Briefing Document for Validation / Periodic Review & Re-validation Panel Members

2013

Reference:
Version: 2.00
Status: Final
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Date: 15/08/2013
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1. Introduction

This document provides a guide to CEM’s validation and periodic review & re-validation processes. It contains information about the purpose, role and composition of panels for these events, the range of outcomes and follow-up requirements.

2. Purpose of programme validation and re-validation

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) glossary defines validation as ‘a formal process through which an awarding institution initially approves a programme of study (in terms of its content, teaching/learning and assessment) for the purpose of leading to one of its qualifications’.

Validation is the process by which CEM evaluates whether new or revised programmes of study meet institutional and national academic standards and whether the content and delivery will provide CEM students with a good quality learning experience. In comparison, re-validation enables CEM to establish whether existing programmes remain current and fit for purpose.

The panel for both validation and periodic review / re-validation events will be made up of both internal and external academics, representatives of professional practice and a representative from the current student or recent alumni community. They will review the programme proposal giving consideration to the following areas:

- The rationale
- Curriculum and syllabus design (as summarised in the course and module specifications)
- Course management
- Administration
- Delivery and student support
- Resourcing

3. Structure of events

The programme for the validation or periodic review / re-validation event will be determined by the Chair of the event in consultation with CEM’s Academic Quality Unit (AQU), and will depend on the nature and scope of the event. It will normally include:

- Confirmation of the agenda by the panel
- The validation / re-validation meeting with the programme team presenting the proposal. This will include consideration of curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment, student recruitment, admissions and support, resources
- A meeting with students and alumni (where appropriate)
- Consideration by the panel of the proposal and discussion of recommendations
- Report back by the Chair to the programme team detailing the outcome of the event and any conditions, recommendations and commendations.
- Agreement of the date by which any revised documents or follow-up information need to be submitted.

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4. Event documentation

It is the responsibility of the programme team, led by the relevant Associate Dean, to produce the documentation for the event. This documentation should be provided to the event secretary, who should ensure that it is circulated to the validation panel at least two weeks prior to the event. The amount of documentation will depend on the nature and scope of the event but will normally consist of:

- Documentation presenting the institutional context
- Rationale / market research (for validation events only)
- Programme specification
- Module descriptors
- Critical reflection on the team’s experience of delivering the programme since the previous such event (for re-validation events only)
- Data relating to applications, admissions, assessment and progression (for re-validation events only)
- External Examiners reports (for re-validation events only)
- Annual Course Reports and minutes from Course Review Meetings (for re-validation events only)

5. Panel composition and role

The members of the panel are appointed by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards and approved by the Quality Standards & Enhancement Committee (QSEC) on behalf of the Academic Board.

The validation panel will normally comprise an independent Chair who will be a senior member of CEM staff such as a Director or Dean; an appropriate number of external members drawn from HE institutions or industry (depending on the scale and/or complexity of the programme being considered); an internal academic not associated with the proposal; a student member (either a current student or recent alumni) and the Head of Academic Quality and Standards whose role is to advise and ensure that the validation process is appropriately followed. All panel members are expected to be impartial and to have had no involvement in the preparation of the proposal (as explained in 5.2, the external members will be entirely independent of CEM). All members of the panel have equal status, with the Chair having the casting vote when this may be needed. The programme team will be invited to the event to present the proposal and to address any queries as well as to the closing meeting to hear the outcome including conditions, recommendations and commendations. In addition, the panel may meet with students at a separate meeting and visit facilities depending on the scale and nature of the event.

5.1 Role of the Chair

The main role of the Chair is to ensure that

- the proceedings are conducted in line with the CEM Code of Practice for Course Design, Approval, Monitoring and Review (see Appendix B);
- an impartial decision is made when reviewing the proposal for a new or revised programme;
- that there is an opportunity for the validation panel to explore and debate the proposal.
The Chair must read through all the documentation and highlight any areas that may require further clarification prior to the event. At the same time, he/she should also review any preliminary comments from other panel members. It is good practice for the Chair to contact panel members in advance of the event to discuss their impressions of the documentation and thus begin to form an agenda for the panel meeting.

The Chair should plan to arrive early in order to finalise any remaining meeting arrangements with the validation event secretary. A preliminary meeting will be held with the panellists following their arrival to enable the Chair to gauge initial opinion and to allocate responsibility for leading discussion on specific aspects of the agenda to individuals. At the validation meeting, the Chair is expected to open the meeting by setting out the context and purpose of the event and to also set the tone in order to promote a constructive discussion of the proposal. He/she should invite all panel members to participate and discourage aggressive questioning styles and/or individuals from dominating the discussion. The Chair should encourage the panel to concentrate on identifying the significant issues, rather than, say, any spelling and typographic errors. He/she should also raise any issues of concern that have not been identified by other members of the panel. The Chair's role is to ensure that the panel reaches a consensus over the outcome and that the panel has identified any conditions, recommendations and commendations.

When closing the event, a feedback summary should be provided to the programme team, detailing the outcomes and follow-up actions in the form of recommendations and conditions (and, where appropriate, time limits for any response) (see section 6, below), as well as commending any areas of good practice.

After the meeting, the Chair should approve the draft report containing the recommendations and conditions before circulating it to the panel for comments and final approval.

