

UNIVERSITY PARM STANDING PANEL

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New of September 2011:

- Addition of Panel recommendations
- Amendment to the fees for external assessors for the 2011/2012 session.

New Section for October 2010

UNIVERSITY PARM* STANDING PANEL

* *Programme Approval, Review and Modification*

1. PURPOSE

The PARM Standing Panel is a centrally based panel comprising internal and external representatives which is convened under the aegis of the Academic Development Committee (ADC) and reports to the ADC via the Academic Standards Sub-committee.

The Panel provides an alternative, more streamlined approval mechanism to the University's established PARM approval procedures and is responsible for recommending approval of proposals for:

- major modification
- periodic review
- approval (of a limited nature)

where the Head of CASQE has deemed it appropriate for academic scrutiny to take place via a centrally convened standing body rather than through the establishment of a full Approval, Review or Modification Panel Event.

Full details of the procedures for the [Approval, Review and Modification of Programmes](#) are available in the [University's Academic Regulations and Procedures Handbook](#). These sections also provide information on which proposals will, or are likely to, come within the remit of the PARM Standing Panel.

2. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE PARM STANDING PANEL

The Panel has two main areas for which it is responsible:

- (i) **consideration of proposals for modification, review or approval.**
The Standing Panel is requested to receive and scrutinise a full set of documentation (as outlined in the relevant [ARPH](#) section or as agreed by the Head of CASQE) and to make its recommendation on the outcome to the Academic Standards Sub-committee.
- (ii) **modification of Undergraduate Programmes to ensure compliance with EQAL.** During 2011/2012 modifications will be undertaken to existing undergraduate programmes to comply with EQAL precepts. These major modifications will normally be considered by the Standing Panel (except where a full review to meet PSRB requirements is necessary). The Standing Panel is requested to receive and scrutinise documentation and to make its recommendation on the outcome to the Academic Standards Sub-committee.

It is normal practice for the Standing Panel to consider a range of proposals from across the institution at the same meeting.

3. **MEETINGS**

The Panel meets on regular pre-determined dates through the calendar year, which are published, in advance, across the University.

All meetings will be held at the University.

4. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The PARM Standing Panel must:

- be able to make impartial judgements on the comparability of a programme, in terms of standard and content, with similar programmes offered elsewhere in higher education in the UK, and be able to consider the programme in a national perspective;
- address the requirement in the QAA's code of practice for independence and externality;
- include members with an understanding of current practice and developments in quality assurance and enhancement in teaching, learning and assessment in higher education;
- be aware of the University's requirements for award(s) relevant to programmes under consideration (or the requirements of any other relevant awarding body);
- be aware of requirements involved in the modification to, or review of, programmes involving collaborative provision as set out in the Institutional Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision (see the section on Collaborative Provision in the Handbook).
- be aware of the requirements of any professional, regulatory or statutory bodies associated with the programme and the requirements of the University as set out in the Institutional Code of Practice for Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (see relevant Section of the Handbook);

5. PANEL MEMBERSHIP

The composition of Panel should normally include, *as a minimum*, the following:

- A Senior University Representative - Chair
- CASQE member (or nominee) – Panel Secretary
- At least one External Assessor
- At least one internal academic member of staff
- Collaborative Partnership Office representative (*where required*)
- Academic Board Research Degrees Sub-committee Representative (from another Faculty)*

* *for research proposals (see below)*

- i a **Senior University representative**, who shall chair the Event. The person appointed under this category by the Head of CASQE is a representative (but not necessarily member) of the Academic Board. The University Representative is not expected to possess any relevant subject expertise. CASQE maintains a database of approved chairs who are trained and updated annually.

The University Representative should be able to participate in the process impartially and effectively, bringing detachment and objectivity to his/her task of leading the event.

- ii at least one independent **external assessor** of academic/professional standing.

The role of the external assessor is to assist the Panel in fulfilling its terms of reference by providing an independent academic and/or professional perspective of the proposal(s) under consideration. External assessors are appointed by the Head of CASQE.

- iii An **internal member of academic staff**. The person(s) appointed under this category will not be expected to have any relevant subject knowledge of the proposals under consideration but will be experienced members of staff with a strong knowledge of quality assurance procedures and who will be able to participate in the process impartially and effectively, bringing detachment and objectivity to the Panel.
- v A **CASQE** representative (or nominee) who attends to ensure compliance with University regulations and QA procedures and services the event.

and, if the Panel is considering a programme leading to a Master's Degree (by research) or Master of Research,

- vii a **member of the Academic Board Research Degrees Committee**

Additional Panel Members

Additional external and/or internal members are appointed to the Panel as directed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or the Head of CASQE where the nature of the programmes under consideration merits it.

