



Academic Approval

Regional University Network Supplement

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Notes:

v1.1	Addition of further appendices relating to learning outcomes
v1.2	Addition of information relating to periodic review
v1.3	Addition of reference to 1-year due diligence period for PG provision, off-site and trans-national delivery.
V2.0	Full revision to align with regulatory changes and Academic Approval guidance

1 CONTEXT

This document has been developed to accompany the University's guidance document on Academic Approval in order to contextualise the guidance for colleges within the University's Regional University Network.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Approval guidance document. It does not duplicate all the information within the *Academic Approval* guidance and must not therefore be considered on its own as a definitive guide to Scheme Approval Board activity.

The sections of this document map to those within the Academic Approval guidance document to contextualise and provide additional information. The corresponding sections of both documents should be read in preparing for an event.

Where a section has been left blank then it is the case that the section within the Academic Approval guidance stands without any need for contextualisation or additional information.

The information within this document supports the development and approval of new programmes of study, leading to validated awards of the University.

In doing so, this document provides detail and context to the University's regulations for the approval and review of new awards. The requirements of these documents must therefore be followed.

All additional documentation referred to can be found in the University's online Quality Manual, which is located here: http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/prs/index_98248CDA26E242CAB9C5523225A508DA.htm. This includes documents with regard to [Institutional Recognition](#), Periodic Review and [Validation](#).

The Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement (QSRE) team, which is part of the Registrar and Secretary's Office, ensures that the Quality Manual contains the most up to date versions of all guidance documents and templates. QSRE seek to continually enhance the guidance and templates it provides and so welcomes feedback on the documentation. Feedback on this or any other QSRE documentation can be sent to QSRE@leedsmet.ac.uk.

2 DEFINITIONS

The University has published definitions of some of the terms commonly used with regard to the approval, review and management of its academic portfolio, which can be found in the Academic Approval Guidance.

3 APPROVED SCHEMES OR COURSES

3.1 INSTITUTIONAL COMPATIBILITY

The Regional University Network is a group of Colleges that have entered into a relationship with the University. In entering into a partnership, the University is satisfied that the College has similar aims and vision for its development of higher education.

The formal process of institutional recognition of a College as a partner assures the University that the College has the ability and resources to deliver higher education courses.

As part of the process, the University will normally allow the College to lead on the development of new courses, subject to agreed guidelines, such as the University's regulatory framework, the Scheme documentation and the Services Agreement (for College- or University-enrolled Students). Such guidance is mapped to the QAA *Code of practice*, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review.

3.2 WHAT THE UNIVERSITY MUST ENSURE THE COLLEGE DOES

In principle, Academic Approval is a process by which the University is assured that a new course:

- Meets both institutions' goals and missions
- Has clear and appropriate aims
- Has an appropriate level of intellectual challenge and fits into national and European qualifications frameworks
- Conforms with external benchmarks (QAA subject and foundation degree benchmarks), the requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies and employers
- Shows appropriate progression with increasing demand on the student during the programme of study
- Is appropriately balanced with respect to academic and practical elements, personal development and academic outcomes, breadth and depth in the curriculum
- Is coherent so that the overall experience of a student has a logic and an intellectual integrity that is related to clearly defined purposes
- If a foundation degree, has a clearly identified and agreed top-up route to an honours degree
- Has an appropriate award title, which has clarity and reflects the intended learning outcomes of the programme
- Is clear regarding how the intended learning outcomes of the programme will be promoted, demonstrated and assessed

In addition, the process of validation (of delivery) needs to take place in order that the University can be satisfied:

- That the necessary resources are available to support the programme
- That a scheme or course can be appropriately managed and delivered by a recognized institution.
- That the necessary mechanisms are in place to ensure all research undertaken is performed ethically and in line with the

University's [Policy, Framework Principles and Practices for Research Ethics](#)

The processes within this guidance are intended to ensure that the above needs are met and are aligned to the QAA *Code of practice*, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review, and the guidelines on programme specifications.

Development of new courses must adhere to the requirements of the College's Foundation Degree or Higher Education Scheme, e.g. if the College operates a Foundation Degree Scheme, it may not develop awards at Level 6 (e.g. bachelor's degrees) or higher.

If a College operates a Higher Education Scheme, it may wish to develop taught postgraduate programmes (at Level 7) or wish to deliver University awards at another location (off-site delivery) or overseas (trans-national education). In both cases, this is subject to the approval of the University via the Strategic Planning Approval process, in addition to a year's period of due diligence in order for the University to ensure the College has the capacity to undertake these forms of delivery.

These requirements are articulated in more detail within the Scheme Document and Services Agreement, in addition to the following document:

How to develop and gain approval to deliver an award on an off-site or trans-national basis, which can be found in section E of the Quality Manual.

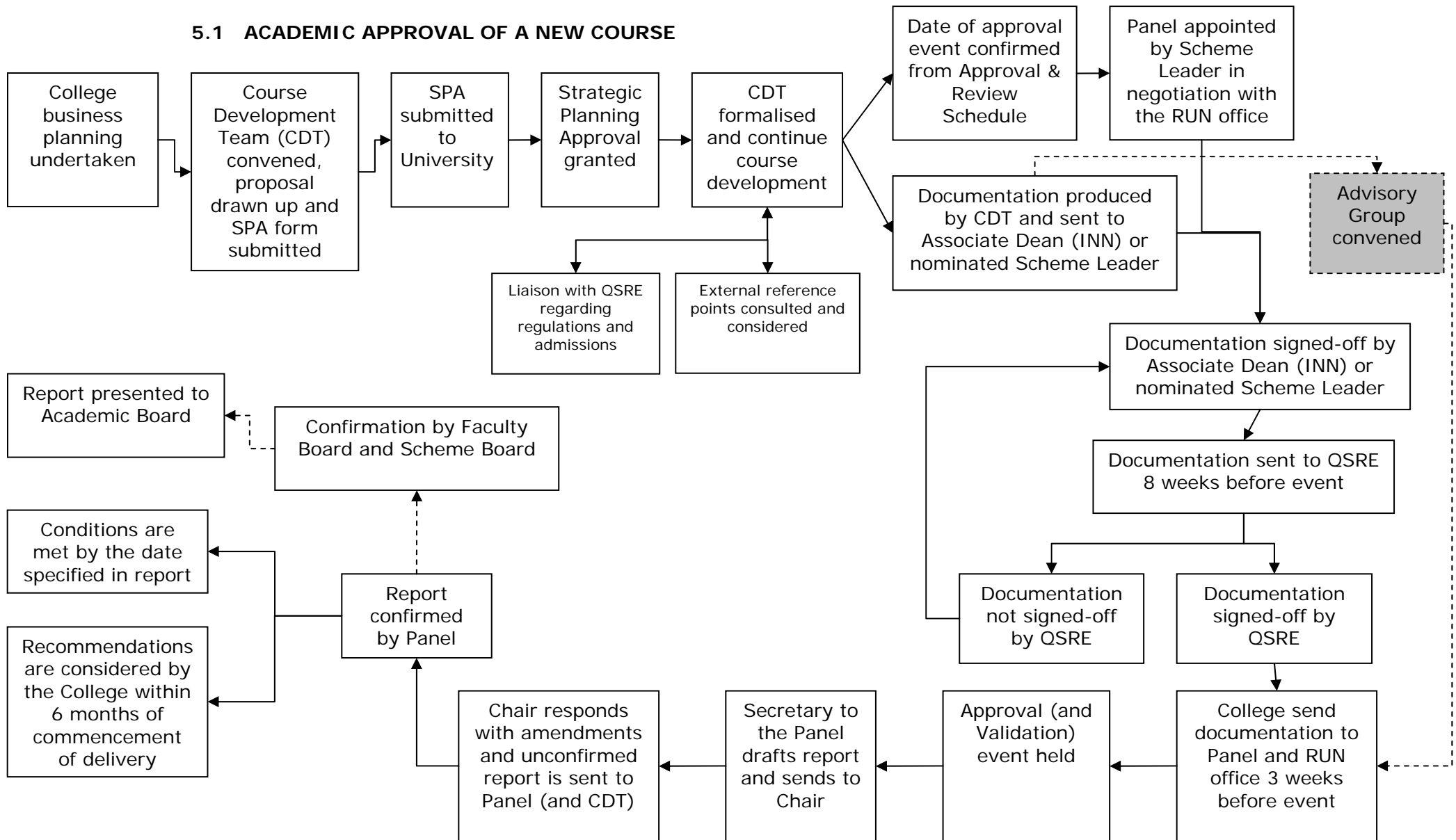
4 NOTES ON ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