5.2 Role of internal and external panel members

The role of internal and external panel members is to give consideration to the proposal and to provide an objective view, highlighting any weaknesses in the proposal and commending areas of good practice. It follows that they must commit to thorough preparation, e.g. through careful study of the programme documentation in advance of the event.

The internal panel member must have had no involvement in the writing of the proposal and the external panel member(s) must be entirely independent from CEM. The external panel member(s) play a very important role in providing an autonomous and impartial view of the quality of the proposal by drawing on their experience of provision elsewhere and/or its likely fit with sector needs.

Both internal and external panel members should critically examine the documentation provided and engage in discussion with the programme team. They must assess whether the intended programme aims and learning outcomes are realistic, attainable and set at an appropriate level, and that the programme is going to provide students with a high quality learning experience/academic qualification. They should also give consideration to any conditions and recommendations that must be addressed prior to the final approval of the programme.

5.3 Role of the student / alumni member

The student (or recent alumnus/alumna) member undertakes a similar role to the internal and external panel members and is an integral and equal member of the panel. The student panel member should familiarise themselves with the proposal and all relevant documentation giving particular consideration to the student experience. They must consider issues such as curriculum and assessment, learning resources, quality of teaching and
learning and student feedback. They like the other panel members should also give consideration to any conditions or recommendations that should be applied.

5.4 Role of the event secretary

The event Secretary will normally be a member of AQU and will act as the liaison between the panel and the programme team, and prepare the report of the event.

Before the validation event, the Secretary is responsible for organising the meeting by booking the room, facilities and refreshments, and to organise any necessary transport and accommodation for external panel members. He/she should also ensure that documentation is collated and available to all panel members at least two weeks prior to the event. The Secretary is the designated point of contact for panel members and the programme team in the run-up to the event, and is responsible for collecting and circulating any initial observations that members of the panel may submit prior to the event.

At the meeting, the event Secretary should record minutes of all of the key discussions and ensure that all outcomes, conditions, recommendations, corrections and examples of good practice in the form of commendations are documented.

6. Event outcomes

The possible outcomes of validation / re-validation events are:

- Approve the proposals without either conditions or recommendations;
- Approve the proposals with conditions and/or recommendations;
- Not approve the proposals in their current form, with reasons.

The panel will provide approval for a finite period; the standard length of approval is 5 years, but may be for a shorter period if considered necessary. In the event of revised scheme proposals not being approved, then panel may extend approval of the existing scheme for a limited period of time to enable further amendments to be made. Following consultation with the members of the panel, the Chair will decide whether such amendments will require a further meeting between the panel and the programme team or whether matters can be dealt with by correspondence.

If the approval includes conditions, normally these need to be complied with before the programme is offered. In comparison, recommendations are areas to which the programme team and other stakeholders are strongly advised to give consideration when monitoring the programme.

The AQU is responsible for reporting the outcome of the event to QSEC and the Academic Board.

7. Event follow-up

For purposes of checking for factual accuracy, the Secretary, on behalf of AQU, will circulate a draft report of the event, listing any conditions, recommendations and commendations, to the panel members and programme team within one week of the meeting. Issues that have not been discussed at the event will not be identified as conditions or recommendations unless a further discussion is held with the programme team before the report is circulated.

Once the subsequent final report has been distributed, it is the responsibility of the programme team, led by the Associate Dean, to ensure that the programme level conditions and any recommendations and other amendments suggested by the panel are complied with within the designated time period. Once the responses to these have been approved by the panel, a definitive copy of the revised programme specification and a schedule of the
amendments should be submitted to AQU. The schedule of amendments will detail that appropriate changes have been made, conditions met and recommendations considered and actions taken as appropriate. In instances where recommendations are not incorporated, a reasoned case should be provided to the panel as to the reasons why they have not been actioned. Where the recommendations require a longer timescale for compliance, an action plan should be submitted detailing the tasks that will need to be completed to meet the recommendations along with timescales and details of when a further evaluation will take place (for example as part of annual monitoring for the following academic year).

Any institutional-level recommendations or conditions should be referred to AQU in the first instance. AQU will compile an action plan and response, in liaison with the Directors Group where appropriate.

The outcome from the validation or periodic review / revalidation will be reported by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards to the relevant Board of Studies, QSEC and Academic Board. Under its Terms of Reference, it is the responsibility of Academic Board to give approval to the introduction of all programmes of study leading to CEM awards.

8. Archiving documentation

On completion of the validation event, AQU is responsible for ensuring that the following documentation is stored on the ‘Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement’ drive:

- Validation / re-validation report
- Programme documentation including programme specification and module descriptors
- Validation event minutes
- Any follow-up action plan and progress reports
- Any relevant correspondence
Appendix A – Suggested preparation questions

Questions to consider at validation / re-validation events and during prior review of the programme documentation:

- Does the programme demonstrate overall coherence in terms of aims and anticipated outcomes and of provision for assessment, progression, management and resourcing?
- Have the programme specification and module descriptor templates been completed in full and are they in the correct format?
- Are the programme aims reflected in the module learning outcomes?
- Do the programme and module learning outcomes reflect the intended level of the qualification as set out in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the relevant QAA subject benchmark statements?
- Does the intended programme comply with CEM Code of Practice and other CEM regulations and policies?
- How does the programme fulfill the needs of students and the requirements of professional statutory regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and employers?
- Does the module content reflect recent developments in the subject area?
- In respect of a new programme, what market research has been conducted in order to establish the intended market for the course?
- In respect of an existing course programme, is there still a demand for this course?
- Are the intended learning and teaching methods appropriate for the intended learning aims and outcomes?
- Will the programme provide a good learning experience for students?
- Will success on the programme enhance employability?
- What are the arrangements for learning support?
- Are the assessments outlined within the module descriptors set out clearly and the various elements weighted correctly?
- Have the resource implications of the new or revised programme been considered?
- Are the entry requirements appropriate?
- What student support arrangements are in place?
• How will the programme be monitored and reviewed?

