AUM QUALITY MANUAL

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Introduction

The *Academic Quality Manual*, alongside the *AUM Organizational Regulations* and *AUM Academic Regulations*, serves as a key constituent of the University's quality assurance framework, defining and providing detailed operational guidance on the University's quality assurance procedures. The three main components include:

- **Course/Program Validation** – a process whereby all new courses/programs are subject to formal consideration and approval prior to implementation.
- **Annual Review** – a process whereby the delivery of all courses/programs and output standards achieved are monitored.
- **Internal Review** – a process conducted on an annual and 5 yearly basis which consists of two major elements i.e., the critical review of the subject and its development and the formal re-approval of the associated course portfolio.

Other sections of the *Academic Quality Manual* refer to:

- **Academic Collaboration**
- **External Examiners**
- **Placements**
- **Research Degrees.**

The *Academic Quality Manual* is subject to regular review, the impetus for which includes:

- The ongoing desire to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the quality assurance procedures.
- The feedback from externals engaged with the University's internal procedures; and
- The implications of changes within the external quality assurance environment, in particular, further revisions to sections of the *Malta Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations* https://legislation.mt/eli/sl/607.3/eng and the devolved responsibility for undertaking a review of all subject provision within a five-year cycle.

Fundamental to the effective operation of all the quality assurance procedures are the University's committees. The most senior of these are the Board of Trustees, University Council and Academic Council, the latter assuming responsibility on behalf of the Board of Trustees for the overall planning, development, and supervision of the academic work of the University. The Committees report upwards to both the University and Academic Councils, several of which have key roles in overseeing the development and implementation of the University's quality assurance framework and in monitoring quality and standards.

The executive authority is for approving/implementing transactional activity associated with the University's quality assurance procedures. The key postholders in this respect are:

- The CEO in his role as the Chair of University Council (*Institutional development and Quality)*
- The Provost in his role as Chair of Academic Council (*Academic Development and Quality)*
- Deans of Colleges in their roles as Heads of Colleges and members of the Academic Committees

Further details of executive roles and responsibilities are available from the University's *AUM Organizational Chart.*

Operational support to the Colleges of the University is provided by the academic and non-academic units, including the *Academic Registrar, QA Department, Student Affairs Department, Admissions, Marketing, Student Affairs, HR and others*.
The University's focus for quality enhancement is the holistic student experience, and effective engagement with students is integral to the University's approach to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning. This student engagement includes, *inter alia*:

- Engagement and collaboration with the Student Union.
- Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires and Student Experience Questionnaires.
- Staff/student liaison arrangements at course/program level.
- Student representation on Internal Review Panels.
- Student representation on all the University's committees.
- Annual meetings of the Provost and Deans with Student Representatives.

The University's *Quality Assurance system* is the key mechanism for monitoring progress towards the University's enhancement priorities. The system described in this Manual is reviewed each year through a combined top-down and bottom-up approach. The University sets its key enhancement priorities and Colleges, and Departments reflect on these in formulating their own enhancement priorities.

PART 1: MODULE, COURSE AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

1.1 Introduction

All the University's course provision is designed using the *Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF)*, which means its awards are described in terms of MQF levels and MQF credits. A full description of the MQF may be found at its website https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Pages/MQF.aspx, at AUM website and its application to the University's awards is prescribed in *Academic Regulation Part 1: Courses.*

The University defines a *course* as the approved curriculum followed by an individual student that leads to named award and/or the achievement of academic credit. In some instances, courses are grouped into a *program* to act as a suite of routes with a high degree of commonality, or as a framework for course administration and management.

This Section of the *Academic Quality Manual* provides details of the Validation Procedure, whether this is for the purpose of approving new provision or substantial amendments to existing provision and offers guidance on each of the stages of the Procedure and other issues to consider during the process.

In addition, it also provides the procedures to be followed to approve and amend modules and credit-rated exit courses.

As part of the validation and administration of courses/programs, the University requires several elements of core documentation.