The University's Academic Principles and Regulations are available at:
http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/prs/index_CE2025E107C94ED2BE3D6A8FF0D7C729.htm.

The Academic Principles and Regulations are the definitive source of information regarding Academic Approval and related processes. Any new scheme or course must be developed in accordance with the regulatory framework. Any questions with regard to regulatory interpretations may be directed to the RUN office or the QSRE Team.

5 PROCESS DIAGRAM

5.1 ACADEMIC APPROVAL OF A NEW COURSE



6 PRE-EVENT PROCESS

When considering the development of a new course, the following points must be considered:

How does the proposed course meet:

- Employer demand
- Portfolio gap
- Market research
- Trend forecasts
- National initiatives
- The College's mission and aims

How will the design of your course be influenced by:

- Student profile
- Locations for delivery
- Potential numbers
- Funding
- Routes to top-up to honours for foundation degrees

Having considered the above, a title and some general ideas of academic content should begin to emerge.

To help develop this the following questions should be considered:

- What should graduates to be able to do?
- What skills and knowledge would employers expect from these graduates?
- What does the subject sector have to say about this area?
- What skills and knowledge will students need to be successful at the top-up (foundation degree only)?

The following reference documents that should be considered at this stage include:

- The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/default.asp>
- Foundation degree qualification benchmark
(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/foundationDegree/benchmark/FDQB.pdf>)
- QAA subject benchmark statements
(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp>)
- Subject sector skills councils
<http://www.sscalliance.org/SSCs/LinkstoSSCs.aspx>
- Aims, objectives and general outcomes of the scheme (and route or pathway)

All these discussions should help to determine an award title, and in broad terms, the aims of the course. Hopefully some module titles can now be put together, bearing in mind the necessary inclusion of the scheme Personal and Professional Development (PPD) and Work-Related Learning (WRL) modules.

Once this initial development has taken place, the next step is "Strategic Planning Approval".

6.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROVAL

Strategic Planning Approval (SPA) is the process all proposed University award titles and award modes of delivery must undergo in order to be included within the University's academic portfolio. This process ensures the award is consistent with the University's vision and values.

This process involves completion of the SPA form, which can be found in the Quality Manual.

Applications for SPA are considered for approval at the following levels:

- Regional University Network office
- Faculty Quality and Standards Committee
- University (SPA Review Group and Registrar and Secretary)

If there are no errors on the forms or issues relating to the proposal, it will take between two and three months for full approval to be granted by the University. However, if there are questions about the content of the form or incomplete information, each time the SPA form is referred back at a meeting, it is likely to be returned with a request for more information, and will result in the process taking longer. The SPA must be approved by the University before a Scheme Approvals Board can be planned and prepared for. This ensures that resources are not invested unnecessarily in the development of a new course, should SPA not be granted.

Formal approval can only be considered as granted when the University's Registrar and Secretary's Office, through the QSRE team, issues a memo in this respect.

Following the granting of SPA at University level the course can be advertised, with "subject to approval/validation" following the title.

The University has a deadline of 30 January of each year for the receipt of SPA forms for awards due to be delivered in full-time mode in September of the same year or January the following year. For part-time or employer-led awards there may be some flexibility with this deadline. However, Colleges must inform the University as soon as possible, should these circumstances be likely to occur.

6.2 APPROVAL AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

It is a requirement of the University Regulations (section B.2.2.2) that each Faculty, and therefore College, provide the Registrar and Secretary with a schedule of planned approval and review activities on an annual basis by 30th September. This schedule should be sent to the Head of QSRE in order to facilitate entry into the QSRE team's quality database.

Approval and Review Schedules should include a full list of the College's current and planned provision with indication as to which courses are due for approval, periodic review or withdrawal and confirmation as to all the courses to be considered by the annual review process. Approval and Review Schedules should be sent to QSRE@leedsmet.ac.uk.

Colleges should also provide the Head of QSRE with a revised Approval and Review Schedule by 31st January, which should include any new provision for which SPA has been submitted or is planned.

6.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEME OR COURSE

Once the SPA form has been submitted and has been approved at University level, it is time to start writing the course. Now is also the time to formalise the Course Development Team (CDT) and plan some meetings. Set dates early on as they can always be cancelled if they are not needed and allow at least twice the time anticipated.

The CDT should include:

- Members of staff who will teach on the award
- At least one members of the library or learning resources team
- Someone with experience of developing higher education awards at the same or higher academic level to the course being developed
- Someone from the College quality office who understand the regulations for awards

The CDT may include, or seek advice from:

- A member or members of technical support staff (if there are specialist facilities involved)
- Student on a similar award, feeder course (e.g. Foundation Degree for a top-up Honours Degree) or past students who expressed an interest in the area
- Potential employers who can give you advice (N.B. if an employer is used, the same individual cannot sit on an approval/validation panel)
- An academic in the field, external to the College; maybe an external examiner would cast an eye over the documentation (N.B. if an external academic adviser is used, the same individual cannot sit on an approval/validation panel)

It is important that the team is used in full and that the writing is not carried out by one individual; team members will have their specialist subject knowledge and can act as critical friends to each other.