• Do the curriculum, learning and assessment methods promote equality and diversity and are these flexible enough to minimise the need for adjustments to be made?

Suggested additional preparation questions to guide the student / alumni panellist

• Are the aims and learning outcomes of the programme clearly communicated to students?
• Are the admission arrangements clear?
• Is there a suitable variety of teaching methods and learning opportunities for students?
• Is it clear how student evaluation will be collected?
• Is there evidence of staff drawing on their research and professional expertise to keep the study materials relevant and up to date?
• Is feedback to students adequate and timely?
• Are there appropriate support arrangements available to students? such as;
  ▪ Administrative and pastoral support
  ▪ Technical support
  ▪ Study skills support
  ▪ Induction
  ▪ Careers guidance
  ▪ Library and e-resources
  ▪ Support for students with disabilities
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1. Introduction

This document sets out the broad principles and procedures that guide the design, approval (in respect of both peer-based validation and professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) accreditation), annual monitoring and periodic review and re-approval of courses comprising CEM’s undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study. It also identifies the provisions that will be followed in the event of a course or award being withdrawn.

The document draws upon the guidance provided by QAA within Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval (2011) and Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review (2011) of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. It is intended to reflect the underlying rationale articulated in chapter B1 that the processes of design, approval, monitoring and review ‘are linked….and need to be seen in a holistic and integrated manner’ (p.2). These processes will also be informed by periodic internal or external opportunities for relevant staff development.

In the case of courses that may be offered by CEM that lead to the awards of validating university partners these guidelines may be varied to meet the requirements of the HEI concerned. Such circumstances are indicated where appropriate below.

With regard to the terminology used by CEM, a course of study may consist of a single award (possibly with provision for different optional curriculum pathways leading to it) or may have provision for a number of discreet awards at different levels within the framework of the course scheme. Individual courses are offered within CEM’s undergraduate programme or postgraduate programme, as appropriate.

2. Course Design

2.1 Initial consent

Initial consent for a proposed course of study (whether a new course or an additional award or pathway within an existing course scheme) comprises evaluation of the business case and scrutiny of the academic justification. The proposal will take into account external guidelines and advice from QAA, relevant PSRBs and, where appropriate, validating university partners.

In preparing a case for consent, the author(s) of the proposal will complete a standard proforma with the following information:

- The academic rationale for the course or award, including its objectives and its accessibility to a range of potential learners
- Its strategic fit in terms of the CEM academic offer
- Its relationship to the objectives of the current CEM business plan, in terms of both immediate priorities and long-term objectives
- The potential market (with evidence) for students (both UK-based and international), including an appraisal of competitor courses in other HEIs
- The benefits (including public benefits, impact on profile and development of relationships with PSRBs) to be realised from offering the course or award
- An appraisal of options with regard to realising these benefits
An evaluation of the commercial aspects of the proposal, including best case, worst case and ‘most likely’ scenarios, with regard to:

- resource requirements (personnel and financial), including those required for the development of any new or revised modules
- timescale for the project, and analysis of the achievability of the project within this timescale
- an outline project budget

An appraisal of risks – financial, operational and reputational

The business aspects of the proposal will be considered by the CEM Business Case Group (chaired by the Director of Business Development), which will either recommend approval to the commitment of the necessary resources or refer it back to the proposer(s). Recommendations of approval will be referred to the CEM Directors Group for authority to proceed.

The academic justification set out in the proposal document will be considered by the relevant Board of Studies following approval of the business case. Similarly, the proposal may be supported or referred back to the proposer(s).

2.2 Preparing for validation

Following approval of the initial proposal from the Directors Group and the Board of Studies, the Associate Dean for the programme area concerned assumes responsibility for course planning, preparation of documentation and presentation of the proposed course to the validation panel. The course team consists of CEM staff and members of its academic community involved in the delivery and assessment of the course. The Associate Dean will co-ordinate the authoring of the necessary documentation to support the proposal for the new course or additional award or pathway, as follows:

2.2.1 Course rationale and institutional context

This comprises a critical evaluation document setting out the rationale for the course, placing it within its institutional context, and including:

- Commentary on the award title, its coherence and intellectual integrity
- Discussion of the current and potential market
- Evidence of consultation with employers and how liaison with the sector, including PSRBs, has contributed to the development of the course
- How the course fits within the CEM business plan and existing suite of HE awards
- Any relevant external factors, e.g. competing awards
- The adherence of the course proposal to CEM policies, its Code of Practice and regulations, e.g. on equality and diversity;
- The availability of the necessary resources; and
- Any future intentions with regard to the development of the course and/or its resourcing.

The document should also include a course structure diagram, which illustrates the sequencing of modules and progression through study levels, where relevant.

