodic review event, one of which will conclude the report:

- recommendation to reapprove the course(s), in which case no further action by the course team is required
- recommendation to reapprove the course(s) with conditions, requirements and/or recommendations, in which case the course team must provide the Chair with evidence, within any agreed timescales, that the conditions and/or requirements have been met, and must respond to any recommendations.

In exceptional circumstances the report may recommend suspension of the review process whilst the course team undertakes a major revision to the course under review.

**Commendations** allow the panel a chance to congratulate the course team on aspects of good practice, which could usefully be shared across UCS.

**Conditions** are those issues that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the review panel prior to successful reapproval, by agreed deadlines.

**Requirements** are those issues on which action will be expected beyond the start of the following academic session, by agreed deadlines, and progress will be monitored through UCS Academic Board.

**Recommendations** are those issues on which action is to be considered, possibly beyond the start of the following academic session.

The review panel may not set further conditions and/or requirements after it has reported.

The JAC considers the outcomes of the periodic review process and makes a recommendation to the UEA and Essex Senates that the course(s) be reapproved for delivery at the UCS institution(s) for a given period of time, normally five years. Each UCS institution is represented on the JAC and

minutes of the JAC are circulated to all UCS institutions as a record of the periodic review process and any follow-up actions required.

The JAC may recommend reapproval of a course to the University Senates only on the grounds of a recommendation from a properly constituted review panel. The JAC may in exceptional circumstances amend the conditions and/or requirements set by the panel or set further conditions and/or requirements although this would be very unusual. In such a case, these amendments or additional conditions/requirements would over-ride the conditions/requirements set by the review panel and the UCS institution would be obliged to adhere to them.

## **6.8 Course team's response**

The course team makes a formal response to the periodic review report, by the agreed deadlines, evidencing how specific conditions and/or requirements have been met and addressing any recommendations that were made. This response is submitted to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) for onward submission to the review panel Chair, and the UCS Academic Board monitors the responses and reports to the JAC.

The formal response should include:

- amended documents (using tracked changes to highlight any amendments)
- a brief summary of how each condition and/or requirement has been met, with reference to the amended documents
- how each recommendation has been considered
- any other appropriate evidence.

Any revisions and amendments to the documentation should be mapped and cross-referenced to the new documentation, for example:

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Page no (original document)</b>	<b>Page no (new document)</b>	<b>Details of amendment(s)</b>
1	47	48	Addition of paragraphs 2-4 on p48 to explain the action taken to address retention issues.
2	57	61	Paragraphs 3-4 on original p57 replaced with new paras 3-4 clarifying the library resources information
3	throughout	throughout	Document checked throughout document for typographical errors and proof-read

## **6.9 Approval of response to conditions, requirements and recommendations**

Conditions are usually signed off by correspondence under Chair's Action, drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a

conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the review event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair in liaison with representatives of both validating universities.

If it is decided that the conditions have been met, the Chair will confirm reapproval and sign off the periodic review outcome form to evidence this. If any condition has not been met or further evidence is required, the Chair will request additional documentation to address the outstanding issues. If the conditions are not able to be met, the matter is referred back to the joint Chairs of JAC to determine an appropriate course of action.

The course team's subsequent response to any requirements should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) by the agreed deadline(s). These are considered by the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement and are monitored by the validating universities through regular reports to the JAC. If a requirement is not adequately addressed by the agreed deadline, the matter will be referred to the joint Chairs of JAC to determine an appropriate course of action.



## **7 REVALIDATION OF COURSES**

### **7.1 Introduction to the revalidation process**

Revalidation is the formal process by which a course or group of courses is periodically evaluated and the validating universities assured of the continuing quality of the provision. The process normally takes place in the final year of the existing period of validation and is the basis for revalidation with effect from the following academic year.

The revalidation process is only used occasionally as an alternative to the periodic review process outlined in [Section 6](#) above, for example where there has been a major variation to a course and the academic content requires more detailed scrutiny. The UCS Course Approvals Group is responsible for recommending to the UCS Joint Academic Committee whether a full revalidation event would be more appropriate than a periodic review, via the CAT1R or CAT2R form.

The revalidation process can be brought forward at the discretion of the joint Chairs of the JAC where either the UCS institution or the universities have a particular concern. Internal and external peer review is a normal part of revalidation, as it is of the initial validation process and periodic review.

The purpose of revalidation is:

- to review the continuing validity and relevance of the stated aims of the course(s) and the intended learning outcomes in accordance with QAA guidelines
- to ensure that students continue to be provided with learning opportunities of an appropriate quality
- to enable an external subject expert or experts to contribute advice on the course(s)
- to identify good practice for wider dissemination
- to identify areas for enhancement
- to audit the procedures of UCS institutions for quality assurance and enhancement and the maintenance of academic standards as they apply to the course(s) under review
- to report to the two University Senates via the JAC with a specific, reasoned recommendation about the future of the course(s).

Where substantial changes are being made to a course, any students enrolled on the course during the preceding period of validation will be expected to continue on the original programme, unless the revalidation panel indicate that they should be able, if they choose, to transfer on to the revised and revalidated programme. If any students remain on the original programme, a CAT4 form should be completed to ensure appropriate oversight of arrangements to support continuing students to the end of their studies.

## 7.2 Revalidation panels

Revalidation panels are appointed by the JAC through joint Chairs' Action and typically comprise:

- Chair from UEA or Essex
- at least one academic subject expert, external to the validating universities and their partner institutions
- relevant employer representative(s) (not closely associated with the courses being revalidated)
- professional, accrediting and/or statutory regulatory body representative(s) as appropriate to the award(s)
- a member of academic staff from UEA and/or Essex (or their partner institutions other than UCS), where possible from a cognate discipline area
- UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee
- one member of the academic staff of UCS, where possible from a cognate discipline area
- an appropriate senior officer of the UCS institution(s) delivering the course, not normally drawn from the course team
- student representative (normally currently registered on the course, although a recent graduate may alternatively be appointed)
- senior administrator from the Partnerships Office (UEA) and/or Academic Partnerships (Essex)

The course revalidation panel will be serviced by a senior administrator from UCS, UEA or Essex.

The validating universities are responsible for identifying the external academic expert(s) and internal non-UCS members of the revalidation panel. The UCS institution concerned is responsible for nominating all other members of the revalidation panel, including the employer and/or professional body representative. These nominations should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) for onward submission to the validating universities at least six weeks in advance of the revalidation event, and are subject to approval by the JAC through joint Chairs' Action.

The course team should normally consist of key members of staff involved in the delivery of the course(s) under review, normally up to a maximum of eight (with the approval of the revalidation panel Chair required if this maximum is to be exceeded).

In the absence of any panel members on the day of the event, the decision as to whether the revalidation event should proceed is at the Chair's discretion.

A peer from UCS may be invited to attend revalidation events as an observer, to facilitate staff development and the sharing of good practice, subject to agreement by the Chair.

### **7.3 Duties of the revalidation panel**

It is the duty of the revalidation panel to:

- critically examine the revalidation documentation and undertake discussion with the course team in order to make a collective judgement as to the continuing quality and academic standard of the course(s), and to ensure that the award(s) conferred by the Universities of East Anglia and Essex are of an equivalent standard to comparable awards
- recommend to the validating universities whether the proposed course(s) should be revalidated.

A checklist setting out guidance for panel members is available at [Appendix M](#) and is sent out to all panel members with the revalidation documentation.

### **7.4 Revalidation documentation**

The course team is required to submit revalidation documentation in an agreed electronic format to UCS Registry (registry@ucs.ac.uk) at least four weeks in advance of the revalidation event, along with sufficient hard copies for all panel members. A longer timescale may be required when professional/accrediting bodies are involved. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to members of the revalidation panel two to three weeks in advance of the event.

The revalidation pack typically includes:

- a) a list of panel members
- b) an agenda for the revalidation event
- c) an explanation of the UCS revalidation process and procedures
- d) guidance for panel members
- e) a self-evaluation document prepared by the course team(s) under review
- f) up-to-date definitive course document(s) (template available on Wolsey), incorporating any changes made since the previous validation/review event via the CAT 3 process
- g) an up-to-date student handbook.

The revalidation documentation is normally compiled by the course team(s) under review, supported by senior staff at the UCS institution and at the universities.

The self-evaluation document is a crucial part of the revalidation process and should take the form of a critical commentary cross-referenced to any other documentation provided and should identify those issues the course team would find it helpful to explore in greater depth. The structure of the reflective document should correspond to the broad agenda themes for revalidation, and should include the following information:

- a) a list of courses to which the report applies

- b) details of any professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation
- c) details of any course that includes study abroad, work placement or work-based learning
- d) the main characteristics of the course(s) covered by the review – a short (no more than two paragraphs) comment about the distinctive features of the provision, including what distinguishes it from provision at other institutions
- e) the last validation or revalidation/periodic review report, accompanied by a summary of follow-up action taken
- f) a self-evaluation of the course(s) under review, drawing on recent SARE reports and including major developments since initial validation or the last revalidation. The evaluation should include, in summary, a reflective account of the quality of the provision under review and an indication of how the course team see the provision developing over the next few years.

The evaluation should draw upon a wide range of evidence including statistical data, feedback from students, feedback from external examiners and PSRB reports, and should be structured under the following headings:

- curricula (including evidence of how any relevant QAA subject benchmark statements have influenced the courses under review)
  - learning, teaching and assessment (to include issues arising from work-based learning, placement learning or study abroad, and the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity)
  - student recruitment and student entry profiles
  - student retention, progression and achievement and graduate destinations
  - student support mechanisms
  - learning resources
  - staffing and staff development activity (including engagement with UCS academic communities and scholarly activity)
  - employer engagement
  - any other issues.
- g) A summary of the key themes for consideration at the revalidation event, identifying those issues the course team would find it particularly helpful to consider as part of the review. These should be drawn from issues arising from the more detailed evaluation of the course(s) and/or SARE reports.

The course team(s) should ensure that the panel have access to the following (where this is not included as part of the reflective document):

- the last three years' SARE reports
- the last three years' external examiner reports (if not included as appendices to the SAREs)
- any relevant QAA subject benchmark statements
- any recent professional, statutory or regulatory body reports and the course team's response.

On receipt of the revalidation documentation from the course team, the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee may carry out a critical appraisal. Should this raise significant concerns, the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement or nominee will consult with the Chair of the revalidation panel to decide upon

an appropriate course of action, which may include cancellation of the event should the documentation have significant omissions and/or require significant revisions that cannot be undertaken within an appropriate timeframe.

## **7.5 Revalidation event**

A revalidation event normally takes place over a half or full day depending on the size and nature of the award(s) being revalidated. The agenda is based upon a standard programme that may be modified as appropriate for each revalidation event. An example of an indicative agenda for a revalidation event may be found in [Appendix N](#).

The Chair will normally commence the event by:

- explaining the purpose of the event
- inviting panel members to introduce themselves
- confirming the agenda
- explaining revalidation procedures and the responsibilities of the panel
- identifying any collective or individual issues raised by panel members in relation to the revalidation documentation.

The agenda will include one or more blocks of time in which the panel can discuss the course(s) in detail with the course team, and in which the course team will have the opportunity to respond to points raised. The panel will need to be assured of the continuing rationale for the course(s) concerned and that the course team has the necessary resource base for the continued successful running of the provision. In addition, the panel would expect to be assured that issues identified through the SARE process, including the comments of students and external examiners, have been addressed.

The Chair is responsible for highlighting positive aspects of the course(s) under review and raising issues in a constructive but critical manner. A successful revalidation event will be characterised by constructive dialogue, structured around the self-evaluation document provided by the course team under review.

A meeting will normally be held with a group of students registered (or previously registered) on the course under review (avoiding students who are also members of staff at the UCS institution wherever possible). The course team will not be present for this part of the review. Guidance for students involved in this meeting is available in [Appendix M](#). Where appropriate, a tour of facilities and specialist resources will also be included in the programme.

After debate, it is usual for the course team to depart to allow the revalidation panel members to determine their recommendations. The Chair normally commences this second private meeting of the panel by summarising the issues and the course team's responses and s/he will conclude the meeting by agreeing the outcome of the event with the panel before inviting the course team back for verbal feedback. A unanimous decision of the panel is normally required for the conclusion of the revalidation event, but in the event that an individual panel member disagrees with the majority decision, then the Chair of the revalidation panel shall have a casting vote.

During the feedback session, the Chair will announce the outcome of the event and notify the course team of any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations that should be addressed or considered. Deadlines will be set by which conditions and/or requirements should be met and recommendations should be responded to (usually within six to eight weeks of the event) and a decision made by the Chair as to whether the conditions should be met via a conditions meeting or by correspondence. The Chair and Secretary will liaise to ensure that draft conditions, requirements and recommendations are circulated to the course team within five working days of the event.

## 7.6 Revalidation report

The revalidation report summarises the panel's conclusions and specifies any conditions that are to be met to successfully complete the revalidation process. It is usual for the panel to specify the date by which the conditions and/or requirements must be met and to recommend the period of revalidation, which for most courses is five years. The report template is available on Wolsey.

There are normally two possible outcomes from a revalidation event, one of which will conclude the report:

- recommendation to revalidate the course(s), in which case no further action by the course team is required
- recommendation to revalidate the course(s) with conditions, requirements and/or recommendations, in which case the course team must provide the Chair with evidence, within any agreed timescales, that the conditions and/or requirements have been met, and must respond to any recommendations.

In exceptional circumstances the report may recommend suspension of the revalidation process whilst the course team undertakes a major revision to the course under review.

**Commendations** allow the panel a chance to congratulate the course team on aspects of good practice.

**Conditions** are those issues that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the revalidation panel prior to successful revalidation, by agreed deadlines.

**Requirements** are those issues on which action will be expected beyond the start of the following academic session, by agreed deadlines, and progress will be monitored by the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement and JAC.

**Recommendations** are those issues on which action is to be considered, possibly beyond the start of the following academic session.

The revalidation panel may not set further conditions and/or requirements after it has reported.

