

Guidance for Students Involved in the Validation/Revalidation Process

These guidance notes provide information on the process for the approval of new courses (known as 'validation') and the review of courses (known as 'course revalidation') which normally takes place every five years. The notes have been written to support students involved in the process, either as a member of a panel or as a participant in a student meeting at an event.

What is a course validation event?

A course validation event provides an opportunity for a course, or a group of related courses, to be considered and approved by the validating university (University of East Anglia) and academic staff from the university and other higher education institutions to ensure that it provides students with a high quality learning experience and it meets the required academic standards.

What is a course revalidation event?

A course revalidation event provides an opportunity for a course, or a group of related courses, to be reviewed by the validating university (University of East Anglia) and academic staff from the university and other higher education institutions to ensure that it continues to provide students with a high quality learning experience. The process also allows the course team an opportunity to step back from the day-to-day running of the course to evaluate whether the course remains fit-for-purpose.

Why is my involvement important?

As part of the process we are keen to involve students as both panel members and in student meetings with the panel. That way we ensure that the panel sees the event from a student's perspective and we incorporate students' views in the discussions about the course. We value your input and are keen to ensure that you have an active role in developing and improving learning opportunities.

What happens at an event?

A panel is formed to consider the course(s) under approval/review. There are typically around 6 or 7 members of the panel, including academic staff, administrative staff, students and external representatives (including employer representatives and statutory regulatory body representatives if appropriate).

Before the event, panel members are sent an electronic documentation pack which contains details on arrangements for the event and information on the course (prepared by the course team). This gives panel members a chance to find out more about the course before the event and to identify any items that they would like to discuss on the day.

The panel usually meets at the location where the course is delivered. During the event (which usually starts at around 9:30am and finishes by 3.30pm), the panel gets a chance to view facilities, meet with students and discuss the course with the course team. At the end of the event, the panel reaches a decision about the quality and future of the course, and has the opportunity to commend positive aspects of the course and identify areas where there is scope for improvement. These conclusions are recorded in a written report.

The course team must meet the conditions and requirements given by the panel within the agreed timescales, which may involve revisions to the course. The course team are also expected to consider

any recommendations by the panel. Progress against meeting conditions requirements and recommendations is overseen by the University of East Anglia.

I am taking part in a student meeting with the panel – what is expected of me?

Panels find it incredibly useful to meet with students, to get a real feel for how a course is currently operating and how it is viewed by students. If it's a new course we will still want to meet students from a similar course to ask them about their experience in general. Members of the panel will ask you questions about your experiences at the institution, some of which may be similar to the questions listed in the section above.

Although it can seem a daunting prospect to meet with the panel, please do not feel intimidated as the panel will be keen to hear your views. Please speak freely and honestly about your experience as a student, highlighting any aspects of the course that you like and any areas where you think there is room for improvement. If the panel does not ask questions about something that you feel is important, do not be afraid to bring it to their attention.

Your feedback will be treated with discretion and your views will not be individually attributed to you in either the written report of the event or in verbal feedback to the course team.

What's in it for me?

Firstly, you will be helping to improve the student experience and course for yourself and your fellow students. You get to have your views listened to and taken seriously, and you will have a real input into decisions that are made that will affect your course and other courses.

You will get to meet new people, and it will also provide an opportunity to gain new skills and enhance your CV. It's a real chance to put your communication skills into action, and for student representatives on the panel it provides an opportunity to demonstrate your teamwork, time management and negotiation and presentation/meeting skills.

I am a panel member – what is my role?

You are a full and equal member of the panel and your views will be valued by other panel members. In the initial meeting the Chair will ask you and the rest of the panel whether you have any points to raise in the discussions with the course team and students. Please participate honestly and constructively, and don't be afraid to ask questions, make suggestions or tell the panel and the course team how you and other students feel about your experience as a student and on the course (if you have experience of the course being considered).

While reading the documentation before the event and in discussions on the day, some of the things you might want to consider are:

- Is the course meeting students' expectations?
- Are the teaching methods appropriate?
- Are timetables and workloads manageable?
- Do students have adequate access to the necessary resources (e.g. labs, computers, the library)?
- Do you feel that the course is preparing students well for future employment or future study?
- Is information in course handbooks, the website and on the course intranet clear and up-to-date?
- Are students clear about how work is assessed? Do they get useful and timely feedback on work from members of the course team?
- Is there sufficient support (both academic and personal) to help students during their studies?
- Does the course team seek students' views on the course on a regular basis? Are students views listened to? Are there matters that students have previously raised with the course team that need to be addressed further?
- What do students like most about the course?
- Is there anything that could be improved?

If the panel does not ask questions about something that you feel is important, do not be afraid to bring it to their attention as you have a unique and valuable perspective. If there is anything that you do not understand, please feel free to ask any member of the panel for clarification.

Although the experience may initially seem daunting, please rest assured that your thoughts and suggestions are of real value and the panel will be keen to make you feel welcome and to hear your views.

All student panel members will be offered a half hour briefing session with a representative of the UEA Academic Partnerships team. This will include more detail about what to expect on the day and give you an opportunity to ask any questions you might have.