2.2.2 Course specification

Using the standard CEM course specification template, the following information should be provided:

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• Summary details, including the level(s) of study and academic credits available
• Admissions criteria
• Course aims and learning outcomes
• Course structure
• Curriculum matrix, mapping the modules against course learning outcomes
• Any requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) that have been incorporated

The course specification should reflect the provisions of the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education and the relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement. (see Appendix A)

The proposals should also take account of relevant provisions within the CEM Code of Practice and the CEM General and Academic Regulations (see Appendix A)

Prior to finalisation, the proposed course specification will be subject to internal peer review by a nominee of the Director of Education by reference to a published check-list of criteria.

\section*{2.2.3 Module descriptors}

For any new or revised modules proposed as part of the course will complete a module descriptor should be completed in line with the standard CEM module specification template to provide the following information:

• Summary details, including the level of study, academic credits available and notional learning hours
• Module aims and learning outcomes
• Module content
• Details of assessment methodology
• Mapping of assessment components against learning outcomes
• Key module learning resources

A learning outcome is defined as a competence or skill that should be evident and demonstrable at the end of a module of study and a programme or course of study. Such competencies should be capable of being assessed in some way to demonstrate that the student has acquired the skill or knowledge.

Prior to finalisation, the proposed module specification will be subject to internal peer review by the relevant subject leader by reference to a published check-list of criteria.

\section*{2.2.4 Course regulations}

The designate course leader or a nominee will prepare draft course regulations consistent with the framework of the CEM General and Academic Regulations to cover matters of:

• Assessment
• Classification
• Compensation and condonement
• Awards and progression
• Provision for repeating components of the course
Maximum period of study

Additionally, these regulations may incorporate any particular requirements that have been identified by a potential accrediting professional body.

The documentation may also include indicative examples of learning materials and specimen assessments and examples of the information to be provided to students, such as promotional material.

All documentation must be submitted to the Director of Education for review prior to submission for formal approval to AQU.

3. Course Approval

3.1 The validation event

The Academic Board delegates detailed consideration of a new course to a validation panel. The Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee (QSEC) approves nominations for validation panels against the criteria agreed by the Academic Board. Panels are bound by the CEM regulations. The Academic Quality Unit (AQU) is responsible for managing the approval calendar, convening validation panels and maintaining records of validation reports and course documents. AQU will identify an independent chair for the validation event. The chair will be selected from a pool approved by QSEC against the criteria set by the Academic Board. The pool of chairs is given appropriate training for the role and a register of members is maintained by AQU.

Validation entails peer scrutiny by academic and professional expertise relevant to the subject-matter of the course. This process helps assure the coherence and quality of what is intended to be made available. Such external participation ensures that courses are designed, developed and approved in the light of independent advice in terms of content and standards. It also supports objective decision making:

The course leader and AQU agree a suitable date and agenda for the validation event. The course leader may supply nominations in respect of the panel membership, which should contain an appropriate balance of academic and professional backgrounds. However, it remains AQU’s responsibility to determine the composition of the panel, under the authority of the chair of the Academic Board (See Appendix B)

Following agreement of the agenda, a pre-meeting may be held to clarify the purpose and structure of the validation event. Pre-meetings will be arranged by AQU and will be attended by the chair of the validation event, the Associate Dean and designate course leader and a representative of AQU.

The documentation provided by the course team to support the proposal will be circulated in advance of the meeting by AQU: The scrutiny undertaken at the event typically will embrace matters of:

- Institutional context
- Structure and coherence
- Curriculum and syllabus design (as summarised in the course and module specifications);
- Means and weighting of assessment
CEM Code of Practice

- Appropriateness of teaching methods and assessment in relation to intended learning outcomes
- Course management and regulations;
- Administration;
- Delivery and student support;
- Resourcing

Following the meeting with the panel, a report summarising the proceedings, including the period of time covered by an approval and any conditions and recommendations laid down by the panel, will be prepared by the clerk to the event on behalf of the Academic Quality Unit. This will be circulated to all panel members for confirmation.

The relevant Associate Dean and course leader are responsible for preparing a response to any conditions and recommendations laid down by the panel in accordance with the timescale imposed. The response (including any consequential amendments to the course scheme) will be distributed to the panel members for approval by the Academic Quality Unit. All such amendments will be consolidated into a definitive scheme document for the course. An electronic copy of all documentation should be provided to ASPO for inclusion in the CEM central archive.

If the decision of the panel following scrutiny of the course proposals is that the scheme should not be approved in its present form, reasons for that decision should be provided to enable the Academic Board and the course team to determine how best to modify the proposal.

For courses leading to an award of a validating partner, validation will be carried out by that institution in accordance with its standing documentation requirements and procedures, as set out in the appropriate guidance (see Appendix A). All documentation must be approved by HAQS prior to submission to the validating partner.

The outcome of all validation events (i.e. approval with/without conditions and recommendations or non-approval at this stage) will be reported to the relevant Board of Studies, Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee and Academic Board.

Further details regarding the composition of the validation panel and the conduct of the validation event is provided in Appendix B.

### 3.2 Accreditation by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)

Accreditation is a formal process of review undertaken by a PSRB as a distinct exercise from validation. The process of validation of the course scheme must be complete before accreditation is formally sought.