The JAC considers the outcomes of the revalidation process and makes a recommendation to the UEA and Essex Senates that the course(s) be revalidated for delivery at the UCS institution(s) for a given period of time, normally five years. Each UCS institution is represented on the JAC and minutes of the JAC are circulated to all UCS institutions as a record of the revalidation process and any follow-up actions required.

The JAC may recommend revalidation of a course to the University Senates only on the grounds of a recommendation from a properly constituted revalidation panel. The JAC may in exceptional circumstances amend the conditions and/or requirements set by the panel or set further conditions and/or requirements although this would be very unusual. In such a case, these amendments or additional conditions/requirements would over-ride the conditions/requirements set by the revalidation panel and the UCS institution would be obliged to adhere to them.

## 7.7 Course team's response

The course team makes a formal response to the revalidation report, by the agreed deadlines, evidencing how specific conditions and/or requirements have been met and addressing any recommendations that were made. This response is submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) for onward submission to the revalidation panel Chair, and the UCS Academic Board monitors the responses and reports to the JAC.

The formal response should include:

- amended documents (using tracked changes to highlight any amendments)
- a brief summary of how each condition and/or requirement has been met, with reference to the amended documents
- how each recommendation has been considered
- any other appropriate evidence.

Any revisions and amendments to the documentation should be mapped and cross-referenced to the new documentation, for example:

Condition	Page no (original document)	Page no (new document)	Details of amendment(s)
1	47	48	Addition of paragraphs 2-4 on p48 to explain the examination process in more detail
2	57	61	Paragraphs 3-4 on original p57 replaced with new paras 3-4 clarifying the library resources information
3	throughout	throughout	Document checked throughout document for typographical errors and proof-read

## **7.8 Approval of response to conditions, requirements and recommendations**

Conditions are usually signed off by correspondence under Chair's Action, drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the review event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair in liaison with representatives of both validating universities.

If it is decided that the conditions have been met, the Chair will confirm revalidation and sign off the revalidation outcome form to evidence this. If any condition has not been met or further evidence is required, the Chair will request additional documentation to address the outstanding issues. If the conditions are not able to be met, the matter is referred back to the joint Chairs of JAC to determine an appropriate course of action.

The course team's subsequent response to any requirements should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) by the agreed deadline(s). These are considered by the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement and are monitored by the validating universities through regular reports to the JAC. If a requirement is not adequately addressed by the agreed deadline, the matter will be referred to the joint Chairs of JAC to determine an appropriate course of action.



## **8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

### **8.1 Procedure for the institutional approval of a UCS centre for the delivery of postgraduate research degree programmes**

The following are key institutional criteria for the successful delivery of research degree programmes at University Campus Suffolk leading to awards of the University of East Anglia and/or the University of Essex:

- high levels of professional knowledge of current research and advanced scholarly activity in the relevant subject area(s), with academic staff engaged in supervision and teaching at doctoral level commanding the respect and confidence of their academic peers across the higher education sector
- a strong underpinning culture that actively encourages and supports creative, high quality research and scholarship amongst the institution's academic staff and its doctoral and other research students
- the provision of a high quality experience for research students, including supervision, skills development, appropriate facilities and resources, a stimulating intellectual environment (for example through contact with other research students and engagement in the broader research culture of the institution), and support for professional and career development
- evidence of the capacity of the institution to satisfy the expectations of the validating universities in respect of:
  - the FHEQ in relation to the levels of its research degree programmes
  - the QAA Code of Practice (in particular Section 1 on postgraduate research programmes)
  - research degree management frameworks issued by relevant research councils, funding bodies and professional/statutory bodies.

In order to evaluate whether a UCS centre is suitable for the conduct of research degree programmes leading to an award of the University of East Anglia and/or the University of Essex, the institution will be required to undergo a formal institutional level approval process, leading to a recommendation from the UCS Joint Academic Committee to the Senates of the validating universities that the partner institution be approved to deliver programmes at this level in relevant subject areas<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The UCS centre may be approved to offer research degree programmes leading to a joint award of the validating universities. Alternatively, it may be more appropriate for the UCS centre to be approved to provide primary supervision of research degree students but for students to be registered as either University of East Anglia or University of Essex students, possibly with the appointment of a second supervisor at the relevant university (depending on the subject area), leading to a single award of the parent university.

The process comprises three main stages:

- (1) An initial proposal to offer research degree programmes should be submitted to the UCS Joint Academic Committee for outline approval to proceed to the next stage.
- (2) An approval event, with an approval panel appointed by the UCS Joint Academic Committee, to include external academic representation.
- (3) A formal recommendation from the UCS Joint Academic Committee to the Senates of the validating universities to approve the partner institution for the delivery of research degree programmes in the proposed subject areas, acting on its consideration of the report of the approval event

## **8.2 Documentation requirements**

In preparation for the approval event, the UCS centre will be expected to provide a self-evaluation document (template available from UCS Registry) that demonstrates compliance with the QAA Code of Practice and covers the following:

### ***Rationale and market demand***

- a) Rationale for seeking to establish provision at research degree level, including areas of PGR research that the institution wishes to develop; the overall academic staff profile of the institution (including proportion of staff qualified to doctoral level); the number of staff who could potentially act as PGR supervisors (and plans to develop this capacity); anticipated student demand and funding arrangements.
- b) The range of existing programmes at taught postgraduate level within the institution; student numbers at this level over the past three years; retention, achievement and student destination data; and evidence of student satisfaction levels.

### ***Staffing***

- c) Evidence that the staff who will potentially be involved in the delivery of research degree programmes have:
  - substantial relevant knowledge, understanding and experience of both current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area
  - access to staff development and appraisal opportunities aimed at enabling them to develop and enhance their knowledge of current research and advanced scholarship.
- d) Evidence that a significant proportion of full-time academic staff are active and recognised contributors to subject associations, learned societies and relevant professional bodies.
- e) Evidence that a significant proportion of academic staff have recent personal experience of research activity in other UK or international university institutions by, for example, acting as external examiners for

research degrees, serving as validation/review panel members, or contributing to collaborative research projects with other organisations.

- f) Evidence that a significant proportion of academic staff who are engaged in research or other forms of advanced scholarship can demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing (e.g. as indicated by authoritative external peer reviews).

### ***The research environment***

- g) Evidence relating to the research culture at the institution (including existing research groups; seminar series; opportunities to interact and present ideas internally and externally; opportunities to interact with other units in the institution or elsewhere; opportunities for social contact with other research students).
- h) Evidence that the institution has appropriate library facilities to support research degree students (including details of existing resources; current and planned library expenditure; the library environment and opening hours; arrangements for accessing material at other institutions; levels of student satisfaction with library resources over the past three years).
- i) Evidence that the institution has sufficient physical space and specialist resources (working space; specialist equipment; IT resources and facilities; technical support; social space; etc) for individual research students.
- j) Plans for the provision of research skills training, either within the institution or in collaboration with the validating universities.
- k) The student support infrastructure for research degree students (including support for professional and career development).

### ***Management and administration***

- l) Details of the proposed management structure for research degree provision, including the appointment of a Director of Graduate Studies (or equivalent) to oversee the administration of research degree students in accordance with the QAA Code of Practice.
- m) Details of arrangements for allowing adequate staff time for both the supervision of students and the engagement in research and scholarly activity at an appropriate level (including remission from teaching for research active staff).
- n) Details of arrangements for monitoring student progress, including Supervisory Boards and Progress Committees (and arrangements for training staff involved in these processes).
- o) Details of arrangements for supervision of students, including the frequency of formal supervisory meetings, recording of discussions, and identification of students training needs.

- p) Arrangements for the appointment, training and mentoring of supervisors, either within the institution or in collaboration with the validating universities.
- q) Procedures for students to raise any concerns.
- r) Proposed forums for research students to raise issues (such as a Graduate Staff/Student Liaison Committee).
- s) Relevant institutional regulations, developed in conjunction with the validating universities, covering:
  - admission requirements
  - academic and procedural requirements for postgraduate research awards
  - requirements for progression, including monitoring and review arrangements for the award and the minimum and maximum periods within which programmes may be completed
  - assessment methods, requirements and procedures, including the criteria for achieving the award
  - procedures for dealing with research ethics and misconduct, including plagiarism
  - complaints and appeals processes.

### **8.3 Approval panel**

An approval panel will be formed by the UCS Joint Academic Committee, with membership typically comprising:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (UEA) or Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Essex) or nominee (*Chair*)
- Director of Partnerships (UEA) and/or Dean of Academic Partnerships (Essex)
- Director of Postgraduate Research Programmes (UEA)
- Dean of Graduate School (Essex)
- At least one external academic with appropriate experience of research degree provision
- Head of Academic Partnerships (Essex) and/or Head of Partnerships Office (UEA) or their nominees
- Member of senior UCS academic staff

The event will be serviced by an experienced senior administrator from the University of East Anglia or the University of Essex.

### **8.4 The approval event**

The approval panel will meet at the UCS centre. The event will usually take place over a full day, and will include meetings with relevant academic and administrative support staff and a tour of relevant facilities.

At the conclusion of the event, the panel will agree an outcome before inviting members of the partner institution back for verbal feedback. A unanimous decision of the panel is normally required for the conclusion of the event, but in

the event that an individual panel member disagrees with the majority decision, then the Chair of the panel shall have a casting vote.

The panel are asked to consider approval of the following:

- (1) the UCS centre for the delivery of research degree programmes in relevant subject areas
- (2) the process for the approval of selected UCS staff to act as primary supervisors, with students registered at either UEA or Essex
- (3) the process for the approval of selected UCS staff to act as secondary supervisors, with students registered at either UEA or Essex

The above outcomes can be:

- without conditions or recommendations
- subject to conditions and/or recommendations which must be met by agreed deadlines
- not approved.

During the feedback session the Chair will announce the outcome of the event and notify the UCS centre of any conditions and/or recommendations for UCS and/or the validating universities to action or consider. A deadline will be set by which conditions and/or recommendations should be met and/or responded to, and the Chair and Secretary will liaise to ensure that draft conditions and recommendations are circulated within five working days of the event.

## **8.5 Approval report and recommendation to the Senates for approval**

The Secretary to the panel will prepare a summary of the panel's discussions in the form of a report which will be circulated to panel members for confirmation. The final report will be submitted to the UCS Joint Academic Committee. The UCS Joint Academic Committee will then make a formal recommendation to the Senates of the validating universities for approval of the institution to offer research degree programmes (subject to agreed procedures for approval of individual proposals for PGR student registrations).

The UCS Joint Academic Committee will be responsible for monitoring subsequent progress against conditions and/or recommendations and reporting back to the Senates of the validating universities.

## **8.6 Extension of postgraduate research degree provision into new subject areas**

If a UCS centre which already has approval to offer postgraduate research degrees wishes to extend provision into new subject areas, the following information should be submitted to the UCS Joint Academic Committee in support of the request:

- the proposed new PhD subject area(s)

- an outline of proposed supervisory arrangements (including contingency plans in the event of any staff changes)
- evidence relating to the research culture within the relevant School/Division
- CVs for all relevant UCS staff who it is proposed will act as primary or secondary supervisors.

The UCS Joint Academic Committee will consider the proposal and make a formal recommendation to the Senates of the validating universities for approval of the institution to offer research degree programmes in the proposed new subject area(s), subject to agreed procedures for approval of individual proposals for PGR student registrations.

#### **8.7 Periodic review of research degree programmes**

Postgraduate research degree provision within the UCS centre is subject to periodic review at least every five years, with the period of (re)approval determined at the previous approval or review event. Further information on the periodic review process will be published in due course.

## **9 CHANGES TO VALIDATED PROVISION**

It is understood that courses are dynamic and are subject to modifications from time to time. Some changes are regarded as minor and may or may not require formal notification to the validating universities, whereas others are more major in character. In essence, minor changes do not alter the substantial character of the course, whilst major changes are those which fundamentally alter the character of the course.

The decision as to whether a proposed modification to an approved course constitutes a minor or a major change is made jointly by the Chairs of JAC. Advice on proceeding with changes can be sought from the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement.

A notifiable change to a validated course may not be made without the prior consent of the joint Chairs of JAC or their authorised nominees.

### **9.1 Non-notifiable changes**

Non-notifiable changes do not require formal notification to the validating universities.

Examples of non-notifiable changes include:

- minor changes to indicative content that do not affect the learning outcomes
- updates to reading lists and references in order to maintain relevance
- minor changes to the ratio of contact time attributed to previously stated methods of teaching and learning, assuming no overall change to the total number of contact hours.

### **9.2 Notifiable minor changes**

Notifiable minor changes are notified to the validating universities via the 'Changes to Validated Provision' form (CAT 3), which is available on Wolsey. Where relevant, changes may also require approval from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

Documentation regarding the proposed change(s) will normally include a summary overview indicating where the change lies. Examples of minor course variations include:

- a change in the balance of components of assessment within a module
- adjustments to module learning outcomes
- modest changes to the mode and content of assessment.

The documentation should detail the name of the award undergoing change, the nature and rationale behind the proposed change, the expected date of implementation and any delivery or resource implications. Relevant module specifications should be appended to the CAT 3 form, using tracked changes to highlight any proposed variations.

Where a number of changes are proposed between (re)validations, the CAT 3 form should also include a summary of the extent to which the course has changed since the last (re)validation event, including the original and updated course structure where appropriate, to guard against curriculum drift.

The CAT 3 form should be signed by relevant senior member(s) of staff at the UCS institution concerned and evidence of consultation with the external examiner should be provided. The completed form and all associated documentation should be sent to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) by agreed deadlines, for approval by the UCS Course Approvals Group and then onward submission to the joint Chairs of JAC for approval.

The Chairs of JAC or their nominees sign the document to formally record approval of the change, and this is reported to the next meeting of the JAC.

### **9.3 Major changes**

Major changes normally require further action and the Chairs of JAC or their nominees may consult with internal and/or external academics before deciding whether the proposed change should proceed through the course variation route or would require revalidation.