At the same time it is useful to build up a library of useful reference documents. These will include:

- Scheme (and route/pathway) documents
- The College's assessment, learning and teaching strategy (or equivalent) for higher education
- Foundation degree qualification benchmark (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/foundationDegree/benchmark/FDOB.pdf>)
- Subject benchmark statements
- (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp>)
- Honours degree subject benchmark statements:
- (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/honours/default.asp>)
- Relevant subject sector skills council documents and/or any professional statutory or regulatory body requirements

- University academic regulations:
(http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/metoffice/ags/index_framework.htm)
- Bloom's taxonomy (to help write the learning outcome statements at the correct level)
<http://www.educationforum.co.uk/HA/bloom.htm>
- QAA *Code of practice*, Section 7
(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp>)

Further document templates that will be helpful could include:

- Programme specification, which can be found in the Quality Manual
- Module specification, which can be found in the Quality Manual
- Bloom's taxonomy
- University *Taxonomy of assessment domains*, which can be found in the Quality Manual
- PPD and WRL module specifications
- Delivery patterns, which can be found in the Quality Manual Course Document template
- Assessment grids, which can be found in the Quality Manual Course Document template
- Learning outcomes / benchmarks statements grids, which can be found in the Quality Manual
- Staff CVs which should include evidence of recent scholarly activity, conferences attended and other staff development, which can be found in the Quality Manual Statement of Resources template

When you start writing the course, look at the programme learning outcomes and consider:

- Dividing them up amongst the modules to be delivered, making the content equal as possible across all modules
- The order in which the outcomes should be delivered, and bear in mind what is FHEQ Level 4 (1st year of a full-time foundation degree) and what is going to be in the second year (L5) and the honours year (L6)
- Remember that some outcomes will be delivered through PPD and WRL
- Remember that modules must be 15 credit points or multiples thereof (often used for dissertation or research projects) for undergraduate programmes and 20 credit points or multiples thereof for postgraduate programmes
- Some honours benchmark statements now include an extended piece of research or writing, such as a project or dissertation

In developing the course the CDT will need to ensure the following questions, which the Panel will be expected to make an academic judgement on, have been addressed:

- Has the course has been developed with sufficient reference to the:
 - Framework for Higher Education Qualifications?
 - Subject Benchmarks?

- PSRB requirements?
 - University Academic Principles and Regulations?
- Do module learning outcomes map to programme learning outcomes?
- Do learning and teaching strategies for the programme align with the College's and, therefore, University's ALT strategy?
- Has appropriate attention has been given to student workload and the scheduling and balance of assessments on the programme?
- Are placement arrangements appropriate?

Once development of the course is under way consideration need to be given to the convening of the Advisory Group, which acts as a critical friend to the CDT.

7 ADVISORY GROUP

The Academic Principles and Regulations state that all new course developments require an Advisory Group to be convened. Guidance for which can be found in the Academic Approval document.

Within Colleges the Advisory Group will include:

- A senior academic member of staff from the College but beyond the subject area, route or pathway developing the provision (Chair)
- An academic member of staff from within the subject area, route or pathway developing the provision but beyond the scheme or course under development
- A member(s) of support staff from the College. It is recommended that this be someone with either quality assurance and/or regulatory expertise.

Advisory Groups may include additional members as the CDT and/or Scheme/Route/Pathway Leader sees fit. However, the above membership should be considered the minimum.

Advisory Groups are expected to meet at least once with the CDT. Advisory Groups may meet more than once dependent on the nature of the development, the experience of the CDT, etc.

It is recommended that [the] one meeting of the CDT with the Advisory Group take the form of a mock-Panel or pre-approval event. The Advisory Group are expected to act in the role of critical friends to the CDT to help identify potential issues and/or questions the Scheme Approval Board might raise. This provides the CDT with the opportunity to enhance the documentation and give consideration to pertinent issues in advance of meeting with the Panel at the Scheme Approval Board.

In order to provide consistency within the process it is expected that the Chair of the Advisory Group will also be a Panel member at the Academic Approval event. This supports the developmental remit of academic approval by providing continuity between the Advisory Group activity and that of the Scheme Approval Board.

The Advisory Group may be convened either before or after the submission of documentation to QSRE 8 weeks prior to the Scheme Approval Board. However, the Advisory Group should be convened so as to allow the CDT sufficient time to enhance the documentation as a result of discussions with the Advisory Group prior to sending it to the Panel 3 weeks before the event.

Some notes should be kept from the Advisory Group meeting, which should be made available to the Chair of the Scheme Approval Board prior to the event.

8 DOCUMENTATION FOR ACADEMIC APPROVAL

The University's Quality Manual contains relevant templates with regard to the following documentation.

8.1 SIGNING-OFF BY THE ASSOCIATE DEAN (INN) OR SCHEME LEADER

All approval documentation must be signed-off by the Associate Dean (Innovation North), Scheme Leader or other senior member of academic staff, e.g. the Route/Pathway Leader within which the course has been developed. The procedure for signing-off the documentation will be agreed between each College and the RUN office. The member of staff signing-off the documentation must not be the Chair of the Scheme Approval Board at which the course will be considered.

The signing-off may take the form of a memorandum, the template for which is on the Quality Manual, or may be included in the briefing statement if the Scheme Leader has compiled that. The signing-off must confirm that the course has been developed with due consideration of regulations of Leeds Metropolitan University by the CDT. It must also confirm that the course and its documentation have been duly considered by the Scheme/ Route/ Pathway Leader prior to submission to the Panel and that they are happy for it to be considered for approval.

8.2 BRIEFING STATEMENT

This provides an introduction to the course, setting it in the context of the College, the Scheme and Route/Pathway as relevant. It should provide Panel members with a short explanation of the documentation provided and a brief overview of the nature of the event.

8.3 SCHEME DOCUMENT

The College should ensure that external Panel members are provided with a copy of the Scheme Document and the briefing statement (above) should give some explanation as to how the course fits within the Scheme.

8.4 SCHEME APPROVAL EVENT REPORT

If there was any relevant discussion at approval regarding the consideration of Scheme modules then the event report should be made available to the Panel on the day.

8.5 COURSE DOCUMENT

All new courses must have a Course Document. The Course Document addresses the context, philosophy and rationale for the programme including its aims and objectives, structure, management, organisation and regulations that apply to the course. Additional or specific PSRB requirements are also included within this document.

Whereas the Programme Specification should be student-facing in how it is written, the Course Document is an internal document that details how the course will be managed and its quality assured on an ongoing basis.

The Course Document should include the following, which may be duplicated within the Programme Specification:

- Module delivery patterns for full- and part-time modes of study

- Assessment methods mapping grid
- Assessment schedule mapping
- Mapping of module learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes
- QAA or sector skills subject benchmark mapping
- Key skills mapping

8.6 STATEMENT OF RESOURCES

The statement of resources will cover both the human (CVs) and physical resources to assure the Panel that there is sufficient resource available to successfully deliver the course and safeguard the student experience, within reason, i.e. that the course is not over-reliant on any individual for successful delivery.