The attainment of certain competences and requirements for practice and membership of a profession is specified by a relevant professional body. Therefore, when reviewing a course for accreditation, representatives of that organisation will determine whether the learning outcomes of that course and the means of achieving them embody the competences and requirements of that body. Other requirements may have to be met to achieve registration for regulatory purposes.

Responsibility for liaison with PSRBs lies with the CEM Academic Standards and Partnership Officer (ASPO) on behalf of the Director of Education. Course documentation and other information will be provided in accordance with the requirements of that body.
Such material is subject to approval by HAQS prior to submission. In some instances the professional institution may wish to convene a meeting with representatives CEM to discuss aspects of the course; such meetings will take place in accordance with the institution’s procedures.

The outcome of the deliberations by the PSRB (i.e. whether to recognise the award or to refer it back for further consideration by CEM, the period of time covered by any such accreditation and any recommendations and/or conditions) will be reported to the relevant Board of Studies, Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee and the Academic Board. An electronic copy of all documentation should be provided to the Academic Standards and Partnership Officer for inclusion in the CEM central archive.

3.3 Minor amendments to an approved course

Depending on the circumstances, and under referral to AQU, minor modifications to a course and/or module may be considered outside of the full process for periodic course review (see below).

Proposed amendments to a validated course scheme normally will be initiated through the annual monitoring process (see below). Urgent amendments may be initiated by the relevant Associate Dean and the course leader in consultation with relevant members of the College staff. The purpose of such amendments may be to reflect changes in the requirements of QAA, a validating partner, an accrediting professional body or general pedagogic practice, developments in subject coverage or professional practice or experience gained through delivering the course, including student and employer feedback.

Such modifications may include:

- The addition and/or deletion of individual option modules within a course
- Changes to the learning outcomes of a module
- Changes to the assessment weightings of a module
- Changes to the title of a module.

They are confirmed through a documented process co-ordinated by the Dean of Postgraduate or Undergraduate Studies as appropriate and drawing on all available feedback.

In the first instance the relevant Associate Dean is asked to review the proposed changes against the course learning outcomes and a report, together with the amended syllabus, is sent to AQU for decision on whether the changes fall within the ‘minor modification’ definition or should prompt a full course review.

Approval of amendment to a course leading to a CEM award will be undertaken by means of consultation by correspondence by the course leader with the external examiner(s) (in the case of amendments to course regulations), or with the external examiner(s) and appropriate subject experts (in the case of amendments to curriculum or module syllabus). Their responses will be considered by the course leader and relevant Associate Dean and tutors: a report will be made to the relevant Board of Studies for authority to implement the changes, subject to any recommendations or conditions proposed by the consultees.

Confirmed minor modifications will be referred to the appropriate Board of Studies for recommendation to the Academic Board provided that, at all times, external, independent advice has been sought on the proposal and the external examiner(s) is content with the proposed change.
Approval of amendments to a validated course leading to the award of a partner institution will be undertaken by that institution in accordance with its standing documentation requirements and procedures, as set out in the appropriate guidance (see Appendix A).

In all cases, circulation of documentation to either the validating partner or to consultees is subject to its prior approval by HAQS.

The outcome of any amendment proposal may be reported to an accrediting PSRB in any annual return required by that organisation. It should also be reported by the Academic Standards and Partnership Officer to relevant non-UK regulatory bodies prior to the amendment being implemented. An electronic copy of all documentation should be provided to the Academic Standards and partnership Officer for inclusion in the CEM central archive.

If the accumulative effect of minor modifications to a course over a period of a few years is substantially different from that originally approved, AQU should submit the course for a full periodic review.

4. Annual Monitoring

Annual monitoring is an important mechanism whereby the respective Board of Studies and, through it, the Academic Board confirm that the standards of CEM courses are maintained; that their quality is assured; and that opportunities for enhancement are identified and implemented and that, in short, the course remains fit for purpose. The process of monitoring involves checking and evaluating the way in which provision is operating in relation to its aims and outcomes. It is based on both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Effective monitoring focuses on the identification of good practice as well as addressing areas of concern and thus should lead to quality enhancement and to the dissemination of good practice.

Monitoring should not be regarded as an activity which takes place only at a particular time in the academic cycle: it is a continuous process of evaluation and action where necessary so that matters are addressed and subsequently noted in each annual monitoring report. The activity is thus positioned within the broader context of quality assurance and enhancement brought about through other aspects of CEM’s work, e.g. review, management procedures, use of external examiners, staff development.

Monitoring should be evaluative and reflective rather than merely descriptive. In order to make it so, course teams should draw on a wide range of evidence and consider their findings in the context of the continuing validity of the course outcomes as set out in the course specification. Such an approach provides CEM with qualitative and quantitative information as a tool for the effective management of its courses.

CEM has an overriding duty to ensure that the award achieved by the student is of value and that the standard meets the level as determined by external reference points, including subject benchmark statements, the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and any PSRB requirements so that it will be recognised as such by employers, professional bodies and other organisations.

All courses and their associated modules are subject to monitoring, the outcomes of which are reported to the Boards of Studies on an annual basis and to an agreed cycle maintained by the AQU. All programmes at the same level within the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications will normally follow the same annual monitoring cycle.

The Deans of Postgraduate and Undergraduate Studies respectively are responsible for ensuring that the necessary information is presented to the Boards of Studies. To achieve
this, they may, where appropriate, establish course teams which will draw their memberships from a range of internal and external stakeholders (including student and employer representatives).