Examples of major course changes include:

- a change in course or module title
- adjustments to course outcomes
- changes in module status (e.g. optional, mandatory)
- key changes to the course structure
- key changes to delivery methods (e.g. to VLE)
- introduction of a new module
- changes in assessment strategy for a module or a course
- a significant number of minor changes.

Where revalidation is not required, changes are notified to the validating universities via the 'Changes to Validated Provision' form (CAT 3), which is available on Wolsey, using the guidance in section 7.2 above. Where relevant, an updated programme specification should be appended to the CAT 3 form, using tracked changes to highlight any proposed variations. Where relevant, changes may also require approval from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

Following internal approval by the UCS Course Approvals Group, the Chairs of JAC or their nominees sign the CAT 3 form to formally record approval of the change, and this is reported to the next meeting of the JAC and, where appropriate (for example for a change in course title), to the two Senates.



## **10 WITHDRAWAL OF VALIDATED PROVISION**

Discontinuation of an approved course is normally agreed after discussion between relevant senior staff. The UCS institution formally notifies the universities via the 'Course Discontinuation' CAT 4 form, which is available on Wolsey. This should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) when the decision to close a course has been initially taken by the UCS institution(s) concerned. The completed CAT 4 form is subject to internal approval by the UCS Course Approvals Group prior to onward submission to JAC for approval.

A CAT 4 form should also be used when a UCS institution does not wish an existing course that is reaching the end of its period of validation to be revalidated. Validation of courses should not just be left to expire without formal withdrawal of the course.

As part of the withdrawal process, the course team will be expected to detail in the CAT 4 form an exit strategy for students completing the programme to ensure that the quality of their experience is not compromised. It is expected that students enrolled on the programme will follow it to completion. In exceptional circumstances (for example for students returning from a period of intercalation), students may be asked to transfer to a comparable course. In these cases, discussions with students and evidence of student agreement must be fully documented.

## **11 TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL OF VALIDATED PROVISION**

Where a validated course is to remain in validation but is not to be offered during a specific academic year, the UCS School or Centre should formally notify the universities via the 'Course Recruitment Suspension' form (CAT 5, which is available on Wolsey). This should be submitted to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) for onward submission to the validating universities.

Following approval by JAC, the UCS website and UCAS listing will be amended as applicable so that new students cannot apply for the course, and any students who have applied will be contacted as appropriate.

## 12 SELF-ASSESSMENT, REVIEW AND EVALUATION (SARE) PROCESS

### 12.1 Introduction to the SARE process

The self-assessment, review and evaluation (SARE) process is undertaken annually at module, course and School/Centre level. It provides an opportunity to draw together a range of evidence on the quality and standards of provision at UCS, to enable a reflective evaluation of the curriculum, delivery and the achievement of students. It is a key mechanism for systematically identifying, recording and evaluating action in order to enhance the quality of the student experience at UCS.

The process has been informed by the QAA Code of Practice, which states that institutions should “routinely monitor (in an agreed cycle) the effectiveness of their programmes:

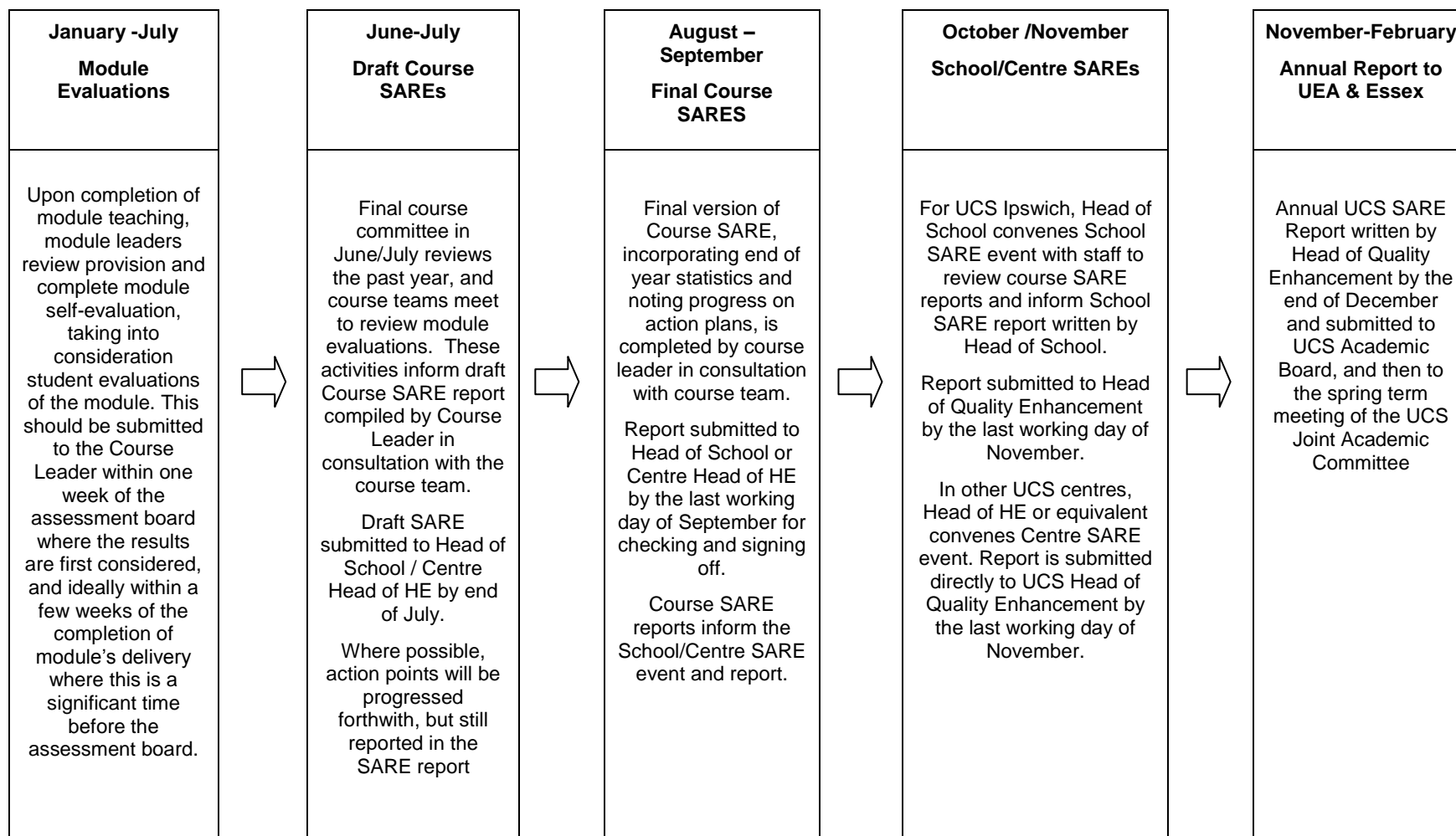
- to ensure that programmes remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and practice in its application
- to evaluate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are being attained by students
- to evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes
- to ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings” ([QAA Code of Practice: programme design, approval, monitoring and review \(September 2006\)](#), precept 7).

SARE reports should be constructive, critical and evaluative. Strengths and areas for enhancement should be identified and evidenced, with actions to address any areas of concern. The reports should draw on a wide range of evidence, including:

- external examiner reports
- student feedback (at entry; on course/module; at exit)
- staff feedback
- student recruitment data
- student performance data (including category B or C reports on retention and achievement from the course categorisation process)
- professional, statutory or regulatory body reports
- employer/professional adviser feedback or meeting minutes
- relevant research or professional development activity
- validation or revalidation/review reports by the validating universities
- responses to relevant external reference points (the QAA Academic Infrastructure; regulatory body requirements; etc).

The Module Evaluation Form and SARE templates are available on Wolsey, and include guidance on the type of information and evidence that should be cited. Guidance on any issue relating to the SARE process can be sought from the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement.

The SARE process can be summarised as follows:



## **12.2 The SARE process at module level**

All module leaders are expected to produce a reflective review of provision for each module, using the Module Evaluation Form template available on Wolsey. This should usually be undertaken after the first assessment board following the completion of the teaching of the module. All module evaluations should be given to the course leader (in an electronic format) within a week of the summer assessment board.

It is expected that the review will be heavily influenced by student feedback, usually derived from module questionnaires. Students should be given the opportunity to express their opinions on each module at or near to the end of the module's delivery. This will usually be done through the use of the UCS Module Feedback Form (available on Wolsey). However, teaching staff may choose to combine this with other mechanisms to gain a richer set of data to inform their review. The results of the module feedback questionnaire should be collated and used as evidence in the Module Evaluation Form.

Each course team should meet together to review all the module evaluations, identifying as a team the key issues that need to be addressed and ensuring that these feed through to the SARE process at course level. This meeting should take place close to the end of teaching for the academic year to allow time for relevant actions to be completed before the start of the next academic year.

## **12.3 The SARE process at course level**

Course SARE reports are required annually. The SARE report should reflect the self-evaluation process that the course team and relevant stakeholders have progressed through to enhance the quality of the course(s) under review.

It is essential that members of the course team and the course committee (including students) are given the opportunity to contribute to the course SARE report, with the Course Leader taking overall responsibility for its collation and submission to the Head of School/Centre Head of HE. Where appropriate, the report may review a group of cognate courses. There must be a clear rationale for this procedure (for example much shared teaching) and approval should be sought from the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement.

The evaluation process normally comprises two key activities: the final course committee meeting of the academic year and the meeting of the course team to review module evaluations as noted in 10.2 above. However, some course teams may choose to combine these two events, thus allowing both students and other stakeholders to be involved with the review of module delivery.

It is expected that the two review events will take place before the end of July each year, thus facilitating the completion of a draft SARE report by the end of August. This will then be revised and completed once the final course statistics are available following the completion of the assessment processes. Separate guidance on the completion of course SAREs will be issued

annually to course leaders. This will include guidance on any key institutional issues that should be explored, and will provide prompts for course teams based upon any specific relevant events or issues from the current year.

The final course SARE, including all relevant appendices, should be submitted electronically to the relevant Head of School or Head of HE at Centres by the end of September of the academic year following that to which it relates. All course SARE reports should follow the prescribed format and guidelines which are available on Wolsey. The Head of School or Centre Head of HE will then ensure that the SARE report is complete and sign it off.

Where courses are delivered at more than one UCS centre, a common courses SARE event should be held to review the operation of the courses over the previous year and ensure appropriate consideration of issues relating to multi-site delivery. The event should be held in early October and should be chaired by the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement. The outcome of the event should feed into the School or Centre SARE process.

#### **12.4 The SARE process at School / Centre level**

The purpose of the School or Centre SARE event and report is to review and bring together all the course SARE reports, identifying common themes and taking actions forward as necessary.

##### **The SARE event**

Prior to the SARE event, Heads of School or Heads of HE in Centres should ensure all course SARE reports meet required UCS standards. If changes are necessary, these should be discussed and agreed with the Course Leader.

The School or Centre SARE event should be arranged by the Head of School or Head of HE at the Centre to take place by the end of the second working week of October. Prior to the meeting, the following should be circulated to members:

- details of the timing and venue
- appropriate SARE documents (to be read prior to the event)
- membership of task groups for the event
- the requirement for Course Leaders to prepare, for verbal reporting, a brief summary of their course SARE reports. This should outline key strengths and note key action points, citing the evidence source for each.

##### *Membership*

Heads of School or Heads of HE in Centres should ensure appropriate representation from their School or Centre. This should include Course Leaders and lecturing staff. At least two critical friends from outside the School or Centre (for example from a different area of UCS and/or from an external institution) should be invited to ensure an independent perspective. There should also be at least two student representatives. The UCS Head of Quality Enhancement should be invited to attend all events, and the UCS

Learning Network and Partnerships Manager should be invited to attend all Centre events. The validating universities should be invited to attend all events.

### *Agenda*

While there is opportunity for flexibility of approach, the agenda should include:

- an introduction and review of activities, developments and achievements within the School or Centre over the past year
- a review of progress in relation to the previous year's action plan
- a brief verbal report from each Course Leader for his/her course for the year under review (including key strengths and action points for the forthcoming year)
- opportunities for peer review of course issues and sharing of good practice (for example through the creation of task groups to discuss common issues or particular aspects that have been chosen by the School/Centre/UCS as a focus)
- an opportunity for members to identify issues to be included in the School or Centre SARE report action plan.

### **The School or Centre SARE report**

The School/Centre SARE report is produced by the Head of School or Head of HE at Centres, and as well as providing a record of the SARE event, it should give an overview of the quality of education in the School or Centre.

The report should follow the prescribed format and guidelines which are available on Wolsey, and should be submitted to the UCS Head of Quality Enhancement by the end of November of the academic year following that to which it relates.

## **12.5 Annual academic report to the validating universities**

The UCS Head of Quality Enhancement compiles an annual report to the validating universities, drawing from a range of evidence including:

- School and Centre SARE reports
- external examiner reports
- institutional level summaries of student feedback
- institutional level student recruitment and student performance data
- professional, statutory or regulatory body reports
- staff development activity
- teaching observations
- validation or revalidation/review reports by the validating universities

- responses to relevant external reference points (including the QAA Academic Infrastructure).

The report is expected to be constructive, reflective and evaluative, and provides the validating universities with a mechanism for overseeing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities at UCS.

The annual academic report is submitted to UCS Academic Board for approval prior to submission to the spring term meeting of the UCS Joint Academic Committee.

## 13 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

The role of the external examiner is a vital component in assuring the continuing academic quality and standards of the universities' awards delivered at UCS institutions.

External examiners for awards delivered at UCS institutions are nominated by UCS and approved by the validating universities via the joint Chairs of JAC or their delegated nominees. External examiners are normally appointed for a period of four years according to the procedures outlined in the *UCS Appointment of External Examiner Guidelines*, which are available on Wolsey.

Nominations of appropriately qualified external academic staff may be submitted by the relevant UCS institution to the UCS External Examiners Group, a subcommittee of Academic Board, who will consider the application for forwarding to the Partnerships Office (UEA) and Academic Partnerships (Essex) for approval by the joint Chairs of JAC or their delegated nominees. Nominations should be submitted using the external examiner nomination form available on Wolsey.

