Annex L: Quality Assurance Procedures for Programmes of Study at Validated Institutions Leading to University Awards

1 Introduction

1.1 These procedures are to be used in connection with the quality assurance of programmes of study which are delivered by Validated Institutions and which lead to the award of a certificate, diploma or degree of the University.

1.2 These procedures should be used by existing Validated Institutions. Prospective Validated Institutions must first complete the process of institutional approval as detailed in Collaborative Provision Policies and Procedures Part 1.

2 Approval of New Programmes of Study and New Modules

2.1 Initial Development

There should be consultation at an early stage with the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) and relevant University School(s) with regard to all aspects of proposed new programmes of study. Validated Institutions and Academic School Liaison Officers should ensure that the Head of School is consulted during these discussions.

2.2 Submission to Executive Group - Outline Planning Approval

2.2.1 Validated Institutions must submit an outline proposal for approval by the University’s Executive Group (EG).

2.2.2 Outline proposals should attach the business plan approved within the partner institution, indicate that the partner will be solely responsible for providing resources and facilities sufficient to staging the programme and take account of the following requirements:

   i. Evidence of need and demand for the programme as suggested by market research, to include projected student numbers

   ii. How it is proposed that the programme will be resourced. The internally approved business plan should be provided;

   iii. Any special resources required (e.g. staff, space, library, IT, learning technologies, training, timetable), and the implications for the partner of putting these in place;

   iv. The cover available in the partner institution if key parts of the programme depend on an individual member of staff for their delivery;

   v. A statement of which existing programmes, if any, will be withdrawn as a result of the new proposal.

2.2.3 The outline proposal should first have been approved within the Validated Institution and should be passed directly to the QAO, which will liaise with the Faculties Support Office (FSO) in order to ensure that the proposal is submitted to EG.

2.2.4 Validated Institutions are not required to submit a business case to the University’s Business Case Committee (BCC). Permission from EG will be sufficient to proceed with the development of the proposed curriculum and the production of programme, module and other relevant documentation as set out at 2.4.2 below. The School Academic Liaison Officer should be consulted as necessary with regard to the development of the curriculum and production of relevant paperwork.

2.3 Submission to the School

2.3.1 Following Executive Group consideration detailed proposals for new Validated
Institution programmes of study and new modules should be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Annex B: Approval and Withdrawal of Modules and Annex C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes of the University’s Code of Practice for Quality Assurance for Taught Programmes.

2.3.2 Detailed proposals for new programmes of study and new modules should first be approved within the Validated Institution by the appropriate body. If it is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, the Validated Institution should submit the proposal for a new programme of study to the QAO, which will liaise with the Academic School Liaison Officer within the Validated Institution's cognate School.

2.3.3 When making such programme submissions Validated Institutions should ensure that the information required in section 2.4.2 below is submitted together with a report on the outcome of internal consideration of the programme. If the Academic School Liaison Officer considers the proposal to be satisfactory s/he will inform the School Education Committee or School Graduate Studies Committee (as relevant), and recommend the programme submission for approval by the relevant Faculty.

2.4 Faculty Consideration

2.4.1 Where, following its consideration of the programme and module specifications, the Academic School Liaison Officer is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, a Faculty Panel will be established to visit the prospective Validated Institution and meet with staff in order to consider the programme proposal in detail.

2.4.2 The documentation required to be provided to such panels by the prospective Validated Institution is:

- the proposed programme for the visit (see the guidance in Appendix A to this Annex)
- rationale for the proposal
- programme specification
- module specifications
- module mapping document
- staff management structure and CVs of core teaching staff
- statement of available physical resources
- self-assessment of the infrastructure of support for student learning and student welfare
- the relevant extract of the Student Voice Committee minutes that notes the student discussion of the proposed programme specification (see Annex M: Student Evaluation section 5.10)
- requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (where applicable)
- reports from any previous stages of the approval process, where available.