It is expected that staff delivering a course will have a qualification one academic level above that which they are delivering. For example, a lecturer delivering a foundation degree would be expected to have an honours degree, a lecturer delivering an honours degree would be expected to have a masters degree. Panels may make exceptions for individuals if there is evidence that they are currently undertaking a qualification at the required level or that the overwhelming balance of the course team's expertise is at the required level and they can be assured that appropriate development, supervision and moderation will be in place for team members without the appropriate level of qualification.

8.7 PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

The programme specification is a student-centred, public document that has to be available to students and prospective students as well as other stakeholders.

QAA has produced guidance on how to complete programme specifications, which can be found at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/programSpec/default.asp>

The QAA student guide to programme specifications states:

“Programme specifications focus on single programmes of study (or courses), and outline the intended knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes of a student completing that course. A programme specification should also give details of teaching and assessment methods as well as linking the course to the framework for HE qualifications. Universities and colleges of HE should have programme specifications for the courses that they offer.

“With both programme specifications and benchmark statements there has been concern that 'specifying' what a student will have learnt at the end of the course or programme might inhibit innovation within that course. For this reason it is important not to see programme specifications or benchmark statements as 'tick lists'. They offer broad indications of the types of things students might be expected to learn and the types of skills and abilities they might be expected to gain. This shouldn't reduce any of the flexibility of HE programmes or courses but should give a

broad idea of what might be expected from a student's time in higher education."

(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/students/guides/UnderstandCourses.asp>)

The University's template for programme specifications can be found in **Error! Reference source not found.** the Quality Manual.

The University's online repository of programme and module specifications can be accessed at:

<https://pams.leedsmet.ac.uk/main/index.htm>.

It is a requirement that following unconditional approval of an award the completed (and updated) programme specification should be made publicly available, preferably linked to any online prospectus entry for the course.

8.8 MODULE SPECIFICATIONS

All modules must be written using the University's module specification template, which can be found in the Quality Manual.

Learning outcomes

- Aim for no more than 5 learning outcomes per 15 credit-point module.
- Consider which skills outcomes can be developed and/or assessed.
- Use Bloom's taxonomy and the University's taxonomy of assessment domains to get the outcome statements at the right level.

The University's Assessment, Learning and Teaching directorate has also produced a booklet called *Writing and Using Good Learning Outcomes* (D. Baume; 2009), which is intended to support colleagues developing modules and can be found here:

http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/Learning_Outcomes.pdf

Indicative content

Make the indicative content reasonably general and broad in order to allow for some flexibility and responsiveness within the curriculum without the documentation having to constantly undergo minor modifications.

Teaching and learning strategy

- Consider the College's ALT strategy.
- Consider how the topics would be best delivered.
- Remember that students will thrive if they get involvement and variety of delivery.
- Part-time students may have a wealth of experience to bring to the course; consider how this can be best used.
- Consider using some blended-learning to increase the flexibility.

Assessment

- Be creative!
- Consider what might reflect good practice in the working environment.
- Use some group work but try to have individual accounts to allow for variation in input.

- Consider how formative assessment or a small part of assessment early in the delivery will be used to build confidence.
- Consider assessment methods where the risk of plagiarism is minimized.
- Consider assessment methods on foundation degrees that will prepare students for the honours top-up.
- Assessment must take into consideration the notional 150 hours effort for a 15 credit-point module (i.e. 10 hours per credit point).
- There can be more than one component of assessment but if there are a large number of components there will be difficulty in showing depth of understanding rather than simple recall.
- Unless otherwise stated, the total assessment for the module will have one mark (i.e. one component), and the student must attempt all components of the assessment (as per University regulations) and gain 40% overall to pass the module.
- Try to stage assessment across the semester.
- Be prepared to modify your assessment prior to approval/validation if the assessment diet is unbalanced across the semester, year or award.

Reading lists

- Involve the librarian and ask advice; they will know what resources the college already has in the area and will often help in compiling a list, including electronically accessible documents
- The reading list for each module:
 - Should include core texts
 - Should include recent texts
 - Should include some reference to review publications and journals
 - Should be in Harvard format (ask your librarian to check)
 - Should be long enough to provide range and depth but not so long that the library will use all its allocation purchasing the reading lists for one module

Issues for further consideration

- Do the modules fit together?
- Is the delivery pattern appropriate for full- and part-time students?
- Can all the learning outcomes be delivered and assessed?
- Are the learning outcomes consistent with the level?
- Is there a range of teaching and learning methods?
- Is there a variety of assessments?
- Is there a reasonable assessment load, both formative and summative?
- Is there some early assessment in year 1 (level 4) to give confidence?
- Are skills important to the subject area assessed?
- Reviewing all the grids;
 - Delivery patterns
 - Assessment methods
 - Teaching and learning methods
 - Key skills
 - Programme learning outcomes
 - Mapping to subject benchmark statements
 - Subject sector skills and PSRB requirements

At this stage, there should be some negotiation within the CDT to ensure that there is a variety of assessment and that the assessment load is roughly similar across modules.

Panels should be provided with all module specifications for the new course, including Scheme/Route/Pathway modules already in approval, ordered by level to support consideration of the proposed course.

8.9 ADMISSIONS PROFILE

The University would only expect an Admissions Profile to be produced for University-enrolled provision. The template for Admissions Profiles can be found in the Quality Manual.

The Course Document and Programme Specification should both contain contextualised admissions information for the course.

8.10 COURSE HANDBOOK

The University has a course handbook template and all courses within the University are expected to produce a course handbook. The course handbook template is updated annually and made available to Colleges.

However, as much of the information therein is specific to the University it is not expected that Colleges use the University template but refer to it as an example. It is expected that Colleges will make available to students a comparable set of information through a College-specific course or student handbook.

9 GUIDANCE FOR THE ARRANGEMENT OF APPROVAL EVENTS

Within the Regional University Network Academic Approval is considered by Scheme Approval Boards.

A checklist has been produced to support the planning of approval events, which is in the Quality Manual.

9.1 FORMAT OF THE EVENT

Colleges are responsible for the arrangement of the Scheme Approval Board, in negotiation with the RUN office.

Sufficient time must be allocated for the arrangement of the event, the appointment of a Panel and the writing and submission of appropriate documentation. The University may take the decision to postpone an event, where these arrangements have not been made appropriately.

The form of the event and the programme are subject to negotiation and agreement prior to the event.

Reception

It is useful to inform the College reception desk of the names of external members of the Panel, the time and venue of the event.

In addition

- Car parking spaces may need to be reserved.
- Consider whether the Panel members need to be collected from reception and be guided to the room?
- Consider whether the Panel members need to be welcomed to the room and be advised of the relevant facilities (e.g. toilet), how to contact anyone, any planned fire alarm tests, *etc.*

Room

The room should be large enough to accommodate the Panel and the CDT in comfort. It should have space for coats and bags and should be secure if the event is lasting all day.

There should be sufficient space for tea/coffee and lunch as appropriate.