6. **EXTERNAL ASSESSORS**

6.1 **Nomination of External Assessors**

CASQE will establish a pool of external assessors who will each serve for a period of three years and may be approached to participate in one or more Standing Panel meetings throughout the academic session.

External Assessors should hold relevant academic/administrative posts or should otherwise demonstrate that they have the appropriate standing and experience in quality assurance and enhancement and knowledge of the QAA code of practice either through their roles as reviewers of programmes/courses or as external examiners.

External Assessors appointed to a particular Standing Panel meeting should have no association with any programme/programme team which is being scrutinised at that meeting.

The standard form for the nomination of external members is provided as [ARPH Appendix PARM 20](#)

CASQE will contact a proposed external member in order to ascertain whether the person concerned is willing to be nominated to serve on the Standing Panel. CASQE must ensure that external nominees are made fully aware of the commitment in time which participation in the Panel, which will normally involve at least one full-day visit to the University and time for scrutiny of documentation.

Letters of appointment to external assessor nominees approved by the Head of CASQE are sent out by officers of CASQE.

6.2 **Payments to External Assessors**

2011/12

The University will pay:

- a standard fee to External Assessors of £100 per day
PLUS
an additional £50 for each programme/proposal considered by the Panel (up to a maximum of £200)
- reasonable travel and subsistence expenses ie:
 - standard MMU mileage rates
 - standard train fares and, where appropriate, air fares
 - taxi fares
 - standard rate hotel accommodation

External Assessors claiming travel and substance costs must attach appropriate receipts to claim forms in order to obtain reimbursement.

7. **DOCUMENTATION FOR THE EVENT**

When establishing a Panel, CASQE will ensure that all participants are made aware of the purpose of the meeting and each participant's distinctive role within the process.

A Panel needs to have sufficient programme and supporting information to carry out its role, ie to determine the continued academic appropriateness of the existing programme(s) either as modified or reviewed. Documentation for the Panel should therefore comprise the following *as a minimum*:

General Information

- **Event Agenda**
Including details of venue, timings, agenda headings
- **Panel membership list**
with an indication of the function of each member, eg Chair of the Panel, External Assessor,
- **For external members:**
 - a copy of the University Regulations for either Undergraduate or Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study (as appropriate);
 - general briefing information about the University (and/or collaborative partner(s)) and the location of the Event.
- Proposal documentation for full academic scrutiny (*see relevant **ARPH sections on Modifications or Reviews, as appropriate***)

7.1 **Approval of Documentation Prior to Submission to the Panel**

Programme documentation for consideration by a Panel **must** be submitted sufficiently in advance of the date of the Event to permit a judgement to be reached as to whether the documentation complies with MMU requirements and regulations and to require amendments, where appropriate, to the documentation. A Document Approval Form **DAF1 (ARPH Appendix PARM9)** will be used to record and convey Faculty/CASQE officers' comments on draft programme documentation. The purpose of this prior scrutiny is to ensure that the focus of the Event is on academic issues rather than matters of regulation or other technicalities. It will focus on ensuring:

- Adherence to documentation templates and completeness of documentation provided
- Engagement with the University Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study and evidence of any approved variation/exemption
- Adherence to QAA's Academic Infrastructure, ie the Framework for HE Qualifications, Subject Benchmark statements, Code of Practice
- Consistency with proposed changes identified in the approved SAF-R-R
- Consistency with faculty plans, the University's equality policies and institutional codes of practice.
- Evidence of External Examiner support for the proposed changes.

At the same time, a copy of the documentation should be submitted to CeLT for checking of curriculum content and design.

The Faculty/Campus Quality Administrator should check that any changes or additions required as a result of the officers' scrutiny have been made prior to submission of documents to CASQE.

8. PROGRAMME TEAM ATTENDANCE AT PARM STANDING PANEL MEETINGS

Programme Teams will not be required to attend the PARM Standing Panel meeting to discuss their proposals with Panel members. However, a designated senior member of the Team (normally the Programme Leader) should be available during the Panel's deliberations so that specific queries can be dealt with speedily in order to obviate the need for unnecessary delays or conditions. Should any specific issues arise, the Panel Chair may request that one or more persons are asked to attend the Panel meeting to discuss the proposal as s/he deems appropriate.