2.4.3 Such Faculty panels will normally include at least two members from the University, one of whom shall be appointed as Chair, and at least one member external to the University. The Faculty panel is responsible for making a detailed assessment of the design, level, coherence and currency of the curriculum under review and of the capacity of the prospective Validated Institution to assure the standards of the provision under review and to provide learning opportunities sufficient for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Based on its assessment, the Faculty panel is empowered to make one of a number of recommendations to PASC on the Faculty’s behalf:

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1 With the exception of the proposed programme for the visit of the Faculty Panel
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i) that the proposal be given permission to proceed for consideration by the Programme Approval Sub-committee (PASC) of the University, along with the panel’s report of the approval event;

ii) that the proposal be given permission to proceed for consideration by PASC subject to the prior satisfaction of specified conditions along with the panel’s report of the approval event. These conditions might include revisions to the proposal or provision of additional resources. The submission to PASC should include a statement from the prospective Validated Institution as to the steps it has taken to meet the Faculty panel’s conditions;

iii) that the proposal be resubmitted in a revised form for further consideration by the Faculty panel;

iv) that the proposal be rejected.

2.4.4. Where a new programme of study or a significantly revised existing programme proposed by a prospective Validated Institution is subject to approval by a third party, the Faculty may consider establishing a conjoint panel with the third party organisation provided that the following conditions are met:

i) that the Faculty will normally be represented on the approval panel by at least two of its members, one of whom should be a member of the relevant Faculty Committee (Faculty Education Committee or Faculty Graduate Studies Committee, as appropriate to the level of the proposal) and a representative from a subject area cognate to that of the proposed programme;

ii) that chairmanship of the panel resides with the University;

iii) that, such as it considers appropriate, the University retains the right to appoint external subject area experts to the panel;

iv) that the agenda and areas covered by the approval event are considered sufficient by the Faculty to allow for full consideration of the proposal as per the requirements of this Annex and the University’s Code of Practice;

v) that the written report of any such event is subject to the approval of the Chair of the panel (normally the member of the relevant Faculty Committee);

vi) that, following consideration by the Faculty, the proposal and the report of the conjoint validation event are subject to consideration by PASC before final approval is given by the University, as per the requirements of this Annex and the University’s policies and procedures for the approval of collaborative provision.

2.4.5 Detailed guidance on the terms of reference and conduct of Faculty panels convened to consider proposals for new or significantly amended validated programmes of study is set out in Appendix A to this Annex.

2.5 Module Approval

2.5.1 Any new or substantially amended module(s) proposed separately to a new programme should be submitted, via the QAO, to the Academic School Liaison Officer of the Validated Institution’s cognate School. If the Academic School Liaison Officer considers the module(s) to be satisfactory they will recommend them for approval by the Faculty.

2.5.2 Minor amendments to existing modules may be agreed by the Academic School Liaison Officer. The QAO should be consulted in advance about all such changes.

2.5.3 Where a module is non-cognate the Validated Institution should provide a supporting statement from a suitably qualified external expert.

2.6 Programme Amendment

2.6.1 Substantial amendments to approved programmes should proceed in line with 2.3 and 2.4 above. Programme amendments should be submitted through the QAO.
2.6.2 Minor amendments to existing programme of study may be agreed by the Academic School Liaison Officer. The QAO should be consulted in advance about all such changes.

2.6.3 Guidance on what constitutes major or minor amendments reference can be found in the module and programme specification approval risk table, which can be viewed at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/documents/quality-assurance/guidance/pdf/approvalrisktable.pdf.

2.7 Further Information

Further information on programme and module approval and amendment can be found in the Validation Handbook, Section 5 (see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/handbook/index.html).

3 Credit Transfer and APL

3.1 Applications for Credit Transfer and APL made by students studying for a University award at a Partner College or Validated Institution (as appropriate) will have their application assessed and a decision made by the relevant Programme Leader/Admissions Tutor for the programme in question. Recommendations will then be considered for approval by the relevant Faculty Committee (i.e. FEC or FGSC). All decisions will be reported to the APL Board.

3.2 All APEL claims and portfolios should also be referred to the University so that they can be considered and approved by the relevant Faculty Committee.