Name Plates

It is a good idea to make simple name plates for everyone who will be present, A4 card can be used to make 3-4 name plates and it helps everyone to know who is who, as introductions are often forgotten. Have a few spares with a marker pen for the unexpected.

9.2 PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Chair	Usually the Scheme Leader, or may be delegated. The Chair may be a University representative.
College representative	Two additional members of the college staff, these may be route leaders, section head / faculty head from an area not involved
College representative	

	with the course, or maybe a College Course Leader not involved with the course.
University representative	Leeds Metropolitan University representative with approval event experience. Occasionally, there may be an additional representative from a University faculty, dependent on the provision being considered.
External academic representative	An external academic currently working in the subject area at an appropriate level for an institution that is independent of Leeds Metropolitan University and the College
External industry representative	A representative from the sector within which graduates might be expected to work
Representative from PSRB	If required. If a PSRB representative is in attendance then they will double as the external industry representative

The following will be in attendance at the Scheme Approval Board to support the Panel and the event.

Secretary to the Panel	If the College has been a partner less than one year then the RUN office will provide a secretary for events covering provision at levels 4-6, QSRE will provide a secretary for anything at level 7 or above. If the College has been a partner more than one year then the College will provide a secretary, who must have attended the University training for secretaries, for events covering provision at levels 4-6, QSRE will provide a secretary for anything at level 7 or above.
Quality representative	Higher education quality representative from the College

Ex-officio members of a Scheme Approval Board may include:

- College Principal
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Secretary
- Registrar and Secretary's Office, QSRE team representative

While it is helpful for the Chair to have some sympathy with the subject area, it is more important that the Chair is competent at chairing such meetings.

Any external members of the Panel should not have substantial links with the University or College, substantial personal links with anyone at the College and should not have been involved with the development of the scheme or course. Nor can any external Panel member have worked for the University or an associate college within the past 5 years. This

includes current external examiners and external examiners who have completed their term within the last 5 years.

At least one member of the Panel must be an academic who is external to the University and College. The external academic member of the Panel should have current teaching and assessment expertise in the subject area of the course being considered and have taught to the same academic level as the highest target award.

If finding or identifying suitable external academics is difficult, Foundation Degree Forward (<http://www.fdf.ac.uk/>) and the Higher Education Academy (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>) subject forums can be a useful source.

External academic Panel members can subsequently be nominated as the external examiner for the course being considered.

The external industry representative can be an employer who will be employing graduates, or a representative from the appropriate sector skills council. They will be able to comment on the appropriateness of the award for those wishing employment in their field.

Further guidance for external panel members and guidance for the payment of external panel members' expenses can be found in the Quality Manual.

Whenever an award of the University is being considered for approval or validation there must be representation from the University on the panel. No approval event may proceed without appropriate University representation on the panel.

If the proposed course is at postgraduate level, such as a master's degree, the Panel must also contain a member of academic staff from the corresponding subject area of the University. It is the College's responsibility, in liaison with the RUN office, to approach the respective University faculty. If the course being considered does not correspond directly with a subject discipline within the University, a representative from a closely related subject area should be sought or, alternatively, a member of academic staff with significant experience of assessment, learning and teaching.

The process of organizing a Panel can be long and arduous and it is therefore useful to start contacting potential Panel members as early as possible, as many of these individuals will have already made prior diary commitments many months ahead.

Once the Panel list is complete, this should be included with the documentation pack for the Scheme Approval Board, and should include information such as: title, name, position, institution/company and role on Panel, though the individual arranging the event should also have contact details for each Panel member.

In addition to a Panel, a Secretary to the Panel must be appointed. If the College has been a partner less than one year then the RUN office will provide a secretary for events covering provision at levels 4-6, QSRE will provide a secretary for anything at level 7 or above. If the College has been a partner more than one year then the College will

provide a secretary, who must have attended the University training for secretaries, for events covering provision at levels 4-6, QSRE will provide a secretary for anything at level 7 or above.

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to produce a formal report of the event, liaise with the Course Team and Panel over the meeting of conditions and ensure the Chair signs-off on conditions using the correct template. Templates for both the report and signing-off of conditions are available in the Quality Manual.

9.3 DOCUMENTATION FOR QSRE

The College, via the Scheme Leader, is responsible for submitting event documentation to the Head of QSRE at least eight weeks prior to the Approval event as per B2.4.3 of the Regulations. Documentation should be submitted electronically to QSRE@leedsmet.ac.uk, copying in the RUN office.

The documentation should include the following:

- Briefing Statement
- Scheme Document, if applicable
- Scheme Event report submitted, if applicable
- Course Document, including mapping to QAA and/or sector skills subject benchmarks
- Assessment methods mapping
- Assessment schedule
- Mapping of modules to award learning outcomes completed
- Mapping of key skills
- Statement of Resources, including staff curriculum vitae
- Programme specification
- Module specifications
- PSRB requirements

QSRE are responsible for checking that key documentation and information has been made available for consideration by the Panel. QSRE may take the decision to postpone an event, where these have not been made appropriately.

QSRE will respond to the Scheme Leader within two weeks of documentation being submitted. The response will take the form of a memorandum which will confirm which documents have been received and make one of the following recommendations:

- To recommend that the proposal continues to approval/periodic review.
- To recommend that the proposal continues to approval/periodic review subject to the changes detailed below: (insert action to be taken, whether the changes need to be re-submitted to QSRE including a deadline.)
- To recommend that the proposal DOES NOT continue to approval/ periodic review pending further preparation of documentation. The event will need to be re-scheduled and documentation re-submitted 8 weeks prior to the re-scheduled event in accordance with the Academic Principles and Regulations, B3.3.5.

A copy of this memorandum is included in the Quality Manual.

9.4 DOCUMENTATION FOR THE PANEL

Panel members, including the Secretary to the Panel, and the RUN office should be provided by the College with a hardcopy documentation pack in advance of the event. This should be provided at least 15 working days before the date of the event, in order to allow sufficient time to consider the information and raise any queries in advance of the event. If the provision is at level 7 (masters) or above then an additional copy of the documentation pack should be sent to the QSRE Team. An electronic copy should also be sent to the RUN office.

The documentation pack should be prefaced with a cover sheet and contents page and include the following:

- Memorandum or statement from the Associate Dean (INN), Scheme Leader or other senior member of College staff responsible for signing-off the documentation
- Briefing Statement
- Panel list
- Event programme
- Guidelines for Approval Panel members
- Scheme Document, if applicable
- Scheme Approval event report, if applicable
- Course Document
- Statement of Resources
- Programme specification
- Module specifications
- Course handbook
- Panel questionnaire

Within the above documentation the following must be included:

- Subject Benchmark mapping
- Assessment methods mapping
- Assessment schedule mapping, including indicative weightings
- Mapping of module learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes
- Key skills mapping

Additionally, for external Panel members the College should include:

- An invitation letter
- Request for any dietary requirements with regard to hospitality
- Map to the College and directions to the event
- External Panel member expenses claim form

It is desirable, but not essential, to request that Panel members forward any comments to the Chair of the Panel in advance of the event in order to enable the Chair to make an initial assessment of the programme before the event. The Chair may also wish to forward these comments to the Course Development Team before the event, in order for Team members to prepare for any areas of query.