In seeking to nominate an external examiner for a course, UCS institutions are asked to provide basic information on the proposed external examiner's qualifications, experience, title and other external examining experience and commitments. External examiners appointed to UCS courses may not be from the validating universities or their partner institutions. Full details regarding nomination criteria, which have been approved by the validating universities, are available in the *UCS Appointment of External Examiner Guidelines* on Wolsey.

External examiners are members of the assessment boards for the relevant course(s) of study and no recommendation for the conferment or non-conferment of a degree on a candidate is valid without the consent of the appointed external examiner(s).

External examiner reports are submitted formally to the validating universities via UCS Registry. The report proforma is available on Wolsey. The reports are considered internally at the UCS institution and course teams are asked to record their responses to external examiner's recommendations in the relevant section of the report proforma. The report is then submitted to the Partnerships Office (UEA) and Academic Partnerships (Essex) for consideration by the joint Chairs of JAC or their delegated nominees.

The joint Chairs of JAC or their delegated nominees will provide written feedback on the reports and will hold a dialogue with UCS concerning any issues arising from an external examiner's report. Any issues of significance will be reported to the JAC.



## 14 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

UCS and the validating universities recognise the important role that feedback from students plays in the delivery and development of its courses of study and academic support provision, both on the main university campuses and at partner institutions. Mechanisms for student representation and feedback are an integral feature of both universities' quality assurance framework, and it is expected that all UCS institutions will have mechanisms in place to enable:

- students to have their views on academic matters formally represented to the relevant academic staff
- staff to consult students
- students from different groups within the UCS institution to have their views represented.

It is a minimum requirement of the JAC that each School or Centre establishes at least one Staff Student Liaison Committee and that for every module, student feedback is obtained at least annually each time the module is delivered. Schools or Centres can obtain additional feedback from students in a variety of ways, although these will typically include questionnaires, in-class discussions or focus groups. Students' views should feed into the Self-Assessment, Review and Evaluation (SARE) process, and students should be kept informed of actions taken in response to their feedback.

The JAC maintains an oversight of any issues arising from student feedback via the SARE process. A student representative is invited to be a member of the JAC.

Further information is available in the *UCS Student Engagement Strategy*, which is available on Wolsey.

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)</b>	The award of credit to an individual student towards a specific award on the basis of non-certificated prior learning and/or relevant experience, usually assessed by a portfolio of evidence generated by the student. Credit is not awarded on the basis of an experience itself but on the basis of the demonstrable learning outcomes of that experience
<b>Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)</b>	The award of credit to an individual student towards a specific award on the basis of prior certificated learning
<b>Academic Infrastructure</b>	<p>The Academic Infrastructure provides a means of describing academic standards in UK higher education. QAA has worked with the higher education sector to establish the various parts of the Academic Infrastructure which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (available online at <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp</a>)</li> <li>• frameworks for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and in Scotland (available online at <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/default.asp">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/default.asp</a>)</li> <li>• subject benchmark statements (available online at <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp</a>)</li> <li>• programme specifications</li> </ul>
<b>Award</b>	Denotes a degree, diploma, certificate or other formal recognition of successful completion of an approved programme of study
<b>Awarding institution</b>	An institution able to award degrees, diplomas and certificates by virtue of authority given to it by statute, Royal Charter or the Privy Council or under licence from another body
<b>CAG</b>	UCS Course Approvals Group, which has internal oversight of proposals for new and revalidated courses, changes to existing courses and proposals to withdraw provision. CAG is a sub-group of the UCS Academic Board
<b>CAT forms</b>	<p>Course Approval Tracking forms, which provide a record of the initial and ongoing development of UCS courses, beginning with an initial idea for a new course and culminating in withdrawal of provision. There are five CAT forms:</p> <p><b>CAT0:</b> Initial Proposal – Course title approval</p> <p><b>CAT1:</b> Proposal to Proceed to Publicity and Validation – Single Centre Provision</p> <p><b>CAT2:</b> Proposal to Proceed to Publicity and Validation – Multi-Centre Provision</p> <p><b>CAT1R:</b> Proposal to Proceed to Periodic Review – single site provision</p> <p><b>CAT2R:</b> Proposal to Proceed to Periodic Review – multi site provision</p> <p><b>CAT3:</b> Changes to Validated Provision</p>

	<b>CAT4:</b> Course Discontinuation <b>CAT5:</b> Course Recruitment Suspension
<b>Commendations</b>	Aspects of good practice highlighted by validation, revalidation or review panels
<b>Centre</b>	An approved centre of delivery for validated UCS provision.
<b>Collaboration Agreement</b>	A formal document signed by the two validating universities, UCS Ipswich and each UCS Learning Network Centre, which sets out the formal relationship between the institutions and provides a framework within which courses can be approved and delivered
<b>Conditions of validation/review</b>	Issues raised at validation, revalidation or review events that must be addressed before a proposed new partnership or new course may commence
<b>Course</b>	A set of modules that lead to an award or give credit towards an award
<b>Course committee</b>	The committee appointed by a UCS institution to each course to oversee the delivery of the course
<b>Course team</b>	The team of academic staff which develops and submits a course of study for validation and subsequently delivers it
<b>Course validation</b>	The process by which the universities as awarding institutions judge that a course of study developed for delivery at a UCS institution is of an appropriate standard and quality to lead to a joint award of the two universities
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development, a term for training programmes which support the development of employment- related knowledge, skills and understanding
<b>CVU</b>	Council for Validating Universities, an organisation which specialises in good practice and standards for the validation of higher education programmes by universities and colleges ('awarding institutions') for delivery by other colleges or organisations ('partner institutions')
<b>Definitive Course Document (DCD)</b>	The final electronic record of a validated course, which should be in the format outlined on Wolsey and should incorporate all approved amendments to the original validation documentation
<b>Delivery of a course</b>	Teaching, management, administration and assessment of a course of study
<b>Equality of opportunity and diversity</b>	Refers to the requirements of the UCS policy on Equality of Opportunity and Diversity (E&D) including the duty to promote E&D in those aspects required by legislation
<b>Essex</b>	University of Essex

<b>External examiner</b>	A senior academic from another Higher Education institution, appointed by the universities to confirm the standards of student performance within a validated course
<b>EEG</b>	UCS External Examiner Group, with internal oversight of external examiner appointments and external examiner processes. EEG is a sub-group of the UCS Academic Board
<b>FD</b>	Foundation degree, which is a higher education qualification at one level below the Honours degree and of two years' duration full-time or an equivalent duration part-time
<b>FDQB</b>	Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>FEC</b>	Further Education College
<b>FHEQ</b>	QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2008), which applies to degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards (other than honorary degrees and higher doctorates) granted by a higher education provider in the exercise of its degree awarding powers.
<b>Franchise</b>	<p>An arrangement whereby an awarding institution authorises a partner organisation to deliver all or part of a programme designed by the awarding institution.</p> <p>The validating universities do not offer any franchised provision through UCS.</p>
<b>FT</b>	Full Time
<b>FTE</b>	Full Time Equivalent
<b>HEFCE</b>	The Higher Education Funding Council for England, which distributes public money for teaching and research to higher education institutions in England
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>HESA</b>	The Higher Education Statistics Agency, which is the official body responsible for the collection and publication of statistical data on higher education
<b>Institutional review</b>	The quality assurance process whereby the validating universities review a UCS institution to ensure that it remains suitable for the conduct of higher education programmes leading to a joint award of the universities
<b>Institutional validation</b>	The quality assurance process used for the initial judgement by the universities as awarding institutions that a prospective partner organisation is suitable to deliver courses leading to their joint award.

<b>Joint Academic Committee (JAC)</b>	A joint committee between UEA, Essex and UCS with responsibility for monitoring the operational and quality aspects of UCS provision, co-chaired by the Director of Partnerships (UEA) and the Dean of Academic Partnerships (Essex). JAC is a committee of the Essex Senate and the UEA Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, which acts with delegated authority from the UEA Senate
<b>Module</b>	A unit which forms part of a course of study but which does not by itself lead to an award of the universities
<b>Partner institution</b>	An organisation with which the awarding institution enters into an agreement to collaborate. A partner institution is normally a body without degree-awarding powers
<b>Periodic review</b>	The quality assurance and enhancement process undertaken by UCS and the awarding institutions to periodically evaluate a course or group of courses. This process enables the awarding institutions to assess whether any validation previously granted for a course of study shall be continued for a specified further period of time
<b>Programme Specification</b>	A summary of a course which includes the intended learning outcomes together with information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods used to enable the learning outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated
<b>PSRB</b>	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (see Regulatory Body below)
<b>QA framework</b>	The quality assurance mechanisms which underpin all UCS provision and enable the universities to oversee the academic quality and standards of their awards delivered at UCS institutions
<b>QAA</b>	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, which works with UK HEIs in auditing, assessing and enhancing the quality and standards of higher education
<b>QAA Code of Practice</b>	The QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education is a suite of inter-related documents which form an overall code for the guidance of higher education institutions. The Code provides a series of 'precepts' covering matters relating to the management of academic quality and standards in higher education. Available online at: <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/code-of-practice/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/code-of-practice/Pages/default.aspx</a>
<b>Recommendations of validation/review</b>	Issues raised at validation, revalidation or review events on which a response from the UCS institution is expected but on which closure is not required for a partnership or course to commence
<b>Regulatory body</b>	A body established by Parliament to provide self-regulation of a professional group and whose remit is to protect the public through

	standards and regulation of education and practice. Examples of regulatory bodies are the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Health Professions Council and the General Social Care Council
<b>Requirements of validation/review</b>	Issues raised at validation, revalidation or review on which action will be expected by an agreed deadline once the partnership or course has commenced
<b>Revalidation</b>	The quality assurance process undertaken by the awarding institutions to assess whether any validation previously granted for a course of study shall be continued for a specified further period of time
<b>Self-Assessment, Review and Evaluation (SARE)</b>	The process by which UCS provision is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis that, alongside revalidation, provides over time a clear history of the development, evaluation and quality enhancement of courses
<b>Senate</b>	The academic governing body of each validating university
<b>SITS</b>	UCS student information system / database
<b>Subject Benchmark Statements</b>	Subject Benchmarks are part of the QAA academic infrastructure used to define explicit national statements of academic standards or outcomes at subject level. Subject benchmark information of this type provides a reference point against which outcomes at honours level can be measured. Available online at: <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp</a>
<b>UCS</b>	University Campus Suffolk
<b>UCS Board</b>	The body responsible for the financial, strategic and academic operation of UCS, co-chaired by the Vice-Chancellors of the validating universities and with wider stakeholder membership
<b>UCS Ipswich</b>	The main UCS campus in Ipswich
<b>UCS Learning Network</b>	The centres of UCS delivery at UCS Bury St Edmunds, UCS Great Yarmouth, UCS Ipswich, UCS Lowestoft, UCS Otley and UCS at Suffolk New College
<b>UCS Limited</b>	The joint venture company set up by the universities as a vehicle for the creation of UCS
<b>UCS policies, procedures and regulations</b>	All or any of the UCS policies, procedures and regulations (including academic and quality assurance procedures) approved by the universities from time to time and which relate directly or indirectly to any programmes under the Collaboration Agreement
<b>UEA</b>	University of East Anglia
<b>UNISTATS</b>	HEFCE owned web based statistical information from UK Universities

	and Colleges. See <a href="http://www.unistats.com/">http://www.unistats.com/</a> .
<b>Universities</b>	University of East Anglia and University of Essex
<b>Validation documentation</b>	Evidence provided for consideration by a validation panel as part of the validation process
<b>Validation Handbook for UCS</b>	The joint UEA and Essex handbook of procedures for the approval, monitoring and review of academic provision at UCS, as amended from time to time
<b>Validation/review panel</b>	A formal group of experts who discuss and evaluate the academic soundness of a proposed new course and make a recommendation regarding its approval
<b>Wolsey</b>	The UCS virtual learning environment

## **UCS Joint Academic Committee**

### **University of East Anglia and University of Essex**

#### **MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE JOINT ACADEMIC COMMITTEE FOR UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SUFFOLK**

The UCS Joint Academic Committee (JAC) is a joint sub committee of the Senate of the University of Essex and of the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Senate of the University of East Anglia. The Chair of the JAC will alternate between the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex. The membership includes five members from each University (including the Chair), ensuring an appropriate spread of expertise is supplied through the combination of members from the two Universities to support the work of JAC. UCS membership includes representation from UCS Ipswich and each of the five UCS Learning Network Centres. The UCS Students' Union appoints one student representative.

