

Guidelines for Chairing Validation and Revalidation Panels

Thank you for agreeing to chair a validation panel for Bangor University.

You will play a key role in ensuring this mandatory process is used effectively to enhance student learning, student experience and to further the School and the University's strategic aims.

The primary role of the chair is to oversee effective use of the panels' time.

Prior to the event the QA officer assigned to the panel will ensure that other members of the panel have access to the External Assessor's notes. QA officer will also produce detailed notes which they will pass to you. These can be shared with the panel in advance of the meeting at your discretion. If there are major issues relating to programme design, rather than editorial correction, sharing these widely is advise.

As a Chair you will need to have a good understanding of the proposals, which you should receive 2 weeks in advance of the event. I have found that reading rationale, programme learning objectives and assessments and T&L strategies first is most effective making notes and queries as I read. It is crucial to check that meaningful student engagement has taken place and feedback attended to. Next, I prioritise Core or compulsory modules particularly those that count to the final award checking the learning outcomes are appropriate to the level. Please check the QEU website for the current links to the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales or equivalent and guidelines on assessment verbs that correspond to these levels. You will need to be aware of the University's Assessment Framework and note any queries where the proposed teaching appears to diverge from it. QA officers can offer advice on these issues. All Learning outcomes should be taught and unless in exceptional circumstances, should also be assessed. Please read through other modules then. If you are the only Welsh speaker on the panel other than the QA officer, please ensure you have considered these modules.

Panels work under real constraints in terms of time so please use the pre-panel session to survey the views of all other members of the panel. Identify lines of enquiry (primary areas of questioning) at the programme level and move through to modules. Areas to consider are listed on the validation report and please make sure these have been discussed and the panel is aware of them. The QA officer can share the paperwork on screen and that can help focus questions. It is good practice to allocate questions to ensure that all members are involved in the programme level discussion. Usually several questions on the same theme are allocated to each panel member.

When the school or programme team join the meeting, please welcome them, thank them for their proposals and introduce yourself, the external and the panel members including the QA officer. A brief outline of the day may be useful at this point. Ask the school to introduce themselves. The opening question tends to be around the rationale for the changes, but presentations are discouraged as they eat into the panels time and will seldom provide new information. Exceptions are where professional bodies are involved. Invite the external panel member to open the questioning and work through panel members. Enable panel members to come in where reasonable and where they have indicated they would like to. It is important to keep the discussion flowing and to avoid very detailed advice and discussions that would be more useful after the panel concludes. In some cases Externals or other panel members may appear to dictate conditions and negotiate solutions and will need to be guided to understand that these decisions are collective and advice may be provided at the end of the day or subsequently. This is often very useful advice. You may

need to adjust the order of questions and it is useful to keep a teams channel open with the panel only in order to reallocate these. It is good practice to take breaks and to have a closed panel meeting to reflect on progress and to consider whether questions on modules need to be revised or other areas need to be revisited.

During the final closed session, you will consider the decision of the panel. It is good practice to return to the issues outlines in the validation report and ensure that you are satisfied with responses in relation to each of these that is relevant.

As chair, I tend to make notes of potential commendations, conditions and recommendations throughout the day. Often the external assessors' comments at the beginning of the day are very useful indeed as a first draft. During the final closed panel meeting I share this on screen as a basis for panel discussion and so that all members of the panel can finesse the wording. This provides the basis for informal feedback to the school and is often used verbatim in the validation report, which promotes clarity and the timely production of the report. In the majority of cases conditions will include some minor editing to be verified for completeness by the QA officer. The QA officer's note will identify key edits needed and members of the panel may have further suggestions for clarity.

Informal feedback involves narrative comments from the External Assessor and potentially from other panel members. The Chair will state what the decision of the panel is. You will see there are 5 options, but in most cases, issues can be resolved through minor changes to be overseen by the QEU or more substantial changes to be considered by the Chair or panel members.

In some cases, internal panel members offer further help and advice, which is appreciated by schools and helps share good practice.

The chair closes the validation panel with thanks to all involved and particularly the external and by clarifying timelines for changes.

Dr Myfanwy Davies

Head of Quality Enhancement

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