The purpose of monitoring, as defined in the CEM context, is to:

- Ensure that the course remains relevant (including in terms of institutional mission) and valid and continues to meet the needs of users/sponsors
- Consider the continuing effectiveness of the learning and teaching provision, the assessment regime and student engagement and support mechanisms
- Consider the appropriateness of the structure and design of the course in supporting student retention, achievement and progression
- Monitor trends in student performance over time
- Identify opportunities and make recommendations for improvement and enhancement within the course, e.g. in respect of curriculum, syllabi, teaching methods, learning materials or course management and administration
- Share good practice within and across programmes

4.1 Annual course review

For each course, the annual monitoring process will culminate in the preparation of a course report prepared by the Associate Dean in consultation with the course leader, course administrator and other relevant members of CEM staff in accordance with the format adopted either by CEM or a validating partner (see Appendix A), depending on the award. In ranging over the following indicative areas, the report will culminate in recommendations for immediate action and/or further investigation (backed by a comprehensive action plan):

- feedback on matters arising from the previous year’s report;
- student recruitment, retention, progression and achievement information and trends;
- feedback from students, at both course and module level;
- advice and feedback from the course advisory board (where applicable), subject advisory committees and other forums that may have taken place on an ad hoc basis during the preceding year;
- provision for students with specific learning needs;
- performance analysis and other Issues arising from the delivery of individual modules, including face-to-face teaching and webinars;
- external examiners’ reports;
- general teaching and learning and course management developments;
- materials and information available to students and other stakeholders;
- CPD provision and interaction with PSRBs;
- administrative issues;
- recommendations from course validation/review events where relevant;
- action points for the following year.
Where appropriate, annual monitoring reports for different, but closely related, courses may be combined. In the case of certain specialist courses, the review may also be advised by the outcomes from the meeting(s) of the Course Advisory Board where this exists.

Once approved, subject to any amendments, the draft report is presented to the relevant Board of Studies for approval. Where so required, the approved report is either forwarded in its entirety or informs a separate annual return to a validating university partner. Issues of College-wide significance are reported to Academic Board by HAQS for appropriate deliberation.

The outcomes from the annual course review process will be reported to relevant PSRBs by the Academic Standards and Partnership Officer in any annual return required by those organisations.

### 4.2 Annual course content review

As part of the annual monitoring process the study materials for each validated course will be reviewed annually by the course team, co-ordinated by the course administrator and the Media Services Manager. A meeting will take place within one month following the annual review meeting for the course concerned. The content of each module is examined in consultation with the relevant Associate Dean and/or course leader, subject custodians and the course administrator to determine the level of amendment required.

The outcome of the meeting is recorded on a standard course content review proforma, showing the level of amendment agreed for each item within the study materials, the individual responsible and the date by which any changes should be completed.

### 4.3 Boards of Studies annual reports

Having reviewed the individual course reports, each Board of Studies will compile and approve an overarching annual report by 30th January each year focussing on:

- issues of CEM-wide relevance and how they are to be addressed, and matters of good practice (for Teaching, learning and Assessment Committee);
- the security of academic quality and standards (for Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee);
- the findings of annual monitoring (for Academic Board and other stakeholders).

This may need to be reflected in greater detail to an accrediting PSRB by way of any annual return required by that organisation.

The Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee will conduct regular reviews of the effectiveness of the procedures for annual monitoring as a focus for enhancement. Independent advice will be sought as appropriate.

### 5. Periodic Review and Re-approval

All courses are subject to a major periodic review and revalidation and/or reaccreditation after being delivered during a period of approval specified at the previous academic (re)validation or professional (re)accreditation (typically, around five years). Records of all such events are maintained in the central CEM Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement archive.
Outside of this schedule, recommendations for the instigation of an earlier review must be referred in the first instance to AQU. Such initiatives may come through the deliberative committees or on the authority of the Principal, but can also be prompted by AQU, external examiner reports or through the annual monitoring process or on the initiative of course teams. The schedule for course review will, therefore, be influenced by: the period since approval or previous review; external examiner, academic community and industry feedback; and other sources where appropriate.

Course review is a process of scrutiny of a course to ensure its continuing validity and relevance. It is based on evidence, accumulated through monitoring processes, about the quality and standards of the course and, in CEM’s context, its fit with sector needs and changes in student/employer demand. The purpose of review and re-approval is to ensure that the course is being enhanced in line with developments in institutional requirements and pedagogical and professional practice. It must also reflect developing knowledge and be aligned, as appropriate, to changes in external reference points.

For courses leading to CEM awards, the relevant Associate Dean co-ordinates the preparation of an overview report by the course team. This will summarise the issues dealt with at the annual course reviews during the period of delivery and the incremental changes made since the last review or approval of the course, and how both this evidence and the general experience of running the current version has informed the design of the updated scheme. In addition, details of the proposed revisions to the course and module specifications and course regulations will be provided. Inter alia, such revisions may relate to:

- the title of an award;
- the structure of the course, including credit tariff and level;
- the addition, deletion or substitution of individual core modules within a course;
- the learning outcomes of a course;
- means of delivery and assessment.

The proposals will be subject to scrutiny by an independent panel constituted by CEM for the purpose, representing both academic and professional expertise relevant to the subject-matter of the course. The panel will be appointed by AQU on behalf of the Director of Education. In addition to the independent chair, it will comprise a sufficient number of panellists appropriate to the level and range of the subject matter to be considered.

