

# Guidance DG(i)

## Internal Subject Review criteria and checklist for panel members

- 1 Fields due for consideration in Internal Subject Reviews should be reviewed against standard criteria. These, and additional criteria for reviews of collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (FDL), are detailed below.

A checklist of questions for panel members to use as a guide to help them with the analysis of the review evidence is also provided below.

### List of internal subject review criteria

#### 2 All reviews

Positive judgements relating to the review of programmes should be made if there is clear evidence that the following requirements have been met:

- Fields must be consistent with the University and FHEQ requirements for the award(s) concerned
- A complete and comprehensive programme specification must be presented in the University's most current template.
- Subject benchmark standards should be considered when reviewing the field. They apply to full, major and half fields.
- The field's educational learning outcomes should be fully specified and be consistent with its aims
- Learning outcomes should reflect the University's key skills requirements
- The learning and teaching and assessment strategies of the field must be designed to deliver and assure the stated learning outcomes
- All modules must be presented in the format of the current standard module template
- 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)
- The level of modules should be clearly indicated and learning outcomes should reflect the level
- 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 agreed by the Academic Regulations Committee (ARC)
- Requirements of professional bodies should be fully specified
- Appropriate human and physical resources should be available to support the delivery of the fields aims and learning outcomes

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- Fields should be consistent with University policies, procedures and strategies (eg. Widening Participation, Disability and Equality, Admissions, Fairness in Assessment, Personal Development Planning Framework etc)
- Appropriate and ongoing staff development should be in evidence
- Subject 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*', available from the ADC website when preparing for internal subject reviews. In addition advice can be sought from the ADC, the Disability and Dyslexia Service and the Equality Unit

### **Additional criteria for collaborative provision**

- 3 Positive judgements for fields run with collaborative partners should only be made if there is clear evidence that the following requirements have been met:

- Adequate liaison arrangements are in place 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

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

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

- Adequate arrangements must be in place to assure the delivery of appropriate study materials to students
- Adequate arrangements are in place to effectively support students (such as provision of formative and summative feedback and access to student services)
- Adequate arrangements are in place to provide opportunities for students to provide formal feedback to staff in relation to their academic and student experience
- Adequate arrangements must be in place to ensure that the security of assessments is assured

### Checklist of questions to guide analysis of review evidence

- 4 The following are a series of questions that panels should use to guide them in their analysis of documentation and in subsequent discussions with the subject team. This is not exclusive and is for guidance only.
- 5 Panel members are invited to submit issues for discussion with the subject team to the internal subject review clerk up to seven days prior to the event. A draft agenda will normally be sent to the panel and field team not later than 24 hours before the event.
- 6 **All reviews**
  - Are the fields 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?
  - Does the quality of the student experience meet, at the very least, minimum threshold standards?
  - Are the fields academically coherent?
  - Is there clear progression between levels (where appropriate)?
  - Are the fields compliant with the relevant subject benchmark standards?
  - Are the fields compliant with the relevant University regulations? (if variations are required the review team must raise this as a matter for immediate action)
  - Are the aims and objectives of the fields clearly stated?
  - Are the learning and teaching strategies and assessment strategies for the fields linked and are they likely to deliver the stated learning outcomes?
  - Do the fields build upon the likely prior qualifications of students?
  - Will the fields deliver outcomes appropriate for the likely employment market of diplomates/graduates?
  - What arrangements are in place for Personal Development Planning (PDP)?
  - How does the provision develop and assess key skills?
  - Are the fields appropriately constructed in terms of core, option and free choice modules?
  - Do the fields 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 modules?
  - Do the modules support field aims and objectives/learning outcomes?

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- Is the variety and weighting of assessment across modules evenly balanced?
- Are the indicative curriculum content and bibliographies of 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 modules set at appropriate levels and volumes of credit?
- Are pre-requisite and co-requisites of modules appropriate?
- How much of the subject is supported by StudySpace (learning management system)?
- If the fields contain placement learning, is the management of placements clearly articulated and is the student support appropriate?
- Are there adequate human and physical resources available to fully support the delivery of the fields aims and learning outcomes?
- Is there evidence of staff development plans in place to appropriately support the development of staff members?
- What processes are in place to provide opportunities for students to contribute to the development of the fields under review?

7 Panels should ensure that a range of questions relating to disability and equality are explored during all reviews:

- Is there evidence of a range of inclusive methods of assessment which will be accessible to a range of needs, disabilities and abilities rather than expecting all students to fit the standard model?
- When students are 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?
- Has technology been used and are 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 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

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- Are participation, retention and achievement levels monitored in respect of people with protected characteristics?
- How are significant patterns of participation, retention and achievement identified for those people with protected characteristics
- If there are patterns identified, have steps been taken to improve participation or success either for this particular cohort of students or plans made for future cohorts of students?
- What issues have students identified in respect of equality and diversity eg. design, content, delivery or assessment?
- What steps been taken to address the issues/concerns identified through student feedback either for this particular cohort of students or plans made for future cohorts of students?
- How are improvements fed back to students to demonstrate the University's commitment to equality and diversity?

### 7 Collaborative provision

- Are appropriate liaison arrangements in place 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.)?
- Is there evidence of joint staff development to foster a mutual understanding of the standards and quality of student experience required by the University?

### 8 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 are students 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

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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?