All appointed or elected members of the Joint Academic Committee are entitled to vote on any matter put to a vote at a meeting of the Committee. No resolution may be deemed to be carried that is not supported by the majority of University of East Anglia and University of Essex members present at the meeting. In the event of disagreement within the JAC between its University members which cannot be resolved at the meeting, then the Chair will defer and seek resolution outside of the meeting. It should be noted that the decision of one University (i.e. the University of East Anglia Senate or the University of Essex Senate) cannot be implemented in respect of any course leading to a joint award without the approval of the other.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

##### **Appointed by the University of East Anglia:**

Ex officio:     Director of Partnerships (Joint Chair)  
                    Director of University Services

Three members appointed by the Senate:

Head of School of Education and Lifelong Learning  
Professor of Management, Norwich Business School  
Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery / Head of School of Allied Health  
Professionals (alternating)

##### **Appointed by the University of Essex:**

Ex officio:     Dean of Academic Partnerships (Joint Chair)  
                    Academic Registrar

Three members appointed by the Senate:

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards)  
Dean of the Graduate School  
Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering

##### **Appointed by University Campus Suffolk:**

Ex officio:     Provost  
                    Deputy Provost (Professional Services)  
                    Director of the Office of Academic Development



Academic Registrar and Director of Student Services  
UCS Head of Quality Enhancement  
Head of the Graduate School  
Head of School of Applied Social Sciences:  
Head of School of Arts and Humanities  
Head of School of Business, Leadership and Enterprise  
Head of School of Science Technology and Health  
Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery

Appointed by the UCS Learning Network Centres:  
One senior representative from each Centre

President (Education and Engagement), UCS Union

### **In attendance**

UCS Head of Academic Partnerships  
Director of Planning and Partnerships  
Head of the Partnerships, University of East Anglia  
Head of Academic Partnerships, University of Essex

### **Secretary to JAC**

A senior administrator nominated by the UEA Director of University Services and Essex Academic Registrar

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. To consider all matters related to the quality and standards of academic provision of UCS and to make recommendations to the Senate of the University of Essex and the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Senate of the University of East Anglia accordingly.
2. To prescribe and keep under review the quality assurance policies and procedures to be followed by UCS to satisfy the requirements of the two Universities.
3. To maintain an overview of the quality of the student experience for all UCS students, including the monitoring of internal and external student satisfaction survey outcomes, and to receive annual reports on complaints, academic appeals and student discipline.
4. To receive proposals for new taught and research degree programmes, to oversee the approval process and to make recommendations to the Senate of the University of Essex and the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Senate of the University of East Anglia as appropriate.
5. To have oversight of the annual Self-Assessment, Review and Evaluation process for all aspects of UCS academic provision.
6. To receive reports of periodic reviews of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and to make recommendations to the Senate of the University of

Essex and the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Senate of the University of East Anglia on the continuation or discontinuation of programmes as appropriate.

7. To receive reports of institutional reviews of UCS partner institutions, and to make recommendations to the Senate of the University of Essex and the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Senate of the University of East Anglia as appropriate.
8. To receive reports of external reviews of UCS partner institutions or programmes, including QAA reports and reports from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.
9. To review annually UCS admissions, progression, retention and achievement data.
10. To make recommendations to the Senate of the University of Essex and the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Senate of the University of East Anglia on new institutional partners for UCS in terms of the maintenance of quality and academic standards.
11. To agree arrangements for the appointment of external examiners for all UCS provision and have oversight of external examiner procedures.
12. To consider and approve publicity protocols relating to academic provision including publicity via electronic and editorial media.
13. To receive minutes, recommendations and regular reports from the UCS Academic Board.
14. To receive an annual report from the UCS Research Committee.

### **Quoracy**

The quorum for meetings of JAC shall be not less than half of the members, rounded up to a whole number.

**University Campus Suffolk**

**Academic Board**

**Membership and Terms of Reference**

PURPOSE

Subject to the provisions of the *Governance of Academic Standards at University Campus Suffolk*, and to the defined responsibilities of the Provost, the Academic Board acts as the major academic forum for University Campus Suffolk (UCS).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To develop, monitor and evaluate the Institution's Strategic Plan in academic areas, including Teaching and Learning and Research and Scholarly Activity and other academic-related strategies.
2. To consider matters relating to the student experience including recruitment, retention, success rates and student satisfaction.
3. To receive and review reports and action plans on:
  - Annual monitoring of quality and standards
  - External examiner appointments, reports and responses
  - Operation of the system of approval, review and monitoring of the quality and standard of programmes
  - Student evaluations and responses
  - Internal and external reviews, inspections and audits
  - Academic complaints, appeals, academic and professional misconduct
  - Research progress
4. To receive annually membership of Course Committees and Assessment Boards.
5. To receive and consider validation calendars and outcomes.
6. To recommend to the Joint Academic Committee of the Universities of East Anglia and Essex:
  - Policies and procedures for the admission, progression, assessment and examination of the academic performance of students, and student discipline including academic and professional misconduct;

- The content of the curriculum;
  - The appointment and removal of external examiners;
  - Procedures for the effective quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards and the approval and review of courses in line with the Validation Handbook;
  - Procedures for the award of qualifications and honorary academic titles
7. To submit an Annual Academic Report to the Joint Academic Committee which will include, inter alia, consideration of:
- The academic activities of UCS
  - The student experience
  - Academic risk management
  - Other issues relating to validated courses
  - Research developments
8. To advise:
- The Provost, the Board of Directors of UCS Ltd, the UCS Executive Team and the Strategic Management Team on academic and quality assurance aspects of UCS' Strategic Plan
  - On such other matters as are referred to it by the Provost or Board of Directors
9. To establish:
- Such sub-committees as it considers necessary for the purpose of enabling it to carry out its responsibilities. The number of members of any such sub-committee and terms on which they are to hold and vacate office shall be determined by Academic Board; and any such sub-committee may include persons who are not members of the Academic Board.
10. To receive:
- Annual reports from its sub-committees.

## CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

Substitutions for members unable to attend a meeting must be agreed beforehand with the Chair.

### **Membership**

#### **Ex Officio**

Provost (Chair)  
Director of the Office of Academic Development (Deputy Chair)  
Deputy Provost (Professional Services)  
Director of Academic Services, and Academic Registrar Heads of School (5)  
Director of Planning and Partnerships Head of Quality Enhancement  
Head of Student Support  
Head of Learning Resources  
Heads of Division (10)  
Director of Research and Enterprise and Head of Graduate School  
Head of Academic Partnerships  
Heads of HE at each of the Learning Network Centres (5)  
President of UCS Union  
Director of Partnerships, University of East Anglia  
Head of Partnerships, University of East Anglia  
Associate Dean of Academic Partnerships, University of Essex  
Academic Partnerships Manager, University of Essex

#### **Nominated**

1 member of academic staff from each School nominated by the relevant Head of School (5)  
2 students nominated by the UCS Union (2)

Total membership: 43

#### **In attendance**

Representative, UCU

#### **Secretary to Academic Board**

PA to the Director of Academic Development

#### *Quorum*

50% of members rounded to a whole number

## University of East Anglia and University of Essex

### UCS Institutional Validation Documentation Requirements

The University of East Anglia and the University of Essex are responsible for the quality and academic standards of their joint awards offered through University Campus Suffolk. In establishing a new UCS partnership, each university must assure itself that the prospective partner institution has the appropriate infrastructure to deliver HE programmes and/or identify areas where input from the universities is needed to ensure that their required standards of quality management and enhancement are established and maintained.

A prospective UCS partner institution must meet the universities' institutional validation requirements as detailed in this handbook before engaging with the approval process for individual courses. Subject-specific issues are pursued at the appropriate course validation event(s) following approval at institutional level.

#### **Supporting statement by the proposed partner institution**

The proposed partner institution is asked to provide a supporting statement as to why it wishes to enter into UCS and how this is reflected in its mission statement and operational plan. It should also provide the following documentation for scrutiny. This information will be retained by Essex and UEA for audit purposes.

#### **General information about the proposed partner institution**

- Mission statement
- Operational plan
- HE strategy
- Prospectus
- Organisation chart
- Contact information for relevant staff
- Student Handbook(s)
- Other publicity material
- Information on any collaboration at HE level with other institutions

#### **Regulations and policies**

- Regulations for all programmes
- Academic appeals policy/procedure
- Complaints procedure
- Equality of opportunity and diversity policy
- Disability statement

#### **Staffing**

- CVs for all HE academic staff – full and part-time
- Staff recruitment and development policy
- Staff appraisal scheme
- Details of recent staff development activity

### **Admissions, student numbers and progression**

- HE admissions statistics for last 5 years:
  - ⇒ number of applicants
  - ⇒ number of admissions
  - ⇒ ratio of applicants to places
  - ⇒ 'A' level scores and other qualifications of student intake (along with a commentary on the extent to which widening participation is an aim of the institution, and if so, how this has been addressed)
  - ⇒ actual intake as a percentage of the target intake
- student numbers, by course, for last five years (initial enrolments and actual completions) – broken down by year of study.
- HE student performance/assessment/degree results including the percentage of graduates within each degree classification
- Destination of graduates (employment, further training)
- Recruitment and selection policy and procedures
- Details of student record system
- Examples of student transcripts

### **Quality assurance and enhancement**

- Documentation relating to assessment strategy including examination papers and marking arrangements, examination board, invigilation procedures, appointment of external examiners and a definition of their role
- External review reports, such as QAA, HEFCE or Ofsted reports
- External examiner reports and associated correspondence
- Details of student feedback processes
- Revalidation/periodic review process
- AP(E)L procedures

### **Student support and guidance**

Information on:

- Welfare
- Guidance
- Support services
- Adviser system
- Careers

### **Resources**

Information on:

- Library
- ICT
- Other resources

### **Employer Engagement**

**University Campus Suffolk**

**University of East Anglia and University of Essex  
Institutional Validation / Review of**

**[Proposed UCS institution / UCS institution]**

**[Date]**

**[Location]**

**Contact on the day: [name and phone number]**

**TYPICAL AGENDA**

09:30	Arrival, coffee and welcome by the Chair
09:45	Presentation by staff from the [proposed] partner institution
10:00	Private meeting of the validation/review panel: introduction to institutional validation/review, background to UCS and initial discussion
11:00	Tour of facilities
12:00	Structured meeting with students (with coffee)
12:45	Working lunch for panel
13:15	Meeting with senior management from the [proposed] partner institution
13:45	Meeting with staff from the [proposed] partner institution
14:45	Meeting with employer representatives (where relevant)
15:15	Private meeting of the validation/review panel: conclusion and recommendations (with coffee)
16:15	Feedback to staff from the [proposed] partner institution
16:30	Close



## GUIDANCE NOTES FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS

*You may find it helpful to use the checklist below to guide your consideration of the UCS institution under review. The checklist draws upon guidance in the [QAA Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education](#).*

---

### HE strategy and operational management structures

- Does the UCS institution have a clearly articulated HE strategy? Do institutional strategic aims for HE continue to be appropriate and relevant?
  - Does the UCS institution have appropriate internal mechanisms for the operational management and quality assurance of HE provision?
  - Are relevant internal HE committees operating effectively?
  - Are key staffing roles clear, and are there effective lines of communication between the UCS institution and the validating universities?
  - Are institutional policies applicable to HE provision operating effectively?
  - Are effective internal academic development, approval, monitoring and review procedures in place? Has the UCS institution been responsive to feedback from the validating universities on previous Self-Assessment, Review and Evaluation reports?
  - Is feedback from external examiners being dealt with appropriately? How is this feedback shared with students?
  - Is there evidence of appropriate engagement with the QAA Academic Infrastructure?
- 

### HE learning, teaching and assessment strategy

- Does the institution employ a suitable variety of teaching and learning methods to meet the needs of a diverse range of students? How are these perceived by students?
  - Does the institution make appropriate use of formative assessment, in order to support the development of students' abilities?
  - Do staff provide thorough and timely feedback on students' work?
  - Are external examiners generally satisfied with the conduct of the assessment process?
-

### **Admissions, enrolment and induction**

- Are admissions procedures fair and transparent, including those for dealing with AP(E)L?
  - Are entry criteria for HE courses clear and appropriate?
  - Are there well-designed arrangements for student induction?
  - Are students satisfied with the enrolment and induction process?
- 

### **Student support**

- Are students provided with an appropriate level of academic support?
  - Are arrangements in place to ensure that any additional needs of students are identified and reasonable adjustments are put in place to meet them?
  - Are arrangements for tutorial support clear and generally understood by staff and students?
  - Are appropriate arrangements in place to provide careers guidance?
- 

### **Student retention, progression and achievement**

- Are levels of student retention, progression and achievement satisfactory? Where issues have been identified, have these been adequately addressed?
  - Does graduate destination data suggest that the UCS institution is preparing students well for their future careers?
- 

### **Student representation and feedback**

- Are appropriate arrangements in place to gain feedback from students? Are students represented on relevant committees?
  - Do the outcomes of student satisfaction surveys (internal and external) demonstrate that students are happy with their learning experiences? Where lower levels of satisfaction have been identified, have these been dealt with in a robust manner?
  - How does the UCS institution report back to students on action taken in response to their feedback?
-

### **Staffing and staff development**

- Are academic staff appropriately qualified and experienced?
  - Is appropriate technical and administrative support available?
  - Are appropriate contingency plans in place to deal with any medium or long term staff absence?
  - Are adequate staff development opportunities available to support staff in terms of their professional development?
  - How is staff performance monitored and reviewed? Does the institution operate a system of peer observation?
  - Are there adequate opportunities for scholarly activity?
- 

### **Employer engagement and work-based learning**

- Have employers been involved in the ongoing development of HE provision within the UCS institution?
  - Are arrangements for the management and supervision of workplace learning systematic and clear? How does the institution ensure that students gain experience that is appropriate to their programme and level of study? How are placement providers briefed and supported?
  - Are Learning Agreements in place to define the responsibilities of the employers, students, mentors and/or academic tutors?
- 

### **Learning resources**

- Is adequate teaching and learning accommodation available?
  - Are learners supported by appropriate and accessible library resources?
  - Do students have access to adequate equipment (including ICT)?
  - Are appropriate arrangements in place to manage and support the use of virtual learning environments? Are staff provided with adequate training in this respect?
- 

### **Accuracy and completeness of published information**

- What mechanisms does the institution employ to ensure the accuracy and completeness of published information (for example on its website or in HE

publicity material)? Are effective mechanisms in place to liaise with the validating universities regarding publicity material?

- Are student and course handbooks and other information provided for students clear and complete? How is this audited?
- Are programme specifications published to students in full?