3.3 All claims (Credit Transfer/APCL/APEL) MUST be made and approved prior to the start of the modules for which credit is being claimed via these means.

4 Annual Monitoring

4.1 Validated Institution programmes of study will be reviewed annually in accordance with the requirements of the University Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Annex E: Annual Monitoring.

4.2 The Validated Institution will submit an annual monitoring report on each programme for consideration by the relevant School and on any module that meets the required criteria as detailed in Annex E.

4.3 Annual monitoring reports should be submitted to the Quality Assurance Office by 30 November each year. Reports will then be passed to the University Academic School Liaison Officer of the cognate School. In going forward to the relevant School committee, the report will be accompanied by the report of the Academic School Liaison Officer.

4.4 The School should comment on its consideration of the annual monitoring report and any associated reports within its annual monitoring report to the Faculty.

4.5 Further information on Validated Institution Annual Monitoring can be found in the Validation Handbook, Section 6 (see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/handbook/section6.html).

5 Periodic Review of Programmes

5.1 Validated Institution programmes will be subject to Periodic Programme Review (PPR) in accordance with the requirements of the University Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Annex F.

5.2 Validated Institutions will undergo a separate review to that of the School responsible for
oversight of its provision. Such reviews will normally be chaired by an academic member of staff from within the same Faculty as the Validated Institution’s cognate School, but not by a member of staff from the Validated Institution’s cognate School.

5.3 The relevant Faculty Board will determine the year in which each programme will be subject to periodic review, and will receive reports of PPR Panels and the response of the Validated Institution to such reports. The Faculty Board will forward such reports, together with its views on them, to the Education Board or Graduate School Board as appropriate.

5.4 Further information on Periodic Reviews of Validated Institutions can be found in the Validation Handbook, Section 6 (see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/handbook/section6.html).

6 Boards of Examiners

6.1 A Board of Examiners will be appointed for each programme of study. The Board will comprise:

- One or more External Examiner(s), appointed by or on behalf of Senate and Council on the recommendation of the relevant Faculty Board.

- A member of academic staff from the relevant School who shall be appointed as Chair of the Board of Examiners by the relevant Faculty Board. The Chair of the Board of Examiners will normally be the Academic School Liaison Officer.

- Validated Institution examiners, normally comprising a marker for each module, appointed by the relevant Faculty Board on the recommendation of the Validated Institution; one of whom shall be appointed as Deputy Chair. See 6.2.1-6.2.2 below for further details regarding the appointment of examiners.

6.2 The CVs of all Validated Institution staff teaching on programmes leading to University of Kent credit or award should be sent to the Quality Assurance Office on both an annual basis and whenever a new teaching appointment is made throughout the academic year.

6.2.1 For those Validated Institution staff being appointed as examiners, the CV(s) will be forwarded by the QA Office to the relevant Academic School Liaison Officer, who will review the CV(s) prior to each staff member’s appointment as examiner. If satisfied, the Academic School Liaison Officer will return the CV(s) to the Quality Assurance Office, which will send them to the secretary of the Dean of the relevant Faculty with a recommendation that the staff concerned should be approved as examiners by the relevant Faculty Board.

6.2.2 Should the Academic School Liaison Officer determine that, on the basis of the information provided, it would be inappropriate to approve a member of teaching staff from the Validated Institution as a Kent examiner, this outcome will be relayed to the Quality Assurance Office, together with a recommendation for any professional development activities to be implemented prior to the resubmission of the staff member’s CV.

6.2.3 The Quality Assurance Office will report all outcomes on the consideration of teaching staff for approval as Kent examiners to the relevant Validated Institution.

6.3 Boards of Examiners will act in accordance with the University Code of Practice, Annex J: Meetings of Boards of Examiners, except as otherwise specified below.

6.4 Before each meeting of a Board of Examiners, the Deputy Chair shall convene a meeting of a small number of internal members of the Board of Examiners (i.e. the Deputy Chair and normally no more than three members) to agree recommendations to be made to the Board regarding students about whom medical or other concessionary evidence has
been received. The concessionary scale provided in Annex J, section 5 (Conventions for the Application of Concessionary Measures) should be considered when agreeing such recommendations, along with any matters raised in the annual Guidance for Examiners published by the QA Office.

