

## Guidance CG(ii)

### Validation criteria and checklist for faculty committees and University panels

- 1 Proposals for new fields should be considered against standard validation criteria. These, and additional criteria for validations of new subjects, collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (FDL), are detailed below.

A checklist of questions for faculty quality assurance committees and University panel members to use as a guide to help them with the analysis of validation paperwork is also provided below.

### List of validation criteria

#### 2 **All validations**

New fields should only be approved if there is clear evidence that the following requirements have been met:

- The field must be consistent with form A2 – new development proposal, and any subsequent changes, as approved at AD (any variations to the proposal must have AD approval)
- All conditions made at AD relating to the proposal must have been adequately addressed
- The field must be consistent with the University and FHEQ requirements for the award(s) concerned
- A complete and comprehensive programme specification has been presented. If an incomplete or incorrectly formatted specification is presented, it must be a validation condition that it is corrected prior to commencement of the field (if in doubt seek advice from the Academic Development Centre (ADC) or Academic Quality and Standards (AQS))
- Subject benchmark standards should be considered in approving the field. They apply to full, major and half fields. A list of subject benchmark standards is provided in guidance CG(iii) and further advice on their use can be found in the guidance notes for writing programme specifications (see guidance CG(vi))
- The field's educational learning outcomes should be fully specified and be consistent with its aims (see guidance notes on learning outcomes and level descriptions produced by the ADC (guidance CG(ix) and/or contact the ADC for advice)
- Learning outcomes should reflect the University's key skills requirements (as appropriate to the final level of the field) (see guidance notes CG(xiv))
- The learning and teaching and assessment strategies of the field must be designed to deliver and assure the stated learning outcomes
- The programme specification should make clear which are core and which are option or free choice modules
- All modules must be presented in the format of the standard module template

## Guidance CG(ii)

### Validation criteria and checklist for faculty committees and University panels

- The set of modules included in the field should provide a coherent experience for students and as a whole deliver the stated field learning outcomes
- There should usually be a demonstrable link between the field curriculum and current research in the relevant subject area (please note the University's strategy is to increase the proportion of staff research input to the curriculum and for all PGT courses to be informed by staff research)
- Assessment rules must be clearly stated in module descriptions in the format in the standard template (general regulatory requirements should also be followed)
- The level of modules should be clearly indicated and learning outcomes should reflect the level (see guidance notes on learning outcomes and level descriptions produced by the ADC (guidance CG(ix) and/or contact the ADC for advice)
- Module co-requisites and pre-requisites should be clear, logical and not over-specified
- Any variations from the Undergraduate Modular Scheme (UMS) / Postgraduate Credit Framework (PCF) must be considered, agreed in principle and forwarded to Academic Regulations Committee (ARC) for formal approval
- Requirements of professional bodies should be fully considered and fields should not be approved unless the faculty anticipates that necessary Professional Statutory Body (PSB) approval will be gained
- Although assurance is sought in the University's initial planning approval for new fields that appropriate resources will be available to mount a new field, faculties/panels should nonetheless check that appropriate human and physical resources are available at the time of validation
- The proposed field should be consistent with University policies, procedures and strategies (eg. Widening Participation, Admissions, Fairness in Assessment, Equal Opportunities, Disabilities, Personal Development Planning Framework etc)
- Course teams should also ensure they have taken real steps to meet the University's Equality Duty whilst maintaining academic standards and compliance with Data Protection and Health and Safety legislation. Teams are advised to refer to the resource pack '*Embedding Equality in the Curriculum*', when preparing for validations. In addition advice can be sought from the ADC, the Disability and Dyslexia Service and the Equality Unit

### 3 **Additional criteria for University level panels validating new subjects**

New fields should only be approved if there is clear evidence that the following requirements have been met:

- Adequate resources must be available to support the new field (eg. staff (academic, administrative and technical), library and media, laboratories, placement arrangements etc.). In many cases field proposers may

## Guidance CG(ii)

### Validation criteria and checklist for faculty committees and University panels

reasonably wish to build up resources over the life of a new field. Panels should consider how the provision of new resources as a course develops can be checked and monitored in their conditions and recommendations. Panels need to be assured that adequate resources are/will be available for the first year of operation

- Staff development should be demonstrable and ongoing to support the introduction of the new field

#### 4 **Additional criteria for faculty committees and University level panels validating collaborative provision**

Usually, validations with collaborative partners are approved at University level, however, the validation of new fields in existing subjects in ongoing partnerships in UK public sector partnerships may be delegated to the faculty committee validation procedure.