1.2 Validation Procedure

The approval of new courses and programs, or of substantial amendments to existing courses or programs, involves two stages. Before the Validation Procedure is initiated for a new

course/program, the proposal requires to be approved by the *Curriculum Development Committee (CDC).* Thereafter, validation is the process through which the University assures itself of the quality and standards of its course/program provision prior to implementation and delivery or approves substantial changes to existing course/program provision, where this affects more than 25% of an individual award's MQF credit.

The *QA Validation Panel* is asked to examine the standards and quality of the proposed course both in an academic sense, and in the context of external employer requirements and with this in mind to consider, in particular:

- The rationale and demand for the course/program.
- Admission requirements and projected intake.
- Course/program aims and outcomes.
- Structure and content of the course/program.
- Teaching and learning strategies.
- Assessment arrangements and methodologies.
- Support for the course/program in respect of staffing, staff development, research and scholarly activity, physical environment, and library provision.
- Organization and management.

Key aspects of the Validation Procedure include:

- The completion of a *Planning Sheet* for the validation event *(Appendix 1)*
- The preparation of documentation for the event, drafted in accordance with the University's requirements, e.g., *Detailed Course Descriptors, Module Descriptors, ECTS,* etc.
- Authorization, by the *Dean,* for the release of the documentation for discussion at *Curriculum Development Committee* and *Academic Council* respectively with documentation of approval and decision to be eligible to submit for evaluation and accreditation of Professional and Regulatory Body (PRB)
- The *Quality Assurance Panel* reviews prior to commencement of delivery of the course/program to Professional and Regulatory Body (PRB)

1.3 Amendments to Existing Provision

Approval for changes to existing courses/programs is undertaken at two levels:

a) The *Curriculum Development Committee (CDC)* is required to approve amendments to existing courses/programs if these amendments involve any or all the following:

   - changes to an existing course/program title.
   - additions/changes to mode(s) of delivery.
   - changes to named exit awards.
   - proposals for re-developments to the course/program curriculum affecting more than 25% of an award's MQF credit value (e.*g., learning outcomes, module content*).
   - course/program cessations.

b) Deans of Colleges have devolved authority to approve amendments affecting less than or equal to 25% of an award's MQF credit value. Course/Program Management Teams are required to consider course/program changes prior to submitting these to the Academic Council. Thereafter, executive action by *the Dean,* is taken to approve

changes and these changes are reported to the *Quality Assurance Panel.* Changes proposed might include:

- changes affecting assessment (i.*e., module assessment plan, assessment weightings*).
- changes affecting progression.
- inclusion of new and/or revised modules (i.e., *module titles, MQF level/credit*).
- replacement of modules with other existing modules.
- alteration to the timing of delivery of existing modules.

1.4 Module Approval

Modules may be used in the following ways:

- as constituent units of credit-rated award-bearing courses and programs.
- as credit-rated non-award-bearing short courses typically offered as **Professional Development (PD)** provision or fulfilling the University's commitment to the lifelong learning agenda.
- as credit-rated non-award-bearing short courses offered in collaboration with a third party.

Modules delivered as part of a credit-rated award-bearing course or program can only be credit-rated with MQF 30\60 ECTS at the appropriately defined level, or multiples thereof, unless otherwise required by a professional or regulatory body. Modules offered as credit-rated award-bearing courses can be credit-rated with MQF 30 or 60 ECTS at the appropriately defined level.

Unless modules are approved during a validation event, new and amended modules require approval by the College. The key aspects of this process include:

- the preparation of proposed changes by the Course/Program Leader and consideration of these changes by an external subject expert, professional expert from industry and Curriculum Development Committee.
- review by *QA Panel* and approval by the Academic Council.
- consultation with the External Examiners and students if assessments or progression requirements are affected.

1.5 Exit Award Course Approval

The procedure for approving modules to be delivered as Exit Award Course is the same as for the approval of new modules. Approval allows credit-rating for future delivery only.

