



**CITY UNIVERSITY  
LONDON**

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**Guidance for Programme Approval:**

***Student Representatives***

**Scope**

*All taught programmes leading to an award of City University London*

**To be read in conjunction with**

*Quality Manual section 3*

## **Guidance for Student Representatives involved in Programme Approval**

The programme approval process was re-developed in June 2011 to provide greater opportunities for both formal and informal student involvement. For example, there are opportunities for a student representative to sit on their School Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC) and the Student Union President or Vice-President (Education) is a member of the University Stage 2 Programme Approval Committee. Additionally, proposing Programme Teams are advised to seek more informal student input.

The University places a significant value on input provided by students and continues to look for ways to enhance the involvement of students in the programme approval process.

Some guidance, below, has been developed to support students undertaking a Committee role, at either Stage 1 or 2. For further information or advice, please contact Jessica West in Student and Academic Services or the SU Vice-President (Education).

### Guidance for Student Committee Member

Students are a key part of our programme development process. We hope that your involvement will assist in ensuring that student views and the student experience are prominent in consideration of programme and programme amendment proposals.

#### *What is Programme Approval?*

All new programme proposals and significant programme amendments are required to go through the Programme Approval process before they can run. The process has four main stages, a School and a University Stage 1, followed by a School and a University Stage 2. The School meetings are undertaken by the School Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC).

The process is designed to allow for institutional oversight over new or amended provision while also providing opportunities for development and enhancement through internal and external peer review.

Each stage of the process serves a different function from consideration of market and viability at School Stage 1, consideration of the proposal's fit with the University strategy at University Stage 1, through to close scrutiny of programme content by an External Adviser at the Stage 2 School PARC.

The final stage of the process is in place to allow for institutional oversight and assurance of the final proposal. Through reading the Stage 1 report and the External Adviser's report, the Committee is able to gauge the development of the programme proposal as well as being assured that it is of an appropriate standard. Additionally, this stage undertakes a last check of resource requirements and authorisations, and student-facing documentation.

#### *How do we do this?*

Through the scrutiny of documentation prepared by the proposing Programme Team, which includes a rationale for the programme, market and competitor analysis, information on key learning resources as well as the programme and module specifications, the committees are able to consider the viability of the proposal and its resource requirements, its quality and standards and its fit with School and University strategies. Additionally, there are opportunities

for discussion with the Programme Team throughout the process, which allows for development and enhancement of the programme as well as to explain any queries or questions the committees may have.

Programme Teams are also required to identify an External Adviser who attends the School Stage 2 PARC and provides a report to the University Stage 2 Committee. This provides the University with external assurance that the programme is in line with nationwide provision and is of an appropriate standard.

#### *Why do we do this?*

This process exists in order to allow the University to be sure that its educational offer is both relevant to its strategy and vision and is of a high quality. It is also a requirement of the University as set out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Additionally, it allows the University to ensure that the proposal has considered external reference points in its design, such as the Subject Benchmark Statements published by QAA, is coherent and is viable. It also allows for institutional oversight and consideration of the proposed student experience of the new programme.

#### *How are students involved?*

During the development of a programme or amendment proposal, there are a number of ways in which students may be involved.

During Stage 1 and the development of the proposal, any of the following means may be used to gain student input:

- Discussions with the Programme Team
- A survey of prospective student groups
- Student membership of the School Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC)

Additionally, the Student Union President or Vice-President (Education) is a member of the Stage 2 University Programme Approval Committee.

#### *What is the role of the committees?*

The committees at both School and University level should support the development of high quality and relevant provision through consideration of proposals. The School PARC will consider matters at a School level, while the University committees will undertake institutional oversight in order to be able to recommend proposals for sign off by the DVC.

The committees will also ensure that all the relevant Professional Services authorizations have been obtained, such as Timetabling and ISL, and that all of the student-facing documentation is prepared.

#### *What is the role of a student representative?*

The student representative role on the committees is to provide a student-focused view of the proposals, in particular concerning the student experience and quality issues that relate to this.

As well as the considerations made by each Committee as a whole (see above), you may also wish to consider the following:

- Is the student facing documentation (Programme/Module Specifications, Programme Handbook) of a high quality? Does it look like it would be useful? Is all the relevant information included?
- Are there adequate resources to support the students in their learning?
- Has there been any consideration of student support?
- Do you think that the Learning, Teaching and Assessment methods are appropriate? Are they inspiring? Is there appropriate use of Moodle?
- How does this proposal relate to other relevant programmes within the institution of which you are aware?

You will not be expected to critically scrutinize the content – a subject specialist external to the university undertakes this role and submits a report to the University Stage 2 Committee.

You should start by reading through all of the documentation which will be provided to you at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting. For University Committees, the Secretary from Student and Academic Services may also send some accompanying notes.

At the meeting, you will be involved in the discussions about each programme. If you are sitting on a School PARC, the Committee will decide on a recommendation to the University Committee. Similarly, the University Committee will decide on a recommendation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for each proposal.

The recommendation will be one of the following:

- Approval of the programme (with or without recommendations).
- Conditional approval of the programme (with or without recommendations). The Chair of the Committee will discuss and confirm the timeframe with the Programme Director at the conclusion of the approval meeting, which will ensure that any modifications to the programme can be completed in advance of students registering for the programme.
- Rejection of the proposal.

The discussions and outcomes from PARC meetings are recorded in the minutes.

After University Committee meetings, the Secretary will write a report about each proposal and the Programme Team will be required to provide a response to any conditions and recommendations that the Committee has made. The response will usually only be provided to the Chair and the Secretary.

*When are the meetings?*

The dates for School PARC meetings are set by the School so they will be able to provide you with details.

The University Stage 2 Programme Approval Committee meetings for 2012-13 have been set as follows:

Wednesday 14 November  
Wednesday 27 February  
Wednesday 8 May  
Wednesday 5 June

*What do I do if I have any questions?*

If you have any questions or queries about the process or a particular proposal, please contact Jessica West in Student and Academic Services.