New fields of collaborative provision should only be approved if there is clear evidence that the following requirements have been met:

- Adequate liaison arrangements must be planned to assure the quality and standards of the field in the partner institution (including identification of responsible staff, boards of study, staff student consultative committees, external examining, assessment boards etc.)
- Joint staff development should be demonstrable and ongoing to foster a mutual understanding of the standards and quality of student experience required by the University and also to provide the partner with an understanding of the University's procedures and general requirements
- Adequate processes must be in place to ensure the accuracy and consistency of marketing material in relation to the field and collaboration
- For collaborative provision falling under a Category 2 arrangement (for example: where a fee is paid directly to the University rather than the University receiving HEFCE funding and retaining a top-slice for overheads), the default position is that students will not have access to Kingston University resources. Adequate arrangements should therefore be in place to support students in respect of non-academic matters (eg: counselling, careers advice etc.)

#### 5 **Additional criteria for validation of fields delivered wholly or in part by Flexible and Distributed Learning (FDL), or "distance learning"**

New fields delivered wholly or in part by FDL should only be approved if there is clear evidence that the following requirements have been met:

- Adequate arrangements must be planned to assure the delivery of appropriate study materials to students
- Adequate arrangements must be planned to effectively support students (such as provision of formative and summative feedback and access to student services)

## Guidance CG(ii)

### Validation criteria and checklist for faculty committees and University panels

- Adequate arrangements must be planned to provide opportunities for students to provide formal feedback to staff in relation to their academic and student experience
- Adequate arrangements must be planned to ensure that the security of assessments is assured

### Checklist of questions to guide analysis of validation paperwork

- 6 The following are a series of questions that committees and panels should use to guide them in their analysis of proposals for validation and in subsequent discussions with the field development team. This is not exclusive and is for guidance only.
- 7 Panel members are invited to submit issues for discussion with the field team to the validation clerk up to seven days prior to the event. Any draft agenda will normally be sent to the panel and field team not later than 24 hours before the event.
- 8 **All validations**
- (Chair and clerk of faculty committee/University panel only) Is the proposal consistent with form A2 – new development proposal, and any subsequent changes, as approved at AD?
  - (Chair and clerk of faculty committee/University panel only) Have all conditions made at AD relating to the proposal been adequately addressed?
  - Is the field consistent with the University and FHEQ requirements for the award(s) concerned?
  - Do academic standards appear to be set at appropriate levels for the awards concerned?
  - Is the quality of the student experience likely to meet, at the very least, minimum threshold standards?
  - Is the field academically coherent?
  - Is there clear progression between levels (where appropriate)?
  - Does the field comply with the relevant subject benchmark standards?
  - Does the field comply with the relevant University regulations (if variations are requested they must be considered and a case made for approval to the Academic Regulations Committee)?
  - Are the aims and objectives of the field clearly stated?
  - Are the learning and teaching strategies and assessment strategies for the field linked and are they likely to deliver the stated learning outcomes?
  - Does the field build upon the likely prior qualifications of students?
  - Will the field deliver outcomes appropriate for the likely employment market of diplomates/graduates?