6.5 Before each meeting of a Board of Examiners, and separate to the Concessionary Committee meeting, the Deputy Chair may convene a pre-meeting to consider other matters as deemed appropriate. Such matters might include deciding, based on the profile of marks, which candidates should have a viva voce examination (where such an option remains available under the regulations), which candidates should be drawn to the attention of the External Examiner, recommendations to be made regarding borderline candidates where such remain in operation, reviewing the range of marks awarded for each module and identification of other issues requiring discussion by the Board of Examiners. The identities of candidates shall not be made known to examiners during the course of this meeting.

6.6 Board of Examiners will meet at least annually. The Deputy Chair will be responsible for making arrangements for meetings and for informing members of those arrangements.

6.7 The Deputy Chair will ensure that all members of the Board of Examiners receive detailed information about the programme, including assessment requirements; that arrangements for approval of examination papers and monitoring of internal marking are agreed between the Chair and the External Examiner(s); that draft examination papers and samples of student work are sent to the External and Internal Examiners as agreed; that appropriate documentation, including an agenda, is provided at meetings of Boards of Examiners and that all marks are entered on the Student Data System in time for the Board.

The Deputy Chair will also ensure that the Board of Examiners is informed of any recommendations of the Concessionary Committee relating to evidence of mitigating circumstances submitted by students (see section 6.4 above).

6.8 The Validated Institution will appoint a member of its staff to act as Secretary to the Board of Examiners.

The Secretary will attend meetings of the Board of Examiners, will ensure that all members of Boards of Examiners are provided with the relevant regulations and Examination Conventions, and that recommendations made by the Board of Examiners are approved by or on behalf of appropriate University bodies, i.e. that lists showing recommendations for the award of certificates, diplomas or degrees are prepared and submitted to the relevant Quality Assurance Office representative in attendance at the Board.

The Secretary will record the decisions made by the Board including the consideration given to specific cases. Most decisions are recorded on the composite mark sheet which is signed and appended to the minutes (the format of the minutes should follow that of the agenda).

6.9 The Deputy Chair will ensure that students are informed of decisions made regarding their results and any conditions which students have to fulfil in order to progress. Students should be informed that final year marks and classifications remain provisional until the pass list has been signed by the relevant Faculty Dean.

6.10 A representative from the Quality Assurance Office will be in attendance at the Board who will ensure that final composite mark sheets are signed and who will ensure that pass lists are circulated in the same way as pass lists for University programmes.

6.11 The representative from the Quality Assurance Office will also advise on regulations and conventions and their interpretation at the Board.
6.12 Further information on Validated Institution Boards of Examiners can be found in the Validation Handbook, Section 7 (see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/handbook/section7.html).

7 Reports of External Examiners

7.1 External Examiners are required to submit an annual report to the University via the online External Examiners Report Submission System (EERSS) within four weeks of the main annual meeting of the Board of Examiners.

7.2 Reports submitted via EERSS can be accessed by relevant parties (Chair of the Board of Examiners, Head of School, Faculties Support Officer and Dean of Faculty) via the University webpage at https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/extexaminers/local/eerss-admin.html.

7.3 Where the Deputy Chair of the Board of Examiners does not have access to the External Examiner’s report via EERSS, a hard copy of the report will be provided by the Quality Assurance Office.

7.4 Within four weeks of receipt of the report, the Deputy Chair of the Board of Examiners will, via the Quality Assurance Office, provide the Chair with a commentary on the report and an account of any actions planned in response to the External Examiners’ recommendations.

7.5 The Chair of the Board of Examiners will submit the official response to the External Examiner’s report via EERSS, first taking into consideration the commentary provided by the Deputy Chair of the Board.

7.6 Further information on External Examiner Reporting can be found in the Validation Handbook, Section 13 (see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/handbook/section13.html).

8 Student Feedback

8.1 Validated Institutions should seek the views of students on each of the modules they have taken and the programme they have taken.