9. PANEL OUTCOMES

9.1 Panel Recommendations

There should be no ambiguity about the basis for the outcome of the Event and the status of any conditions or recommendations.

Approval may be **recommended either without condition or conditional** upon the fulfilment of certain requirements. Conditions of approval should be used for requirements which must be fulfilled in order to ensure that the modified programme meets the standard required for the award. *Changes which are desirable in order to enhance the quality of the programme of study, but which do not affect the threshold standard, should be identified as recommendations which should be considered through the Continuous Monitoring and Improvement process..*

For collaborative provision only – In addition to the making a recommendation for continued approval (including validation of any new elements to be offered) by a collaborative partner, the Panel will be required to make a **second recommendation** on whether the collaborative partner staff are appropriately qualified and, therefore, are eligible for "Recognised Tutor Status".

Conditions should be expressed precisely and have a realistic date set for their achievement. The Programme Team must be able to understand clearly what action is required and the timescale. The deadline and locus of responsibility for the fulfilment of any conditions should be made explicit by the Panel, as should the means by which the fulfilment of conditions will be deemed satisfied. Recommendations to the Academic Quality and Standards Sub-committee that conditions have been satisfied may be made on the basis of a judgement reached by the Panel Chair, the Panel as a whole or another person or group - (FADC for example) as may be specified in the conditions. **The new or modified programme may not commence until this has been confirmed by a signed report from the Panel Chair.**

Recommendations to the Programme Team - the Panel may construct recommendations which the Programme Team must normally consider and address explicitly in the course of its continuous monitoring and improvement processes. The Team is not required to implement the recommendations but evidence of its consideration of them will be sought through the continuous monitoring and improvement process and at the next review of the programme. Where a Panel recommends, in the light of its discussions, that the Programme Team makes a significant change to the programme prior to its next intake (eg change of title), a deadline should be set for the Team to respond to such a recommendation so that programme details may be confirmed at the earliest opportunity.

Recommendations to the Faculty/University – the Panel may, occasionally, wish to raise issues/make recommendations which are more appropriate for consideration at Faculty or University level. These will be submitted either to the FADC or ADC's Academic Standards Subcommittee as appropriate. It is important that any such issue is **not** included as a condition that the Programme Team will be unable to fulfil as this will delay the completion of the approval process.

Identification of Good Practice – is an important part of the Panel's consultations and is reported through the Academic Standards Sub-committee and added to CeLT's database of good practice, for wider dissemination.

Deferral of Recommendation or Recommendation for Non Approval - A Panel may encourage the submission of revised programme proposals within a specified timescale and give an analysis of those areas where the proposal was found to be lacking together with guidance as to how deficiencies may be redressed. In such circumstances a Panel may recommend that it be reconvened in full to consider the revised proposals or that the process is completed by email communication.

9.3 PARM Reports

An abridged version of the University's standard PARM Report template will be completed (Section A – Summary Report). This section will be sent to the relevant Faculty/Campus Quality Administrator who will be responsible for ensuring that the report is received by the relevant programme and administrative team members and any other members of relevant Faculty/campus staff as appropriate.

9.4 Conditions of Approval

Where the Panel attaches any conditions of approval to their recommendation, it will also include a deadline by which the programme team must provide a written response to those conditions.

The Faculty Quality Administrator is responsible for ensuring that the programme team is aware of any conditions placed on the recommendation and for co-ordinating the submission of the team's response to the Standing Panel.

Written responses should be sent to CASQE who will submit them to the Panel Chair for their approval.

Once conditions of approval have been fulfilled and approved by the Panel Chair, the Head of CASQE will be requested to endorse the recommendation for submission to the Academic Standards Sub-committee.

Proposals **must not** be implemented until the Head of CASQE has endorsed the recommendation.

In the exceptional circumstances, where the Panel Chair is not available to approve changes, and where it is appropriate, the Head of CASQE or the PVC Quality and Standards are empowered to approve a programme team's response to conditions.

9.5 Approval by Academic Standards Sub-committee

On receipt of the report and confirmation that the programme team has made a satisfactory response to any conditions, the Head of CASQE will make a recommendation to the Academic Standards Sub-committee to confirm the outcome of the Panel.

9.6 Report to Academic Development Committee

The decision of Academic Standards Sub-committee will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Development Committee.