## Guidance CG(ii)

### Validation criteria and checklist for faculty committees and University panels

- What arrangements are in place for Personal Development Planning (PDP)?
  - How does the provision develop and assess key skills?
  - If the field contains placement learning, is the management of the placement clearly articulated and is the student support appropriate?
  - Is the field appropriately constructed in terms of core, option and free choice modules?
  - Does the field take full account of University policies and strategies (eg. assessment policy, key skills, Learning Teaching & Assessment Strategy, Widening Participation Strategy, Personal Development Planning Framework etc.)?
  - Where appropriate, are the requirements of Professional and Statutory bodies met?
  - Are there clear and logical linkages between learning outcomes, learning and teaching strategies and assessment strategies in any new modules?
  - Do the modules support the field aims and objectives/learning outcomes?
  - Is the variety and weighting of assessment across modules evenly balanced?
  - Are the indicative curriculum content and bibliographies of new modules current and appropriate?
  - Is the curriculum linked to, and informed by, research in the subject area? (please note the University's strategy is to increase the proportion of staff research input to the curriculum and for all PGT courses to be informed by staff research)
  - Are new modules set at appropriate levels and volumes of credit?
  - Are pre-requisite and co-requisites of new modules appropriate?
  - If the field includes previously validated modules, are these appropriate for inclusion in the new field?
  - How much of the field is supported by StudySpace (learning management system)?
- 9 Panels should also ensure that a range of questions relating to disability and equality are explored during all validations:
- Is there evidence that a range of inclusive methods of assessment will be accessible to a range of needs, disabilities and abilities rather than expecting all students to fit the standard model?
  - If students will be required to study or work off campus are reasonable alternatives offered, either as standard course components or in certain cases where for any reason the off-campus course elements are not appropriate?
  - Where technology will be used, are there alternative formats available to maximise flexibility either in learning, teaching or assessment? For example, are there opportunities for those with caring responsibilities to access material outside teaching hours; are there virtual opportunities to participate in field trips or lab-work; where visual resources are an

## Guidance CG(ii)

### Validation criteria and checklist for faculty committees and University panels

important part of the teaching how would a student with visual impairment access the same information?

- Have learning and teaching resources been selected to appeal to students from a wide range of backgrounds (across the protected characteristics) and which demonstrate the strengths of those backgrounds?
- Will feedback mechanisms support the needs of diverse students and in particular disabled students and those with learning differences?
- Is there evidence that the team have had equality and diversity and related training to enable them confidently to foster good relations between different groups of students

*Note: the availability of appropriate resources will not normally be a focus of the faculty level validation process unless the field is to be offered by a collaborative partner. Normally, in submitting a proposal for a new field to Academic Directorate and reporting validation to the Academic Board, the faculty is signifying that appropriate resources will be available. This will, however, not prevent members of faculty quality committees from asking questions about resources if they have concerns.*

#### 9 **New subjects**

- Are adequate resources available/planned to ensure the quality of the new field (eg. staff, library and media, laboratories, placements etc.)?
- Has appropriate staff development been undertaken/planned to support the introduction of the new field?

#### 10 **Collaborative provision**

- Are appropriate liaison arrangements planned to assure the quality and standards of the field in the partner institution (including identification of responsible staff, boards of study, staff-student consultation, external examining, assessment boards etc.)?
- Has a joint staff development plan been put in place to foster a mutual understanding of the standards and quality of student experience required by the University?
- Is the draft Student Handbook satisfactory?
- For collaborative provision which falls under a Category 2 arrangement (for example: where a fee is paid directly to the University rather than the University receiving HEFCE funding and retaining a top-slice for overheads), the default position is that students do not have access to Kingston University resources. The validation panel should therefore examine whether adequate arrangements are in place for supporting students in respect of non-academic matters (e.g. counselling, careers advice etc.)

## Guidance CG(ii)

### Validation criteria and checklist for faculty committees and University panels

#### 11 **Fields delivered wholly or in part by Flexible and Distributed Learning (FDL), or “distance learning”**

- How reliable is the FDL delivery system, and are there contingency plans in place in the event of failure of the designated mode(s) or delivery?
- Is the delivery system fit for purpose, and does it have an appropriate availability and life expectancy?
- Is the delivery of study materials to students remotely secure and reliable, and is there a mechanism in place for confirming safe receipt of documentation which is delivered remotely?
- Are the study materials available to students appropriate?
- Is there an identified contact who can give students feedback (both formative and summative) on academic performance?
- Is there an opportunity (where appropriate) for inter-learner discussions about the field?
- Do students have appropriate opportunities to give formal feedback on their experience of the field?
- What is the appropriateness of the academic and technical expertise of staff involved in delivering the field (including learning support expertise)?
- How will students be able to access services such as pastoral support, academic counselling, and library and IT facilities?
- What are the mechanisms in place to ensure that assessed work is properly attributed to students, particularly where assessment is conducted through remote methods that might be vulnerable to interception or interference?
- What are the mechanisms in place for ensuring that students' assessed work is the original work of that student only, particularly where assessment is conducted through remote methods?
- What are the mechanisms in place for assuring the security and reliability of transfer of work to assessors, and the mechanisms for confirming safe receipt of work?