8.2 This feedback should be obtained via questionnaires developed and administered by each Validated Institution and where applicable by the National Student Survey. Validated Institutions should also establish a Student Voice Committee for each programme.

8.3 Validated Institutions should take into account the requirements of Annex M: Student Evaluation of the Code of Practice for Taught Programmes when designing feedback mechanisms. Validated Institutions should also take into account the requirements for Student Voice Committees as detailed in Annex M, section 5.

8.4 In completing annual monitoring report requirements, Validated Institutions should make reference to consideration of student feedback on programmes.

8.5 Students on Validated Institution programmes will also be subject to an annual survey carried out by the University requesting direct feedback on their learning experience.

8.6 Further information on Validated Institution Annual Monitoring can be found in the Validation Handbook, Section 11 (see http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/handbook/section11.html).

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2 http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/extexaminers/eerss.html
9 Academic School Liaison Officer

9.1 Each Validated Institution will have an Academic School Liaison Officer who will:

- Act as the Chair of the Board of Examiners for the programme concerned to
  - review the marking of and confirm the marks to be awarded for all modules for which the School holds responsibility;
  - make recommendations for the award of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees to students who have successfully completed programmes of study for which the School holds responsibility;
  - make recommendations with regard to progression, referrals and termination of registration of students taking programmes of study for which the School holds responsibility;
  - ensure concessionary cases are not permitted to be re-opened during Board proceedings;
  - ensure the reasons for awarding a student a higher class of degree than indicated by his/her marks are recorded on or appended to the official record of decisions made by the Board of Examiners;
  - ensure the official record of decisions made by the Board of Examiners has been confirmed and signed by the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the External Examiners.
- Be a source of advice on learning and teaching matters (e.g. assessment strategies and programme resource requirements);
- Assist with curriculum development and receive proposals for new modules and programmes at an early stage in their development;
- Recommend the establishment of Faculty Panels to consider proposals for new and substantially revised programmes of study;
- Recommend the approval of new or substantially revised modules by the Faculty and approving minor changes to both existing programmes and modules.
- Assist the Validated Institution in the nomination of External Examiners and external periodic review panel members;
- Ensure that the relevant School Education Committee or Graduate Studies Committee has effective oversight of quality assurance procedures such as external examining and annual monitoring, and ensure that periodic programme reviews have been completed as required for the programme concerned;
- Receive agendas and minutes of programme team meetings;
- Be a suitable candidate to be a member of any review panels established to undertake periodic programme reviews in Schools with similar provision;
- Inspect samples of marked student work (the purpose of such inspection will not be to moderate internal marking but to obtain information about student learning and achievement).
- Review the standard of student learning and achievement.
- Review the effectiveness of the strategy and criteria for assessment.
- Review whether marking is undertaken rigorously and in accordance with assessment criteria.
• Review whether arrangements for approval of examination papers and monitoring of internal marking are undertaken in accordance with the University’s Code of Practice.

• Submit an annual report to the University via the Quality Assurance Office on the quality of the programme and the learning experience of the students as per the template provided.

• Agree a schedule of visits to the Validated Institution during the academic year for the purpose of meeting the responsibilities set out above (to visit on three occasions, once per term, one of which must be made in order to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners and, where possible, one of which should include a meeting with students [one of the three visits other than the Board of Examiners may be conducted virtually]);

• Submit the official response to the External Examiner(s) report(s) via EERSS, first taking into consideration the commentary provided by the Deputy Chair of the Board.

• Review the Validated Institution’s admissions decisions and ensure that they are made in compliance with University admissions protocols.

• Review the appointment of new Validated Institution staff appointed to be examiners on programmes leading to University of Kent credit and awards. This will include reviewing CVs on an annual basis, and whenever there is a new appointment made throughout the academic year, prior to the approval of Validated Institution staff as Kent examiners. Once agreed, staff CVs will then be returned to the Quality Assurance Office for forwarding to the secretary of the Dean and further approval as Kent examiners by the Dean. Full details of the Appointment of Examiners process can be found in section 6.2 above.