9.5 EVENT PROGRAMME

The programme for the event should be drawn up by the College in liaison with the Chair of the Panel.

The programme for the day must include the following items, unless stated as optional:

Meeting	Purpose	Composition
Private meeting of the Panel (30-60 min)	To discuss award and formulate areas of questioning. This is the first opportunity for the Panel to meet; they need to get to know each other, assemble the areas of questioning and to allocate both the running order of questions, and who will ask them.	Panel
Meeting with Senior Management representatives (20-40 min)	To discuss the rationale behind the course, its position with regard to College strategy and the broader academic portfolio and the human and physical resources required for successful delivery	Panel Senior Management representatives
Tour of specialist facilities (optional) (15-30 min or longer if there is a need to move between sites)	Only needed if the facilities were not visited during scheme approval. (The tour can be moved to a different time in the day, but will often answer queries about facilities that are better viewed than described.)	Panel with appropriate member of College staff to guide
Meeting with CDT (at least 90 min)	To ask questions on any aspect of the course to satisfy the panel that the award meets the criteria for approval.	Panel CDT Representative of learning resources and any other specialist resources used
Meeting with prospective students (optional) (20-40 min)	For example, an SAB to consider a BA Top-up may wish to meet with current foundation degree students	Panel Prospective students
Panel discussion (30 min)	To discuss the outcomes of questions, to come to a decision on approval and any conditions and/or recommendations.	CDT may remain in the room and listen to the discussion, but not take any part unless the Chair wishes to clarify any issues.
Feedback to the CDT (15 min)	Chair to give feedback on decisions of the Panel to the CDT and set dates for meeting conditions if necessary.	Panel CDT
Close and depart		

The programme may need to be repeated according to the number of awards being considered.

When setting up a programme it is useful to remember that:

- It is easier to delete meetings on the day than to insert them
- Some points of the programme are fixed, i.e. normally lunch, any meetings with members of the development team who have to travel in specifically, e.g. external professionals or part-time staff
- Similarly it may be problematic to change the timing of any hospitality arranged during the day
- While the end point of the day can be flexible (within the limits of Panel members travelling commitments) the start of the day is fixed
- The programme start should be realistic for Panel members' travelling arrangements. If a long day is required it may be inevitable that someone needs an overnight stay. If not then it may be appropriate to start later
- A working lunch is a useful way to start a half day event
- Programmes should aim to give Panels the opportunity to meet with everyone they need to and to see everything necessary
- Activities should take place in an appropriate order
- Activities should be split up so that Panels are given the opportunity to walk about, take comfort breaks and to talk informally with staff
- The provision of refreshments is essential throughout the day, particularly at the start of an event for any visitor who has had to travel in that morning
- Panel members will not wish to leave too late in the day, particularly if it is on a Friday
- It is essential that the programme is precise; meeting times (start and finish) and rooms must be fully identified (including the site and building, name or number). It should also be clear exactly who will be met at each point during the programme

It is important that the programme defines participants clearly for all meetings, including lunch.

Private meetings of the Panel

Approval/validation Panels must always be given the opportunity to meet together in private for an initial discussion where issues for discussion with each group defined by the programme can be agreed. The length of time allocated usually varies between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours. Although 1.5 hours may sometimes seem a long period when setting up a programme, it is useful to remember that this private time is also needed for the Panel to become an operating team; many of them will be meeting for the first time. In addition, if the business of the day involves the consideration of multiple awards, several meetings will be required to discuss the academic coherence of each course with the CDT.

A short private meeting for the Panel is often helpful to them immediately after lunch in a full day's event and is essential when moving on to the consideration of another course, in order to review the activities concluded thus far.

The programme normally ends with a final meeting where the Panel has the opportunity to bring together their individual thoughts about the proposal and to come to unified conclusions in the non-

participative presence of key members of the CDT. However, occasionally the Panel may wish to convene privately for discussion prior to feedback with the CDT, e.g. where a Panel may consider a decision to be borderline.

The open meeting allows key staff to understand the concerns of the panel when making conditions and or recommendations. The successful operation of this type of end meeting is, however, dependent upon the non-involvement of the CDT members except when specifically requested to provide information by the Chair. It is essential that the meeting is not regarded as the opportunity for bargaining or the continuation of discussion.

During this meeting the Chair and Secretary will need to ensure that the comments/concerns/questions of external Panel members are captured for the report in order that the event report can be explicit in evidencing externality.

Meeting with the Course Development Team

The main body of any Scheme Approval Board is the meeting(s) between the Panel and the CDT. The Panel will question the team on the areas identified during the private meeting. The team meeting the Panel should not consider this as a confrontational situation, but a collegial and developmental discussion of the proposal course between peers.

The team should be able to speak to the nature of the course, its target market, content, development and the ability of the college to deliver it. The team should also be open to receive suggestions for enhancement, as the Panel will have a different perspective of the proposed development and can act as critical friends in addition to their quality assurance role on behalf of the University and College. **Error! Reference source not found.**

9.6 HOSPITALITY

If it is an early morning event, arrange for coffee, tea and water to be available. Some biscuits or similar may be appreciated if members of the Panel have been travelling for some time.

Arrange for this to be replenished at intervals during the day, check numbers and whether this includes the CDT.

If the event is to last all day, a light lunch of sandwiches, etc., e.g. buffet with fruit would be suitable. At the start of an afternoon event, it could be a working lunch for the private meeting of the Panel.

Consider with the Chair how many people will be present at each stage and organise the catering to meet those needs. Make sure the Panel members are asked whether there are any particular dietary requirements and make clear provision for those.

10 THE SCHEME APPROVAL BOARD

10.1 GUIDANCE FOR PANELS CONSIDERING ACADEMIC APPROVAL

An Approval Panel, having considered the documentation and the discussion with the Course Development Team, may make the following recommendations in respect of the scheme or course(s) considered:

- To approve the proposal
- To approve the proposal with specified conditions and/or recommendations
- Not to approve the proposal

Approval is formally granted by the University's Academic Board. However, for all intents and purposes, the Panel's decision is final and is reported to the University's Academic Board to ensure institutional oversight of provision.

Approval is normally granted for 5 years, after which provision is subject to re-approval through the process of Periodic Review.

"Periodic review is the process whereby the progress of an approved scheme or course is critically appraised at intervals determined by the Faculty by a Review Panel normally including external peers." (University Regulations, B3. 7.1)

The University has published separate guidance on Periodic Review, which is available here:

http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/prs/Periodic_Review.pdf

When approval is granted, subject to conditions, the Panel must determine an appropriate deadline for these conditions to be met, giving due consideration to any administrative processes involving the setting-up of the Award on the University's student information system and the subsequent registration and enrolment of students.