The process followed at review events in respect of the obligations on the course team; the composition of the review panel; the agenda to be followed; and the procedure for consideration of the panel report and the course team’s response thereto, mirrors that in respect of validation events – as set out in section 3 and Appendix B.

Typically, the panel will consider issue relating to curriculum and syllabus design, course management, administration, delivery and resourcing, as at the initial validation event. However, the panel also should be able to see evidence within the documentation of how experience of delivering the existing course scheme has informed the design of the revised version. This should be supported by appropriate evidence (e.g. student retention, progression and achievement data, annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports, student feedback etc). The review will consider the way that such evidence has been used to improve and enhance the course and may embrace the proposed addition/deletion of modules taught as part of the course; consider proposed changes to course/module specifications, including learning outcomes; and generally reflect on how the programme has evolved and its continuing relevance.

Review also will explore the way that such evidence has been used to improve and enhance the course and may embrace the proposed addition/deletion of modules taught as part of the course; consider proposed changes to course/module specifications, including learning outcomes; and generally reflect on how the programme has evolved and its continuing relevance.
outcomes; and generally reflect on how the programme has evolved and its continuing relevance.

Student feedback should form part of the formal agenda for the review. It is common practice for the panellists to meet representatives of both the current student body and alumni either before or during the review and revalidation event to discuss their perspective of the course.

Following the review meeting, a report summarising the proceedings, including the period of time covered by a re-approval and any conditions and recommendations laid down by the panel, will be prepared by the clerk to the event on behalf of AQU. This will be circulated to all panel members for confirmation.

The relevant Associate Dean and course leader are responsible for preparing a response to any conditions and recommendations laid down by the panel in accordance with the timescale imposed. The response (including any consequential amendments to the course scheme) will be distributed to the panel members for approval. All such amendments will be consolidated into a definitive scheme document for the course.

If the decision of the panel following scrutiny of the course proposals is that the scheme should not be re-approved in its present form, reasons for that decision should be provided to enable the Academic Board and the course team to determine how best to modify the proposal.

Courses leading to the awards of validating partners will be subject to the periodic revalidation in accordance with the partner’s documented procedures (see Appendix A). All documentation must be approved by HAQS prior to submission to the institution concerned.

The outcome of all periodic review and revalidation events will be reported to the relevant Board of Studies, Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee and Academic Board. An electronic copy of all documentation should be provided to the Academic Standards and Partnership Officer for inclusion in the CEM central archive.

The Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee will conduct regular reviews of the effectiveness of the process in respect of periodic review and re-approval as a focus for enhancement. Independent advice will be sought as appropriate.

5.1 Reaccreditation by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)

Following periodic review and revalidation, if it is necessary to seek reaccreditation, the course documents will be submitted by the Academic Standards and Partnership Officer to the PSRB concerned in accordance with its requirements.

Such material is subject to approval by HAQS prior to submission. In some instances the body may wish to convene a meeting with representatives of the College to discuss aspects of the course; such meetings will take place in accordance with the institution’s procedures.

The outcome of the deliberations by the PSRB (whether to renew recognition of the award, the period of time covered by any such re-accreditation and any recommendations and/or conditions) will be reported to the relevant Board of Studies, Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee and Academic Board. An electronic copy of all documentation should be provided to the Academic Standards and Partnership Officer for inclusion in the CEM central archive.

Courses accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) are subject to the requirement that an annual submission of data is made in accordance with RICS threshold
standards. These courses must satisfy the RICS threshold standards to maintain their accreditation.

6. Withdrawal of a course or award

Authority to discontinue courses of study rests with either the Academic Board, in terms of the academic viability of the course, or the Principal, who has authority to discontinue a course on grounds of financial viability or resource availability, following consultation with CEM Directors. This may follow a recommendation to withdraw the course, or an award within a course, that has been made at the annual course review meeting and confirmed by the relevant Board of Studies. The decision to discontinue a course will be subsequently reported through the appropriate deliberative committees, together with the supporting advice which will be provided to existing students (see below).

Discontinuation of a course may be either permanent or for a temporary period, as agreed by the Academic Board. Consequently, there will be no further recruitment (unless a subsequent decision is taken to resume provision of the course). However, students already registered will be allowed to continue their studies consistent with the maximum number of individual attempts and the maximum period of registration allowed within the regulations. The relevant Board of Studies will approve the appropriate means of support to be provided to remaining students. Where appropriate, provision may be made for students to transfer to relevant alternative modules or courses, carrying the credit gained up to that point.

Where relevant, notification of this decision to a validating university partner will be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements of the university concerned (see Appendix A).