## UCS Course Planning and Approval Process – Gantt chart outlining key responsibilities

Chart One: Course Development Team

KEY ACTIVITIES	Pre-CAT 1/2 form	Sept	18+ weeks before event	16+ weeks before event	14+ weeks before event	12+ weeks before event	10+ weeks before event	9+ weeks before event	7+ weeks before event	6+ weeks before event	5+ weeks before event	3 weeks before (Monday)	Event	Event + 7 weeks	Post event sign-off
Assemble course team and meet for initial conceptualisation including consultation with employees, professional bodies, etc	Course Team in consultation with UCS														
Produce CAT 1/2 form and send to UCS Registry for approval by the UCS Course Approvals Group and the UCS Joint Academic Committee	Course Team														
Agree date of validation event with UCS Registry		Course Team													
<b>For Revalidation / Periodic Review events only:</b> Identify student panel member and notify to UCS Registry for student rep training		Course Team													
<b>For periodic reviews only:</b> Meet with Course Administrator / HE Administrator to discuss timescales for production of validation documentation			Course Team and Course Admin Team												
<b>For (re)validations only:</b> Meet with Business Admin Team / HE Administrator to discuss timescales for production of validation documentation			Course Team and Business Admin Team												

KEY ACTIVITIES	Pre-CAT 1/2 form	Sept	18+ weeks before event	16+ weeks before event	14+ weeks before event	12+ weeks before event	10+ weeks before event	9+ weeks before event	7+ weeks before event	6+ weeks before event	5+ weeks before event	3 weeks before (Monday)	Event	Event + 7 weeks	Post event sign-off
Draft validation documentation			Course Team												
Agree members of course team to attend validation event and brief appropriately			Course Team in consultation with UCS												
Arrange students for panel to meet			Course Team												
Suggest employer representative(s) for validation panel to UCS Registry			Course Team												
<b>For validation events only:</b> Submit draft validation documentation to UCS Registry in preparation for mock event where identified by CAG							Course Team via Business Admin Team								
<b>For validation events only:</b> Mock event where identified by CAG in liaison with Head of Quality Enhancement								Course Team / HoQE							
<b>For validation events only:</b> Revise documentation in light of mock event/paper review								Course Team via Business Admin Team							

KEY ACTIVITIES	Pre-CAT 1/2 form	Sept	18+ weeks before event	16+ weeks before event	14+ weeks before event	12+ weeks before event	10+ weeks before event	9+ weeks before event	7+ weeks before event	6+ weeks before event	5+ weeks before event	3 weeks before (Monday)	Event	Event + 7 weeks	Post event sign-off
Submit draft documentation to Registry for review by Head of Quality Enhancement / Education Developer and UCS Registry									Course Team via Course / Business Admin Team						
Revise documentation in light of review by Head of Quality Enhancement / Education Developer and UCS Registry										Course Team					
Send copy of document and submission checklist to Head of Division / HE Manager for checking											Course Team, HoD / HEM				
Send required number of copies of documentation (paper and electronic) to UCS Registry with signed submission checklist.												Course Team via Course / Business Admin Team			
<b>(Re)Validation / Periodic Review Event</b>													All		
Submit electronic copy of resubmission documents and conditions grid to UCS Registry to respond to conditions, requirements and/or recommendations														Course Team via Course / Business Admin Team	
Once approved by the Chair: Submit one hard copy and one electronic copy of final course documentation (Definitive Course Documents) to UCS Registry by agreed deadline (no later than 1 Sept)															Course Team via Course / Business Admin Team

**Chart Two: Administration / Management Team**

KEY ACTIVITIES	Sept to Nov	26+ wks before event	18+ wks before event	16+ wks before event	12+ wks before event	6+ wks before event	4 wks before event	3 wks before event	1-2 wks before event	Event	1 wk after event	2 wks after event	3 wks after event	4 wks after event	5 wks + after event	7 wks + after event	8 wks + after event	9 wks + after event
Draft schedule of events agreed	HoQE / PMT																	
Agree UEA or Essex lead (i.e. who will identify chair and external) and notify Registry	UEA / Essex																	
Liaise with UCS Students' Union regarding training for student reps on revalidation panels	Quality / SU																	
Make room booking		Registry																
<b>PSRB events only:</b> Send visit request form, identify reviewers and any additional requirements (agenda etc)		Registry																
Identify, confirm university approval and approach external academic panel member(s)		Lead University																
Identify, confirm university approval and approach employer representative(s) for panel		Course Team / Registry																



KEY ACTIVITIES	Sept to Nov	26+ wks before event	18+ wks before event	16+ wks before event	12+ wks before event	6+ wks before event	4 wks before event	3 wks before event	1-2 wks before event	Event	1 wk after event	2 wks after event	3 wks after event	4 wks after event	5 wks + after event	7 wks + after event	8 wks + after event	9 wks + after event
Select UEA / Essex panel members		UEA / Essex																
Select UCS / Learning Network panel members		Registry																
Gain approval for validation panel from JAC Chairs					Lead University													
Inform UCS of panel membership					UEA / Essex													
Arrange travel and accommodation for external academic panel member(s)					Lead University (or Registry for PSRB reps)													
Send reminder to course teams (no. of documents, employer/student rep, student meeting)						Registry												
Produce validation event agenda in approved format and send to course team						Registry												

KEY ACTIVITIES	Sept to Nov	26+ wks before event	18+ wks before event	16+ wks before event	12+ wks before event	6+ wks before event	4 wks before event	3 wks before event	1-2 wks before event	Event	1 wk after event	2 wks after event	3 wks after event	4 wks after event	5 wks + after event	7 wks + after event	8 wks + after event	9 wks + after event
Book refreshments						Registry												
Prepare validation pack for panel (inc fee/expenses claim forms for externals)							Registry											
Documents and submission checklist sent to Registry, checked by Head of Registry								Registry										
Send documentation to panel members								Registry										
Send electronic copy of validation documentation to both Partnerships offices								Registry										
Brief chairs / panel members as appropriate									UEA / Essex									
Brief UCS / Learning Network panel members as appropriate									Quality									

KEY ACTIVITIES	Sept to Nov	26+ wks before event	18+ wks before event	16+ wks before event	12+ wks before event	6+ wks before event	4 wks before event	3 wks before event	1-2 wks before event	Event	1 wk after event	2 wks after event	3 wks after event	4 wks after event	5 wks + after event	7 wks + after event	8 wks + after event	9 wks + after event
Amend catering requirements following dietary consultation with members									Registry									
Arrange parking for panel members									Registry									
Prepare nameplates for all attendees (including course team members)									Registry									
<b>(Re)Validation / Periodic Review Event</b>										All								
Maintain up-to-date records on each event and chase action as required										Registry								
Send draft conditions, requirements, recommendations to course team within one week of event, subject to agreement by Chair											Registry							
Pay external expenses and fees on receipt of completed expense forms											Lead University (or Registry for PSRB reps)							

KEY ACTIVITIES	Sept to Nov	26+ wks before event	18+ wks before event	16+ wks before event	12+ wks before event	6+ wks before event	4 wks before event	3 wks before event	1-2 wks before event	Event	1 wk after event	2 wks after event	3 wks after event	4 wks after event	5 wks + after event	7 wks + after event	8 wks + after event	9 wks + after event
Produce draft validation report and send to Chair for approval											Registry / Chair							
Send draft validation report to panel members requesting comments within 2 weeks												Registry / Panel						
Revise validation report in light of feedback from panel														Registry				
Circulate final validation report to course leader, HoD/HEM and Partnerships Offices (to go to JAC)															Registry			
Submit electronic copy of resubmission documents and conditions grid to Registry to respond to conditions, requirements and/or recommendations																Course Team		
Send resubmission documents and conditions grid to Chair or full panel for consideration																Chair		
Present validation report to JAC for approval																Registry / JAC		

KEY ACTIVITIES	Sept to Nov	26+ wks before event	18+ wks before event	16+ wks before event	12+ wks before event	6+ wks before event	4 wks before event	3 wks before event	1-2 wks before event	Event	1 wk after event	2 wks after event	3 wks after event	4 wks after event	5 wks + after event	7 wks + after event	8 wks + after event	9 wks + after event
Once agreed conditions have been met, sign-off sheet sent to Chair for completion																	Registry / Chair	
Send sign-off sheet and validation report to Essex Partnerships Office for agreement to remove the subject to validation flag (only if before Essex Senate have met)																	Registry / Essex	
Request definitive documents (with 2 week deadline)																	Course Team / Registry	
Send notification of validation to Admissions, Academic Support/HE Administrator, MIT																	Registry	
Maintain up-to-date course files in agreed format																		Registry

### Key

CAG	UCS Course Approvals Group
Chair	Validation Panel Chair
HoQE	UCS Head of Quality Enhancement
JAC	UCS Joint Academic Committee
Lead	Lead University (UEA or Essex)
Secretary	Validation Panel Secretary

**University Campus Suffolk****Course Approval Process – CAT forms**

There are six forms used in the course approval process, all of which are available on Wolsey:

**CAT0 – Initial Proposal**

This form should be used when proposing a new course or changing the name and substance of an existing course prior to (re)validation. The form needs information which will demonstrate its economic viability and fit within the UCS portfolio. It is expected that if a similar course exists within UCS, then discussion between the two centres has taken place. Equally, if there is similar provision at UEA or Essex, discussions should have taken place before submitting the form. This form is considered internally by the UCS Portfolio Development Committee (PDC).

Once the completed form has been approved by the Universities' Liaison Group, the course can proceed to CAT1 or CAT2 stage.

**CAT 1 – Proposal to Proceed to Publicity and Validation – single site provision**

This form should be used for the validation or revalidation of a course at one UCS centre where the title has already been approved. It requires more detail than a CAT0 about the proposed course, for example target intake, a summary of the course to go onto UCAS, educational aims, course structure, assessment framework, rationale and market demand, implications for existing courses and resources. If the proposed course is a progression route for an existing Foundation degree, then the Foundation degree modules should also be included within the course structure so that the three years can be seen as a whole. This form is considered internally by the UCS Course Approvals Group (CAG).

Once the completed form has been approved by the UCS Joint Academic Committee, the new course can appear on the UCS website, in the UCS prospectus and in UCAS listings (if applicable). New courses should be marked as 'subject to validation' in any publicity material. The course will also be added to the appropriate year's validation calendar.

**CAT 2 – Proposal to Proceed to Publicity and Validation – multi-site provision**

This form should be used for the validation or revalidation of a course that is going to run at more than one UCS centre and where the title has already been approved. The Course Coordinator is responsible for completing Section A of the form for all centres with the same information that is required on a CAT1 form, and then Section B should be completed individually for each centre wishing to run the course. This form is considered internally by the UCS Course Approvals Group (CAG).

Once the completed form has been approved by the UCS Joint Academic Committee, the new course can appear on the UCS website, in the UCS prospectus and in UCAS listings (if applicable). New courses should be marked as 'subject to validation' in any publicity material. The course will also be added to the appropriate year's validation calendar.

### **CAT1R – Proposal to Proceed to Periodic Review – single site provision**

This form should be used when the period of validation for an existing programme delivered at a single UCS centre is due to end. The form requires information about the currently validated course, including the number of students enrolled over the last three years and any significant changes that have taken place since the last validation/periodic review, as well as an overview of any planned changes. This form is considered by the UCS Course Approvals Group (CAG), who will recommend to the UCS Joint Academic Committee (JAC) whether the proposal should proceed to periodic review or requires a full validation event.

Once the completed form has been approved by JAC, the course will be added to the appropriate year's validation/periodic review calendar.

### **CAT2R – Proposal to Proceed to Periodic Review – multi-site provision**

This form should be used when the period of validation for an existing programme delivered at more than one UCS centre is due to end. The CAT2R requires the same information as the CAT1R form, but is split into two sections: section A covers general details about the current course and section B covers the centre-specific details. The Course Co-ordinator is responsible for completing section A of the form for all centres and section B should be completed by the appropriate Head of Division or Head of HE for each centre running the course. This form is considered by the UCS Course Approvals Group (CAG), who will recommend to the UCS Joint Academic Committee (JAC) whether the proposal should proceed to periodic review or requires a full validation event.

Once the completed form has been approved by JAC, the course will be added to the appropriate year's validation/periodic review calendar.

### **CAT 3 – Changes to Validated Provision**

This form should be used when a change to a validated programme is requested. Changes may include a change to the course or module title; a change to the assessment of a module; a change in the learning outcomes of a module; or the addition of a new module to an existing programme. Any changes must be supported in writing by the external examiner. The new module specification, clearly showing the changes to the original specification, should accompany the CAT3 form. This form is considered internally by the UCS Course Approvals Group (CAG).

Once the completed form has been approved by the UCS Joint Academic Committee, the necessary changes will be made to SITS, the UCS website and/or Wolsey.

Please note that a change of course title will also require approval from the Universities' Liaison Group before any change can take effect.

### **CAT 4 – Course Discontinuation**

This form should be used when the School/Centre wish to permanently withdraw a validated course or does not wish to revalidate a course, or when current students are not going to transfer to the newly validated course. This form is considered internally by the UCS Course Approvals Group (CAG).

Once the completed form has been approved by the UCS Joint Academic Committee, the course will be removed from the UCS website and UCAS listing (if applicable) so that no new

students can apply for the course and any students who have applied will be contacted as appropriate.

#### **CAT 5 – Course Recruitment Suspension**

This form should be used when the School/Centre have decided that they do not wish to recruit to an already validated programme during a particular academic year. The suspension will remain in effect for that academic year only. The form is considered internally by the UCS Course Approvals Group (CAG).

Once the completed form has been approved by the UCS Joint Academic Committee, the UCS website and UCAS listing (if applicable) will be amended so that new students cannot apply for the course, and any students who have applied will be contacted as appropriate.



## University of East Anglia and University of Essex

### University Campus Suffolk Publicity Protocol

#### QAA Guidance

The QAA Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision (Section 2) provides the following guidance on publicity material:

- **Information for students**

**Precept A27: The awarding institution should monitor regularly the information given by the partner organisation or agent to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme. This applies equally to students registered on an FDL programme.**

Awarding institutions may find that, despite everyone's best efforts, information for students falls short of what is needed by them. A regular check on the information actually being provided, including user surveys, can help to ensure that it remains accurate, complete and up to date.

- **Publicity and marketing**

**Precept A28: The awarding institution should ensure that it has effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to its collaborative provision, and provision offered through FDL arrangements.**

In the competitive world of higher education recruitment, especially in some overseas markets and through FDL arrangements, publicity and marketing assumes great importance. Information designed to attract potential applicants can, on occasion, be over enthusiastic in its desire to establish a competitive advantage. Unsustainable assertions and claims can readily mislead. This is to nobody's benefit as it only causes dissatisfaction and resentment. It can also give a false picture of UK higher education, with adverse consequences for its national and international reputation. Because of this it is important that an awarding institution take responsibility for information about programmes leading to its awards, particularly where the information is published by others on its behalf. The awarding institution should satisfy itself that this control is exercised consistently and fairly and that the public cannot reasonably be misled about the collaborative arrangement or about the nature and standing of the programmes and awards provided under the arrangement.