The Panel are responsible for ensuring that conditions have been met. The Panel may delegate this task to the Chair and, if the Chair is from the College, the University academic representative on behalf of the Panel where the meeting of the condition is straightforward and the outcome agreed at the Scheme Approval Board.

For more open-ended conditions then the Panel as a whole may need to consider whether these have been appropriately met.

Where a condition relates to subject-specific material, e.g. module content, then the external academic representative must also be involved in confirming that conditions have been met appropriately.

The secretary to the event has a role in following up conditions and ensuring that the Chair completes the template to sign-off that conditions have been met.

A course cannot be delivered if conditions are outstanding. Students may not be registered and/or enrolled until conditions have been met,

definitive documentation has been sent to the RUN office, a FAF submitted and confirmation been sent to the College by QSRE.

Recommendations are normally considered within six months of the commencement of the approved provision and any action taken should be reported through the normal monitoring and review processes for the scheme or course.

The Panel will normally consider issues as below:

Issues for consideration by an approval panel

- Will the scheme or course be operated in accordance with the University's Regulations?
- Will the standards of the University's awards be maintained?
- Are all human and physical resources in place to deliver this award? **Please note:** Should a Panel consider that the human or physical resources are not suitable to successfully deliver an award they make recommendations to that end or choose not to approve the course. However, Panels should not make any conditions in relation to human or physical resource requirements.
- Is the environment within which the scheme or course is offered satisfactory?
- Are appropriate quality assurance and enhancement procedures in place? (especially relevant for collaborative provision)
- Will the standards and quality of teaching be maintained, and, where possible, enhanced? If so, how?
- Have the Course Development Team identified an appropriate external examiner for the course? It is essential that an external examiner is appointed as soon as possible following approval.

The Panel will be asked to make an academic judgement on the following questions, which will be explicitly recorded in the Scheme Approval Board event report:

- Has the course has been developed with sufficient reference to the:
 - Framework for Higher Education Qualifications?
 - Subject Benchmarks?
 - PSRB requirements?
 - University Academic Principles and Regulations?
- Do module learning outcomes map to programme learning outcomes?
- Do learning and teaching strategies for the programme align with the College's and, therefore, University's ALT strategy?
- Has appropriate attention has been given to student workload and the scheduling and balance of assessments on the programme?
- Are placement arrangements appropriate?

10.2 CONSIDERATION OF COURSES WITH 'PRE-APPROVED' MODULES

Most courses within the Regional University Network will have been developed as part of a scheme with some scheme modules. Panel will therefore be asked to consider a course which has a mixed of new modules and modules already in approval.

If this is the case the Panel should have been provided with a copy of the Scheme Document and, if it contains relevant discussion regarding the scheme modules, the event report from the Approval event of the Scheme.

The CDT will be expected to provide the Panel with details of all modules, regardless of whether they are new or already approved, including their development.

As such scheme modules are already in Academic Approval, Approval Panels are not empowered to remove their Academic Approval with regard to the broader academic portfolio of the College and University. However, Panels are empowered to consider the inclusion of such modules in the course they are approving. A Panel may choose not to give approval to the use of such modules within the course should a Panel consider the inclusion of such a module to be inconsistent with the aims and outcomes of the programme, incoherent in relation to the rest of the course, unsuitable in the context of the broader student experience, etc. Panels may also make recommendations for the Scheme Leader to consider in discussion with the Course Team regarding any Scheme, Route or Pathway modules.

Should the Panel choose not to approve the delivery of a specific module then it will be a condition of approval that the CDT write a new module and produce a new module specification. Approval of the new module and the successful meeting of the condition will be a matter for either the whole Panel or, at least, the Chair of the Panel and the external academic representative with subject specific expertise. Should a Panel choose not to approve the delivery of several such modules then the Panel may wish to re-convene at a later date to re-consider the course modules as a whole.

10.3 GUIDANCE FOR CHAIRS OF SCHEME APPROVAL BOARDS

In addition to the information within the Academic Approval guidance the University has produced an aide memoir for Chairs of approval events, which is found in the University's Quality Manual.

10.4 GUIDANCE FOR SECRETARIES OF SCHEME APPROVAL BOARDS

In addition to the information within the Academic Approval guidance the University has produced a checklist for secretaries of approval and review events.

11 POST-EVENT PROCESSES

11.1 EVENT REPORT

A formal report is written following the event, which will outline whether approval was granted and if this was conditional.

The confirmed report will form the definitive record of the scheme or course approval and should be forwarded to the RUN office for submission with the Final Approval Form as per section 11.5.

Remember that the report is that of the Academic Approval Panel. College staff members are sent draft copies in order that any factual inaccuracies can be rectified.

11.2 CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

The CDT must ensure that its response to conditions of approval and validations is lodged with the Chair of the Panel and, if the Chair is from the College, the University academic representative (and the secretary) at the latest by the date specified in the event report. Failure to do this will lead to any conditional approval being withdrawn by the University.

The Chair, with the support of the secretary, should ensure that all relevant members of the Panel receive evidence as to the meeting of conditions as agreed at the Scheme Approval Board.

Schemes or courses are often required to meet conditions of approval and validation close to planned enrolment (either January or September) and special care will need to be taken to ensure that slippage does not occur in the timescales both with the course development team, Panel members and Chair.

The meeting of conditions must be confirmed by the Panel and, once met, formally signed-off by the Chair using the University template. The completed template should be sent to the RUN office to be forwarded to QSRE with the FAF.

If the Panel does not accept a Team's initial response to conditions, a further submission may be required, but no new conditions can be imposed.

The template for signing-off the approval of conditions can be found in the Quality Manual.

Recommendations

Recommendations should be considered within six months of the commencement of the approved provision and reported upon. A copy of the report on recommendations should be forwarded to the RUN office. The RUN office will table the report at the Faculty Board or its sub-committee for audit and monitoring purposes.

Any action taken should be reported through the normal monitoring and review processes for the scheme or course.

11.3 DEFINITIVE SCHEME OR COURSE DOCUMENTATION

Once any conditions have been met, the Team will need to produce a *definitive* set of scheme or course documentation, which should be

lodged with the College quality office. The College is responsible for keeping an unchanged set of definitive documentation, which will then be available as a key reference point to support the next Periodic Review. An electronic copy of this documentation must be available, with an optional paper copy.

Definitive versions of the following documentation should be produced:

- Scheme Document (if applicable)
- Course Document
- Programme Specification
- Module Specifications

The definitive documentation must be forwarded to the RUN office for submission with the Final Approval Form. Unless definitive documentation is received then new provision will not be set up on the University system and students may not be enrolled.

11.4 CURRENT SCHEME OR COURSE DOCUMENTATION

The Scheme or Course Team is responsible for maintaining up to date versions of scheme or course documentation in line with annual updating (e.g. indicative resources) and modifications.

The Scheme or Course Team is responsible for providing the College with the most current version of scheme or course documentation as a result of major or minor modifications or the annual updating of programme elements such as indicative resources. QSRE recommend that a current version of scheme or programme documentation is sent to the College quality office annually.