7. Monitoring of procedures

Regular reports will be made by AQU to the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee on the outcomes of validation events and the effectiveness of the procedures followed. AQU will commission periodic external review of the procedures set down in this Code of Practice chapter for consideration by the deliberative committees and as a focus for enhancement activity and/or the dissemination of good practice.
Appendix A  Related Policies

This statement should be read in conjunction with the following:

QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/FHEQ08.pdf
QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx
CEM – Code of Practice: *Learning and Teaching Strategy*
CEM – Code of Practice: *Assessment Strategy*
CEM – Code of Practice: *Work-Based Learning*
CEM – Code of Practice: *Admissions Policy*
CEM – Code of Practice: *Accreditation of Prior Learning*
CEM – Business Case proforma
CEM – Course Specification Template and Guidance Notes
K:\New Academic Offer\Guidance Docs, Master Forms & Templates\Course Level Templates
CEM – Module descriptor Template and Guidance Notes
K:\New Academic Offer\Guidance Docs, Master Forms & Templates\Course Level Templates
CEM – Terms and Conditions of Registration
University of Reading – Guide to Policies and Procedures for Teaching and Learning
http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/qualitysupport/guide/qual-guidehome.aspx
CIOB – Masters Education Framework (2010)
RICS – Policy and Guidance on University Partnerships (current edition)
Appendix B  The validation panel and the conduct of the validation event

1. The composition of CEM validation panels is as follows:
   - Chair - a senior member of CEM’s staff, or of its academic community, who is independent of the course under consideration.
   - External panel members – AQU selects the external members (normally two) with full consideration given to those proposed by the course team. The external panel members must have no relationship with CEM to make certain of an independent viewpoint and should reflect a balance of direct experience of delivering higher education and practitioner experience within the real estate and construction sectors. Current or recent external examiners will not be used. In appropriate instances the requirements of a relevant PSRB with regard to the composition of the panel will be taken into account.
   - Internal panel members – normally two selected from the CEM academic community and independent of the programme. Such members are required to have experience of delivering programmes within the context of CEM’s delivery model, policies and regulations.
   - A student representative invited by AQU.
   - An AQU representative who will act as secretary to the panel.

2. The validation event will normally be timetabled over one day with the precise timing to be determined by the nature of the course under review. The recommended order of proceedings for the meeting is as follows:
   - Private meeting of the panel to confirm the agenda and identify issues arising from the documentation
   - Meeting with the course team (to an indicative agenda – see below)
   - Meeting with students for similar, existing courses
   - Meeting with the course team to clarify topics discussed with the students (if necessary)
   - Private meeting of the panel to agree its recommendations
   - Feedback to course team

3. The meeting with the course team will typically cover the themes set out in the following indicative agenda with the amount of attention given to each item determined largely by the nature of the course under discussion and the completeness of the supporting documentation:
   - Markets, aims, rationale
   - Fit with CEM mission and strategy and the institutional context
   - Relevant external factors, such as competing awards
   - Entry requirements
   - Structure and scope (the underpinning design principles - coherence)
4. In respect of collaborative ventures, the agenda will also include discussion of the input from partners to the course.

The validation panel is required to ensure that the course:

- Is of the appropriate standard for the level of the award
- Has clearly articulated learning outcomes
- Has a curriculum that makes it possible for the student to achieve those learning outcomes
- Has assessment that is appropriate in terms of size, level and measurement of the learning outcomes
- Places demands on the student appropriate to the level of study
- Provides both academic knowledge, appropriate skills and enhanced employability
- Adheres to CEM regulations and quality assurance and enhancement procedures
- Takes into account appropriate external reference points, including the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, relevant subject benchmark statements and the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

5. The validation panel has the additional responsibility of ensuring that the facilities and resources for the delivery of the course are appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes and equivalent across the student experience of the course. This consideration should embrace, in particular, the following aspects: teaching, learning and assessment; course management; student engagement and support; and the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

6. The validation panel is authorised to reach one of the following recommendations for consideration by the relevant Board of Studies and, ultimately, the Academic Board:

- Approve unconditionally the course and any new or amended modules submitted for approval
- Approve the course and any new or amended modules with conditions that must be met before the approval is actioned. Conditions normally relate to substantive issues, such as academic content, that need to be addressed in the course documentation
• Decline to approve the course with recommendation as to whether it should be resubmitted for validation on a future occasion following further development.

The validation panel may also make recommendations to the course team as to how the course, or the modules contributing to it, may be further improved.

Reasons for any decision to decline to approve a course should be provided to enable the course team to determine how best to modify the proposal.

Courses are not restricted to a set period of approval but must be reviewed at least once every five years in line with the arrangements set down herein for periodic review (see section 5). They may be subject to review earlier within that timeframe if AQU so determines.

7. Following the meeting, the panel secretary prepares a report summarising the proceedings and decisions reached, including any conditions and recommendations laid down by the panel. The purpose of the report is thus to:

• Record the panel’s decision, confirming the award titles and including any conditions to be met or recommendations to be considered
• Provide a commentary on the deliberations leading to those outcomes
• Record the context of the meeting, the key issues raised and any commendations and/or areas of good practice highlighted by the panel

The report is circulated to panel members for confirmation as a correct record of the decisions reached and a true reflection of the discussion at the event. The course team is then given the opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of the report.

The course team’s response to the report will take the form of an action plan detailing how the team will respond to any conditions and consider any recommendations. If appropriate, the response will be supported by revised course and module specifications and will show how the actions are to be tracked through the CEM deliberative committees.

AQU, in consultation with the chair and panel members, as appropriate, will determine whether the action plan sets out a comprehensive response (i.e. that any conditions have been met and recommendations properly considered) ahead of its referral to the appropriate Board of Studies and the Academic Board for formal approval. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee will be invited to comment on any matters relating to the student learning experience.

Thereafter, the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee will sign off any conditions as they are met and actions will be updated via the annual monitoring report (see section 4).