#### University Campus Suffolk Publicity Protocol

UCS Ltd and members of the UCS Learning Network will abide by the following protocol in relation to publicising all aspects of courses validated by UEA and Essex. The protocol covers the widest interpretation of publicity including advertising, electronic media and editorial media (such as press releases and media interviews).

1. Publicity shall in all cases be accurate and fit for purpose. In particular material shall not misrepresent either by virtue of factual inaccuracy, omission of information, or by expression of subjective matter of opinion.
2. Where publicity material is comprised solely of established matters of fact, no reference to the Universities is required prior to publication so long as the presentation of the material preserves the good names of the Universities and is not used in such a way as might give offence to any individual or body. Such publicity shall nevertheless proceed to the public domain only when authorised by a member of UCS Ltd approved for this purpose by the Provost.
3. Where publicity material makes claims that contain judgements, such material shall be published only provided that the Universities are satisfied that the judgements expressed are adequately supported by objective evidence. The Provost of UCS shall ensure that material is first referred to the Universities in any cases of doubt.
4. All publicity material shall be fit for purpose. This means that it shall be a vehicle to make available full and appropriate information to those who may reasonably be expected to refer to it.
5. All publicity material shall be clear and explicit about the status of UCS and the relationship between UCS and the validating Universities, in accordance with the agreed descriptors in Appendix One.
6. UCS Ltd and members of the UCS Learning Network will abide by the following protocols in relation to publicising all aspects of courses proposed for validation by UEA and Essex
  - (1) No course should be advertised by any means including electronic until it has been approved in principle for publicity purposes by the two Universities via the mechanism of the Joint Academic Committee.
  - (2) Following that approval in principle, courses can be advertised as “subject to validation”.
  - (3) All publicity material should make it clear that UCS courses are jointly validated by UEA and Essex and lead to a joint award of the two Universities.
  - (4) The caveat in (2) above can only be removed once the Chair of the Validation Panel has formally agreed that any validation conditions have been met.
6. Publicity produced by UCS will be monitored as part of the monitoring and review of quality assurance processes with reference to the QAA Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision (Section 2), and copies of any UCS publicity material (or a note of the URL in the case of online material) should therefore automatically be sent to the two Universities as part of the publication process.

## **Appendix One**

### **Agreed Descriptors for use in UCS Publicity Material**

	<b>Agreed Descriptors</b>	<b>Descriptors that should not be used</b>
<b>University Campus Suffolk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University Campus Suffolk / UCS</li> <li>• HE institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [The] University</li> </ul>
<b>Universities / relationship between UCS and the Universities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validating bodies / universities</li> <li>• Awarding bodies / universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accrediting bodies / universities</li> <li>• Sponsoring bodies / universities</li> </ul>
<b>UCS Learning Network Centre(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UCS Learning Network Centre(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner college(s)</li> <li>• University centre(s)</li> </ul>

## GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VALIDATION PANEL CHAIRS, PANEL MEMBERS, PANEL SECRETARIES AND STUDENTS

*Please use the checklist below to guide your consideration of the course proposal. The notes draw upon guidance in the section of the [QAA Code of Practice on programme design, approval, monitoring and review](#) (Section 7, September 2006).*

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### Guidance notes for panel members

#### Before the validation event

- Take time to read the documentation in advance and ask for any supplementary documentation or seek clarification on any points of ambiguity via UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) well before the event.

#### At the validation event

- Your role as a panel member is that of a 'critical friend' who is there to discuss the proposal in detail and offer helpful suggestions to the course team, as well as pointing out potential pitfalls and problems arising from your scrutiny of the validation documentation.
- Aim to foster an atmosphere of constructive critical dialogue with the team rather than one of confrontation, for example by avoiding aggressive questioning styles that put the course team on the defensive and by highlighting positive aspects of the proposal rather than focusing exclusively on areas of concern.
- Do not leave major concerns unvoiced - these cannot be considered if they are not documented at the event.
- If you are a panel member as a result of your subject expertise, please ensure that you are familiar with the appropriate subject benchmark.
- **External academic panel members** should be prepared to challenge assumptions held by the course team or the universities/UCS institution(s), and offer a fresh critical but constructive perspective.
- **Industry professional or employer representatives** should offer a view on the value and relevance of the proposed course in relation to industry, the profession and/or employer needs, and give close consideration to any work placement, work-based learning or employment-related aspects of the proposed course.
- **UEA and Essex academic panel members** should act as a critical friend to enhance the proposed course, drawing on their experiences at UEA and Essex and their subject expertise, where relevant

- **Student members** of revalidation panels are full members of the panel and should offer a student perspective on the course under review, including thoughts on course content, learning, teaching and assessment methods, access to resources, student support mechanisms and the opportunities for students to provide feedback on their learning experience. Further information is available in the 'Guidance for UCS students involved in the course review process' below.
- A meeting with students is arranged wherever possible, as this helps you to form a more holistic view of the provision and allows you to ask about course delivery arrangements and learning and teaching from a student's perspective. The student experience should be a key focus of the panel's considerations.
- Issues of competition have been satisfactorily resolved by the universities prior to the validation. These should not be aired at the event, nor cloud judgements of the course.
- Regulations and rules of assessment in the UCS student directory have been approved by the universities and therefore cannot be challenged at a validation event.

### **Guidance notes for validation panel chairs**

- Please open the event by welcoming validation panel members and asking everyone to introduce themselves.
- Use the panel secretary as a source of knowledge and consult with him/her to confirm that the aspects to be explored during validation have been addressed.
- Outline the purpose of the event, the structure of the day, the role of the validation panel and the range of possible outcomes of the event. Ensure that all panel members are clear about their own and others' roles.
- Do not allow issues regarding competition between UCS and the validating universities to be considered as part of the validation process. The validation is to assess the robustness of the course.
- Set a constructive tone to encourage productive dialogue with the course team. Encourage all panel members to participate and do not allow an individual panel member to dominate the discussion.
- Ensure that the role of UCS staff and student representatives on panels is clear, to avoid them being asked panel questions beyond simple factual matters.
- Ensure that discussions are conducted in a manner that is easily understood by external and student panel members, for example by avoiding excessive use of acronyms.
- When you open the initial closed panel discussion, invite the external academic representative(s) to offer their views first, as they have been asked to join the panel because of their subject expertise. An appropriate 'batting order' might be:  
external academic experts, internal academic experts, employer/professional body representative(s), student representative (for revalidation events), other panel members (who might include other university staff, UCS representatives, etc)

At the end of the panel's initial discussion, summarise the main points raised and add any issues or questions of your own. This summary will form a framework for the panel's meeting with the course team. Course teams will be expecting you to structure the discussion by

grouping issues under the headings on the following pages (*Aspects to be explored during validation*).

- Plan the discussion with the students and the course team by agreeing which panel member will lead questioning in specific areas, ensuring that the amount of time allotted to discussion of each topic aligns with its importance.
- It can be helpful to invite the course team to offer an initial short presentation of their proposal as a preliminary to the discussion with panel members (this should normally be considered and agreed through the panel secretary in advance of the event).
- At the start of the meeting with the course team, ask all present to introduce themselves again (including course team members) and set a positive tone by thanking the team for attending and giving some positive feedback from the panel before commencing discussion of the issues.
- Ensure that all issues that might lead to conditions, requirements and/or recommendations are covered in the meeting with the course team, so that any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations attached to a validation decision do not come as a surprise at the end of the event.
- Discuss the outcomes of the course team meeting with panel members at the next closed panel session, summarising those issues where a satisfactory response was given, noting any queries that were not fully resolved and agreeing any points of good practice that emerged during discussion.
- Discussion with students is conducted formally, with all panel members present.
- Allow panel members some time after meeting students to feed back any fresh issues raised, queries resolved, or points of good practice mentioned.
- At the conclusion of the event, state clearly the panel's decision and any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations and associated deadlines, but remind teams that the validation report will be the definitive record of conclusions reached and any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations set.
- After the event, agree the draft validation report with the panel secretary.

### **Guidance for panel secretaries**

- Your role is to take an accurate record of the meeting and to help the Chair to formulate conditions, requirements and recommendations.
- When you arrive, ensure that panel members have all the information they require.
- If not, try and arrange for it to be provided as soon as possible.
- Ensure that refreshments have arrived and that external panel members are appropriately supported (for example in terms of travel arrangements at the end of the day and fee and expenses claim forms).
- Ensure that name cards have been distributed (if not, improvise).

- Work with the Chair to ensure that the points on the checklist have been covered as far as possible.
- Try to ensure that the Chair drafts a full set of conditions, requirements and/or recommendations prior to the final meeting of the panel.
- Circulate draft conditions, requirements and recommendations to the course team as soon as possible (following approval by the Chair).
- Agree the draft report with the Chair, circulate to all panel members for comment and, once finalised and approved by the Chair, send the final report to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) for onward circulation.

## Checklist

<b>Aspects to be Explored during Validation</b>
<b>Rationale and Market Demand</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the proposed course compatible with the strategic mission of the universities (through UCS) and the relevant UCS institution?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has adequate research been undertaken into likely student demand and employment prospects upon graduation, both locally and further afield?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it clear how the skills and knowledge acquired during the course will be of use to students in their future careers?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are student entry profiles appropriate and arrangements for AP(E)L clear?</li> </ul>
<b>Course Design</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is/Are the proposed award title(s) appropriate?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the aims and objectives of the course clearly defined?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there clear learning outcomes that appropriately reflect published QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, FD benchmarks (where appropriate), the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), national occupational standards and any relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the design of the course include assessment of the extent to which the course is inclusive of disabled students?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How have employers been involved in course development? What arrangements are in place for their continuing involvement?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been engagement with appropriate Sector Skills Councils?</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is each learning outcome (subject-specific or skills-related) supported by appropriate elements within the curriculum?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the curriculum content appropriate to each stage of the course, and to the level of the award?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the course balanced, for example in terms of academic and practical elements and the breadth and depth of the curriculum?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the design of the curriculum enable academic and intellectual progression by imposing increasing demands on the learner in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the capacity for conceptualisation, and increasing autonomy in learning?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is there a balance and integration of employment-related skills and broad-based academic study and content?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



<b>Aspects to be Explored during Validation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is work-based learning embedded in the programme of learning?</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the modes of delivery proposed appropriate to the course?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a suitable range and variety of learning and teaching methods to meet the needs of a diverse range of students, including those with disabilities?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are any arrangements for work-based learning satisfactory, and does work-based learning contribute to the overall coherence and integrity of the course?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are the arrangements for the management and supervision of workplace learning systematic and clear?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there systems in place for the continuous briefing of employers?</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is assessment designed to measure the achievement of the learning outcomes, and is achievement of every learning outcome assessed?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the assessment methods appropriate, sufficiently varied and inclusive?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are individual assessments appropriately weighted?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there adequate opportunities for formative assessment, in order to support the development of students' abilities?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are employers involved in the assessment of students? If so, are there sound quality management processes in place?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Student Support</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are students provided with an appropriate level of academic support?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are arrangements in place to ensure that any additional needs of students are identified and reasonable adjustments are put in place to meet them?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are arrangements for tutorial support clear and generally understood by staff and students?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are student and course handbooks and other information for students clear and complete?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are Learning Agreements in place to define the specific outcomes intended for the workplace learning, the responsibilities of the employers, students, mentors and academic tutors?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Facilities and Learning Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are subject-specific learning resources appropriate to the proposed course?</li> </ul>

<b>Aspects to be Explored during Validation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is adequate teaching and learning accommodation available?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are learners supported by appropriate and accessible library resources?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do students have access to adequate equipment (including ICT)?</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the existing staff proposed for teaching on the course appropriately qualified and experienced?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is appropriate technical and administrative support available?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are any additional staff appointments required to enable the course to be delivered effectively?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are any staff development arrangements proposed to support existing staff in acquiring particular new expertise?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the overall staffing arrangements suggest that sufficient expertise will be available for the effective delivery of the intended curriculum, for the overall teaching, learning and assessment strategy, and for the achievement of the learning outcomes?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where employers are contributing to the delivery of the programme, how are these contributions designed and integrated?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Definitions of UCS module types

### **Non-Variable Core Module**

A module which has been validated to be used across a number of courses, for example interprofessional learning modules. Such modules may not be customised except in terms of the examples used during delivery and the assessment focus.

### **Variable Core Module**

A module that must be contained in a series of courses, but which can be customised to each course. For example each Foundation degree course must have a personal development module, but the exact nature of this can vary across courses.

### **Mandatory Module**

A module validated for a particular course that must be taken and without which an award cannot be granted.

### **Option or Elective Module**

A module validated for a particular course that forms part of a suite of modules from which selections can be made, so that an award can be granted although that module has not been taken.

**University Campus Suffolk  
[UCS institution]**

**University of East Anglia and University of Essex  
Validation of  
[Course Award/Title(s)]**

**[Date]**

**[Venue]**

**Contact on the day: [name and phone number]**

## **AGENDA**

9.15 Arrival, coffee and biscuits

9.30 Private meeting of the validation panel: introduction and initial discussion

10.30 Tour of subject-related facilities

11.15 Meeting with course team (with coffee)

12.45 Private meeting of the validation panel: conclusions and recommendations  
(with working lunch)

14.00 Feedback to course team

14.15 Close

*Note: where a meeting with students is incorporated into the agenda, this should take place from 11:15 to 12:00, with the meeting with the course team taking place after lunch at 12:30.*

University of East Anglia and University of Essex

**GUIDANCE NOTES  
FOR PERIODIC REVIEW AND REVALIDATION PANEL CHAIRS,  
PANEL MEMBERS, PANEL SECRETARIES AND STUDENTS**

*Please use the checklist below to guide your consideration of the course. The notes draw upon guidance in the section of the [QAA Code of Practice on programme design, approval, monitoring and review](#) (Section 7, September 2006).*

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**Guidance notes for panel members**

**Before the periodic review or revalidation event**

- Take time to read the documentation in advance and ask for any supplementary documentation or seek clarification on any points of ambiguity via UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) before the event.

