Guidance for Programme Approval:

External Adviser

Scope

All taught programmes leading to an award of City University London

To be read in conjunction with

Quality Manual section 3
Guidance for External Advisers involved in Programme Approval

The Programme Approval process at City is made up of four stages. The first two, a School and then a University Committee, consider an outline proposal of the programme with information about the market and competitors, proposed mode of delivery and budget. The main focus is the strategic fit of the proposal with the School and University plans. Other considerations include market viability, resource requirements, academic standards and quality matters, and financial viability.

Once a proposal has been approved at Stage 1, the Programme Team is in a position to develop the programme more fully, including the development of programme and module specifications and consideration of student support and learning resources matters. This will normally be completed no less than three weeks prior to the Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC) meeting, which forms the School Stage 2 part of the process.

Three weeks prior to the meeting, you will be sent a copy of the documentation collated by the Programme Team in support of the proposal. This will include:

- Full proposal information via the Stage 2 Approval form
- Stage 1 University Programme Approval report
- Programme and module specifications
- Draft programme handbook
- Any other documentation the Programme Team wishes to include (e.g. letter of support from PSRB/NHS Trust etc)

This documentation will form the basis of the discussion at the School PARC meeting which you will normally attend.

The main responsibility of the External Adviser is to provide objective and external scrutiny of the programme content as a subject specialist. This may include consideration of external reference points, such as QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and/or relevant PSRB requirements or competencies, and FHEQ levels. Additionally, the External Adviser should draw on their knowledge of current developments within the field and the HE sector as well as comparable programmes at any other institutions known. Where this role is undertaken by an external practitioner, please draw on relevant knowledge from the industry/professional area.

You may wish to use the report template to guide your initial scrutiny of the programme documentation as it includes a number of suggestions of areas for consideration.

On the day of the meeting, the Committee will engage in peer scrutiny of the proposal. Where possible, any issues, concerns or suggestions you have should be raised at the meeting prior to inclusion in the written report. This will support development and enhancement of the programme before the final University Programme Approval Committee.

We ask you to submit your report to Academic Services within four weeks. During this time, the Programme Team will be amending and modifying the programme documentation based on the discussions and points raised at the PARC meeting. The University Committee will consider the proposal submission, paying particular attention to your report, to any recommendations or suggestions and whether or not these are reflected in the programme documentation.
It is important that, as much as possible, the views expressed in the report have been raised and discussed with the Programme Team at the meeting so that they will be able to address these before the final meeting.

Academic Services will review your report and may contact you if we have any follow up questions. Your report will then be circulated to the Stage 2 University Programme Approval Committee with updated programme documentation from the Programme Team.

Timeline of involvement of External Adviser

- Approached by proposing Programme Team/Programme Director prior to the initial submission of proposal. This could happen at any time during the year, although it is anticipated that this would usually take place between August and October for a programme planning to start in September of the following year.
- The report template and other information will be sent to you by Academic Services.
- 3 weeks before Stage 2 School Programme Approval and Review Committee meeting – you should receive all of the documentation.
- Stage 2 School PARC meeting takes place
- 4 weeks after Stage 2 School PARC meeting – deadline for submission of report to Academic Services. Payment of the fee and expenses will be actioned by Academic Services on receipt of the report.
- After submission of report – you may be contacted by Academic Services with follow-up questions.

If you have any queries about the Programme Approval process and your role within it, please do not hesitate to contact Jessica West in Academic Services.