The College is responsible for receiving and tracking modifications to scheme or course documentation to ensure that the College maintains a record of current iterations and can map this to major and minor modifications.

11.5 FINAL APPROVAL FORM

Once a scheme or course has been approved without conditions or approved following the satisfactory meeting of conditions, the QSRE Team must be advised through the submission of a Final Approval Form (FAF). The FAF is the final part of the Academic Approval process, which culminates in the setting-up of the scheme or course on the University's student information system, ready to receive registrations and enrolments.

The FAF and accompanying documentation must be forwarded as soon as possible after the event by the RUN office to the Registrar and Secretary's Office. This process will trigger input by Planning and Registry Services to the University's student information system (Banner), which puts the scheme or course into full academic approval. The awards will then be available for subsequent student registration and/or enrolment.

In order to enable this to happen the following documentation must be sent to the RUN office:

- Definitive Scheme Document, if applicable
- Definitive Course Document
- Definitive Programme Specification

- Definitive Module Specifications
- Confirmed JACS code
- Confirmed event report
- Confirmation by the Chair that any conditions have been met
- Any contractual documentation relating to collaboration (if relevant), e.g. Memorandum of Collaboration, Agreement of the Contractual and Financial Arrangements for Collaboration, Services Agreement

Please note that the FAF must reflect accurately the proper award titles and structure. It is very unusual, but possible, that the title of the award is subject to discussion during the day and that a recommendation is that this should be reviewed.

The FAF includes details of all awards contained within the programme of study, i.e. target and contained awards, modes of study and status of conditions, and should accurately reflect the information recorded in the event report.

All documentation must be provided electronically.

Following receipt of the FAF and accompanying documentation, QSRE will send a memorandum to the College confirming approval and the setting-up of the course on the system, which means that enrolment and registration of students can now take place.

11.6 EXPENSES

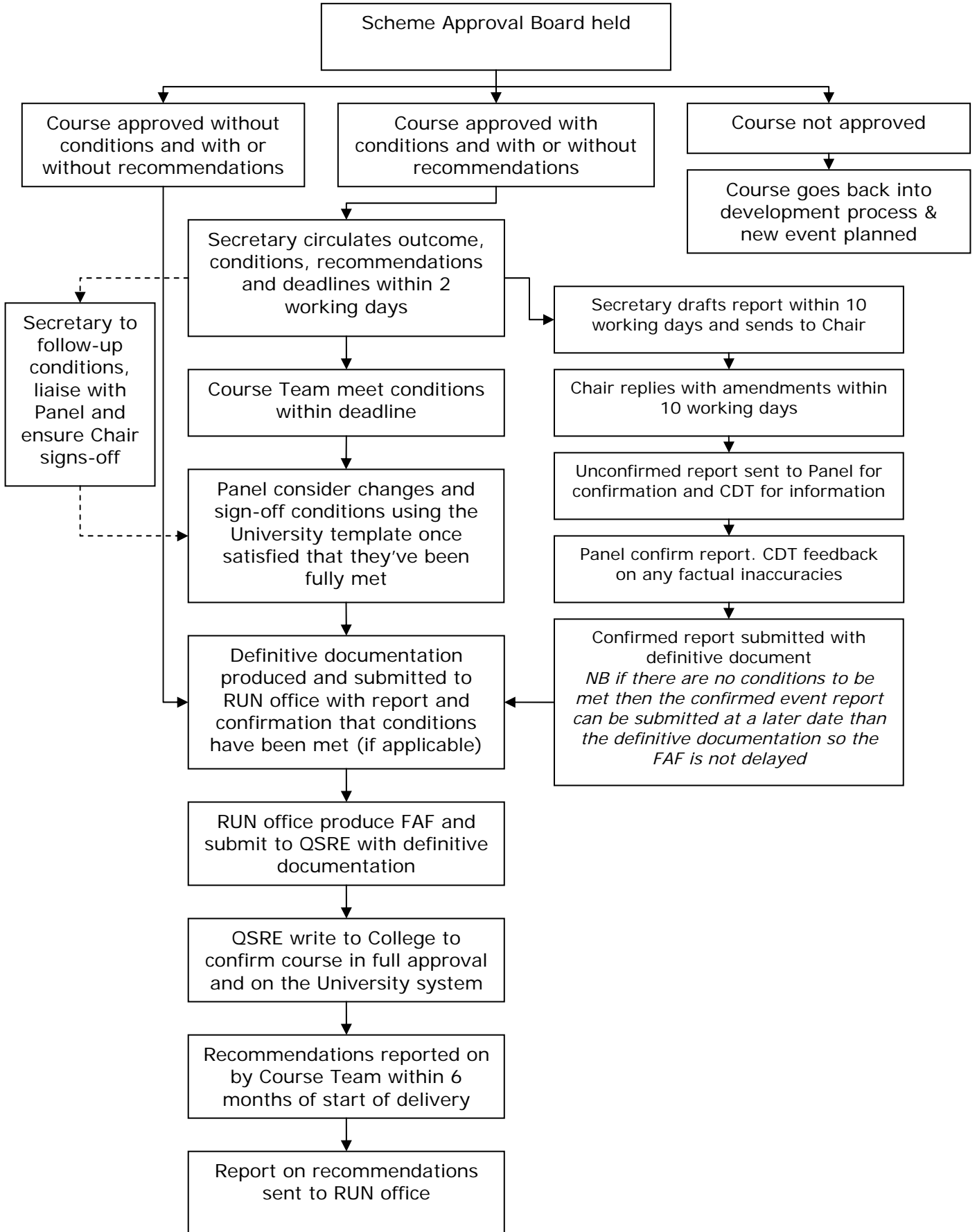
After the event the following will need to take place:

- the settling of invoices from the hotel if appropriate
- the processing and payment of external panel member claim forms

11.7 FEEDBACK AND ENHANCEMENT

The College should ensure that any completed Panel questionnaires it receives are forwarded to the QSRE team.

11.8 POST-EVENT PROCESS DIAGRAM



12 WITHDRAWAL OF ACADEMIC APPROVAL

Though Academic Approval is normally granted on an indefinite basis, the University reserves the right to withdraw this approval at any time. This applies to all programmes of study leading to awards of the University.

Where a scheme or course is withdrawn from Academic Approval and recruitment ceased, it is the University's responsibility, as the awarding body, to ensure continuity of studies for all remaining students, whether on the same course or a suitable alternative. No decision on withdrawal of Academic Approval may be made without due consultation.

Following appropriate consultation a scheme or course may be withdrawn through the completion of a Withdrawal Form, which can be found in the Quality Manual. Completed forms should be sent electronically by the Scheme Leader to the QSRE Team, copying in the RUN office, using the SPA&FFAFs@leedsmet.ac.uk e-mail address.

A scheme or course may also be withdrawn from conditional re-approval (i.e. if conditions have been set at the approval event), should the conditions not be met within the specified timescale agreed at the event.