**At the periodic review or revalidation event**

- Your role as a panel member is that of a 'critical friend' who is there to discuss the course in detail, identifying areas of good practice and making suggestions to the course team on how the course could be improved, arising from your scrutiny of the periodic review documentation.
- Aim to foster an atmosphere of constructive critical dialogue with the team rather than one of confrontation, for example by avoiding aggressive questioning styles that put the course team on the defensive and by highlighting positive aspects of the course rather than focusing exclusively on areas of concern.
- Do not leave major concerns unvoiced - these cannot be considered if they are not documented at the event.
- If you are a panel member as a result of your subject expertise, please ensure that you are familiar with the appropriate QAA subject benchmark statement.
- *External academic panel members* should be prepared to challenge assumptions held by the course team or the universities/UCS institution(s), and offer a fresh critical but constructive perspective.
- *Industry professional or employer representatives* should offer a view on the continuing value and relevance of the course in relation to industry, the profession and/or employer needs, and give close consideration to any work placement, work-based learning or employment-related aspects of the course.

- *UEA and Essex academic panel members* should act as a critical friend to enhance the course, drawing on their experiences at UEA and Essex and their subject expertise, where relevant
- *Student members* of periodic review or revalidation panels are full members of the panel and should offer a student perspective on the course under review, including thoughts on course content, learning, teaching and assessment methods, access to resources, student support mechanisms and the opportunities for students to provide feedback on their learning experience. Further information is available in the 'Guidance for UCS students involved in the course review process' below.
- A meeting with students is arranged wherever possible, as this helps you to form a more holistic view of the provision and allows you to ask about course delivery arrangements and learning and teaching from a student's perspective. The student experience should be a key focus of the panel's considerations.
- Regulations and rules of assessment in the UCS student directory have been approved by the universities and therefore cannot be challenged at a periodic review event.

### **Guidance notes for periodic review or revalidation panel chairs**

- Please open the event by welcoming review panel members and asking everyone to introduce themselves.
- Use the panel secretary as a source of knowledge and consult with him/her to confirm that the aspects to be explored during validation have been addressed.
- Outline the purpose of the event, the structure of the day, the role of the panel and the range of possible outcomes of the event. Ensure that all panel members are clear about their own and others' roles.
- Set a constructive tone to encourage productive dialogue with the course team. Encourage all panel members to participate and do not allow an individual panel member to dominate the discussion.
- Ensure that the role of UCS staff and student representatives on panels is clear, to avoid them being asked panel questions beyond simple factual matters.
- Ensure that discussions are conducted in a manner that is easily understood by external and student panel members, for example by avoiding excessive use of acronyms.
- When you open the initial closed panel discussion, invite the external academic representative(s) to offer their views first, as they have been asked to join the panel because of their subject expertise. An appropriate 'batting order' might be:  
external academic experts, internal academic experts, employer/professional body representative(s), student representative, other panel members (who might include other university staff, UCS representatives, etc)

At the end of the panel's initial discussion, summarise the main points raised and add any issues or questions of your own. This summary will form a framework for the panel's meeting with the course team. Course teams will be expecting you to structure the discussion by grouping issues under the headings on the following pages (*Aspects to be explored during periodic review*).

- Plan the discussion with the students and the course team by agreeing which panel member will lead questioning in specific areas, ensuring that the amount of time allotted to discussion of each topic aligns with its importance.
- It can be helpful to invite the course team to offer an initial short presentation of their self-evaluation as a preliminary to the discussion with panel members (this should normally be considered and agreed through the panel secretary in advance of the event).
- At the start of the meeting with the course team, ask all present to introduce themselves again (including course team members) and set a positive tone by thanking the team for attending and giving some positive feedback from the panel before commencing discussion of the issues.
- Ensure that all issues that might lead to conditions, requirements and/or recommendations are covered in the meeting with the course team, so that any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations do not come as a surprise at the end of the event.
- Discuss the outcomes of the course team meeting with panel members at the next closed panel session, summarising those issues where a satisfactory response was given, noting any queries that were not fully resolved and agreeing any points of good practice that emerged during discussion.
- Discussion with students is conducted formally, with all panel members present.
- Allow panel members some time after meeting students to feed back any fresh issues raised, queries resolved, or points of good practice mentioned.
- At the conclusion of the event, state clearly the panel's decision and any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations and associated deadlines, but remind teams that the periodic review report will be the definitive record of conclusions reached and any conditions, requirements and/or recommendations set.
- After the event, agree the draft periodic review report with the panel secretary.

### **Guidance for panel secretaries**

- Your role is to take an accurate record of the meeting and to help the Chair to formulate conditions, requirements and recommendations.
- When you arrive, ensure that panel members have all the information they require.
- If not, try and arrange for it to be provided as soon as possible.
- Ensure that refreshments have arrived and that external panel members are appropriately supported (for example in terms of travel arrangements at the end of the day and fee and expenses claim forms).
- Ensure that name cards have been distributed (if not, improvise).
- Work with the Chair to ensure that the points on the checklist have been covered as far as possible.

- Try to ensure that the Chair drafts a full set of conditions, requirements and/or recommendations prior to the final meeting of the panel.
- Circulate draft conditions, requirements and recommendations to the course team as soon as possible (following approval by the Chair).
- Agree the draft report with the Chair, circulate to all panel members for comment and, once finalised and approved by the Chair, send the final report to UCS Registry ([registry@ucs.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ucs.ac.uk)) for onward circulation.



## Checklist

Aspects to be explored during periodic review / revalidation
<b>Rationale and Market Demand</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does there continue to be adequate student demand for the course(s) under review, and are there adequate employment opportunities upon graduation, both locally and further afield?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the skills and knowledge acquired during the course continue to be of use to students in their future careers?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking into consideration student performance data and feedback from students on their experiences, are student entry profiles appropriate?</li> </ul>
<b>Course Design and Curriculum Content</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the course continue to provide an up-to-date and relevant learning experience for students, which will prepare them well for their future careers?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do learning outcomes continue to reflect published QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, FD benchmarks (where appropriate), the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), national occupational standards and any relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the curriculum content continue to be appropriate to each stage of the course, and to the level of the award? Is the course balanced, for example in terms of academic and practical elements and the breadth and depth of the curriculum?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the design of the curriculum enable academic and intellectual progression by imposing increasing demands on the learner in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the capacity for conceptualisation, and increasing autonomy in learning?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the design of the course continue to be inclusive of disabled students?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how have employers been involved in the ongoing development of the course?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is work-based learning adequately embedded in the programme of learning?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has there been ongoing engagement with appropriate Sector Skills Councils?</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does there continue to be a suitable range and variety of learning and teaching methods to meet the needs of a diverse range of students, including those with disabilities?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are students satisfied with the quality of teaching on the course?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are levels of student retention and achievement satisfactory?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the UCS virtual learning environment, Wolsey, used to good effect to support the delivery of the course?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are arrangements for work-based learning operating well, and does work-based</li> </ul>

<b>Aspects to be explored during periodic review / revalidation</b>
learning contribute to the overall coherence and integrity of the course?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are students satisfied with arrangements for course management and organisation?</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do assessment methods continue to be appropriate, sufficiently varied and inclusive?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do assessment outcomes confirm that academic standards continue to be maintained?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there adequate opportunities for formative assessment, in order to support the development of students' abilities?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are students provided with adequate and timely feedback on their work?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are employers involved in the assessment of students? If so, are there sound quality management processes in place?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Student Support</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are students provided with an appropriate level of academic support?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are arrangements in place to ensure that any additional needs of students are identified and reasonable adjustments are put in place to meet them?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are arrangements for tutorial support clear and generally understood by staff and students?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are student and course handbooks and other information for students clear and complete?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Foundation degrees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are Learning Agreements in place to define the specific outcomes intended for the workplace learning, the responsibilities of the employers, students, mentors and academic tutors?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Facilities and Learning Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do subject-specific learning resources continue to be appropriate to the course?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is adequate teaching and learning accommodation available?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are learners supported by appropriate and accessible library resources? Are reading lists up-to-date?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do students have access to adequate equipment (including ICT)?</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are staff teaching on the course appropriately qualified and experienced?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is appropriate technical and administrative support available?</li> </ul>

<b>Aspects to be explored during periodic review / revalidation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are adequate staff development opportunities available to support the continuing professional development of the course team (including engagement in scholarly activity)?</li></ul>

## **Guidance for UCS students involved in the course review process**

These guidance notes provide information on the process for the review of UCS courses (known as 'periodic review' of courses), which normally takes place every five years. The notes have been written to support UCS students involved in the process, either as a member of a review panel or as a participant in a student meeting at a review event.

### **What is a periodic review event?**

A periodic review event provides an opportunity for a UCS course, or a group of related courses, to be reviewed to ensure that they continue to provide students with a high quality learning experience. The process allows the course team an opportunity to step back from the day-to-day running of the course and evaluate whether the course remains fit-for-purpose. It also provides an opportunity for the two universities who approve all UCS awards (the Universities of East Anglia and Essex) to oversee the quality of courses on offer at UCS.

### **Why is my involvement important?**

UCS and the two universities are keen to capture your views on the courses you are undertaking and the facilities for learning and support that are available to you. We value your opinion on your experiences at UCS, and are keen to ensure that you are able to take an active role in developing and improving learning opportunities at UCS.

### **What happens at a review event?**

A review panel is formed to consider the course(s) under review. There are typically around 10 members of the panel, including academic staff, administrative staff, students and external representatives (including employer representatives).

Two or three weeks before the event, panel members are sent a pack which contains details on arrangements for the event and information on the course (prepared by the course team). This gives panel members a chance to find out more about the course before the event and to identify any things that they would like to discuss on the day.

The review panel meets at the UCS centre where the course is delivered. During the event (which usually starts at around 9:30am and finishes by 3pm), the panel gets a chance to view facilities, meet with students and discuss the course with the course team. At the end of the event, the panel reaches a decision about the quality and future of the course, and has the opportunity to commend positive aspects of the course and identify areas where there is scope for improvement. These conclusions are recorded in a written report.

The course team is expected to revise the course in light of any recommendations by the panel, and this is overseen by the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex.

### **I am a panel member – what is my role?**

You are a full and equal member of the review panel and your views will be valued by other panel members. Please participate honestly and constructively, and don't be afraid to ask questions, make suggestions or tell the panel and the course team how you and other students feel about your experiences on the course.

Some of the things you might want to consider are:

- Is the course meeting your expectations?
- Are the teaching methods appropriate?
- Are timetables and workloads manageable?
- Do you have adequate access to the necessary resources (e.g. labs, computers, the library)?
- Do you feel that the course is preparing you well for future employment or future study?

- Is information in course handbooks and on Wolsey clear and up-to-date?
- Are you clear about how your work is assessed? Do you get useful and timely feedback on your work from members of the course team?
- Do you feel that there is sufficient support (both academic and personal) to help you during your time at UCS?
- Does the course team seek your views on the course on a regular basis? Do you feel that your views are listened to? Are there matters that students have previously raised with the course team that you feel need to be addressed further?
- What do you like most about your course?
- Is there anything that could be improved?

If the panel does not ask questions about something that you feel is important, do not be afraid to bring it to their attention as you have a unique and valuable perspective on the quality of the course. If there is anything that you do not understand, please feel free to ask any member of the panel for clarification.

Although the experience may initially seem daunting, please rest assured that your thoughts and suggestions are incredibly valuable and the panel will be keen to make you feel welcome and to hear your views.

### **I am taking part in a student meeting with the panel – what is expected of me?**

Review panels find it incredibly useful to meet with students, to get a real feel for how the course is operating and how it is viewed by students. Members of the panel will ask you questions about your experiences on the course, some of which may be similar to the questions listed in the section above.

Although it can seem a daunting prospect to meet with the panel, please do not feel intimidated as the panel will be keen to hear your views. Please speak freely and honestly about your experiences on the course, highlighting any aspects of the course that you like and any areas where you think there is room for improvement. If the panel does not ask questions about something that you feel is important, do not be afraid to bring it to their attention.

Your feedback will be treated with discretion and your views will not be individually attributed to you in either the written report of the event or in verbal feedback to the course team.

### **What's in it for you?**

Firstly, you will be helping to improve the course for yourself and your fellow students. You get to have your views listened to and taken seriously, and you will have a real input into decisions that are made that will affect your course.

You will get to meet new people, and it will also provide an opportunity to gain new skills and enhance your CV. It's a real chance to put your communication skills into action, and for student representatives on the panel it provides an opportunity to demonstrate your teamwork, time management, negotiation and presentation/meeting skills. As one former student panel member noted about the role, "this was truly an experience I am glad I participated in" and "I would actively encourage other students in the future to be involved".

### **Where can I go to for further advice?**

If you would like further information or advice on taking part in a periodic review event, please get in touch with UCS Students' Union, who will be happy to advise you or point you in the right direction of someone who can help. Their contact details are available on the web at <http://www.ucsunion.com/>.

**University Campus Suffolk  
[UCS institution]**

**University of East Anglia and University of Essex  
periodic review / revalidation of  
[Course Award/Title(s)]**

**[Date]**

**[Venue]**

**Contact on the day: [name and phone number]**

## **AGENDA**

- 9.30 Arrival and coffee
- 9.45 Private meeting of the review / revalidation panel: introduction and initial discussion
- 10.45 Tour of subject-related facilities
- 11.15 Structured meeting with students (with coffee)
- 12:00 Working lunch for panel
- 12.30 Meeting with course team
- 14.00 Private meeting of the review / revalidation panel: conclusions and recommendations (with coffee)
- 15.00 Feedback to course team
- 15.15 Close