Short courses derived from existing modules that have not been amended are not subject to any further formal approval. However, the details of the proposed financial arrangements, including the fees, require endorsement by the Dean of College. Normally, fees are set in accordance with the standard fee set by the Financial Department.

1.6 Professional and Regulatory Body Visits

A significant number of the University's courses are affiliated to PRBs and are therefore subject to accreditation/re-accreditation by the relevant bodies. The organization and management of these visits is included within the University's quality assurance procedures to ensure appropriate oversight and monitoring., the format of PRB visits is dictated by the individual body.

Key aspects of such visits include:

- the completion of a *Planning Form* for the event *(Appendix 2)*
- the preparation of documentation for the event, drafted in accordance with the University requirements, e.g., *Detailed Course Descriptors*, *Module Descriptors* etc.
- authorization, by the Dean, for the release of the documentation to the Panel, after appropriate internal scrutiny and approval of the documentation by a Curriculum Development Committee.
- the preparation by the College of a response, as appropriate, to the event outcomes that is subject to the subsequent approval by the Dean prior to issue to the PRB.

2. COURSE/PROGRAMME VALIDATION

2.1 Course/Program Validation Procedure

1. Course/Program Development Leader prepares to the *Curriculum Development Committee* a *Course Development Proposal Form (Appendix 3)* (with reference to *Marketing and Research for New Courses* which is signed by the Dean of College. If proposal is for multi-disciplinary course, signatures of all appropriate Deans are required.
2. Dean appoints Course/Program Development Leader
3. Course/Program Development Leader, in consultation with the Dean, prepares *Rationale and Composition of Validation Panel* and forwards to the Curriculum Development Committee. Validation Panel composition approved by the Curriculum Development Committee on recommendation of the Dean.
4. *Course Development Proposal Form* considered by the Curriculum Development Committee. Once approved, *Approval Form* is completed, and signed by the Provost. The Academic Council advised to approve accordingly.
5. Course/Program Development Leader consults with Dean and co-ordinates preparation of appropriate documentation in liaison with QA Department.
6. Dean approves documentation as being of satisfactory standard.
7. Course/Program Development Leader passes approved documentation to the Academic Council.
8. Academic Affairs checks documents comply with University Regulations and Policies, receives signed QA Approval Form from the Course/Program Development Leader, confirms compliance with Dean by completing V*alidation Documentation Scrutiny Report*, and attaching the completed *QA Approval Form* as an annex.
9. Dean of College authorizes issue of event documentation, and documentation sent to Graphics and Printing by Course/Program Development Leader.
10. Validation Panel undertakes the event. Preparation of report of validation event coordinated by the Academic Registrar, in consultation with QA (Validation Panel).
11. Course/Program Development Team produces response to conditions and recommendations arising from event *(refer to subsection 2.2.8*) and submits this to Academic Registrar. The *Curriculum Development Committee /CDC* considers the outcomes of events.
12. Academic Registrar co-ordinates authorization of response by Dean and QA. The Dean issues authorized response to Validation Panel members.
13. Academic Affairs approves course/program materials for courses/programs delivered in distance learning format.
14. QA Panel reviews event outcomes and informs the Academic Council accordingly.

2.2. Guidance - Course/Program Validation Procedure

2.2.1 Approval of Course Titles

The title of a course must be simple in form, clearly reflect the course content, and accord with the form generally accepted by higher education institutions and by the relevant professional, and regulatory bodies. The title may not be changed between periodic Internal Reviews without the prior approval of the Curriculum Development Committee and Academic Council, respectively.

Use of 'with' in the title of a course is permitted if at least 25% of the subject content is in that area. The use of 'and' in the title is permitted only if at least 40% of the subject content is in that area.

A new course title will normally not be permitted if its curriculum content is less than 25% different from that of any existing course title.

2.2.2 Planning and Scheduling of the Validation Event

The event must normally be at least 12 weeks prior to the anticipated date for commencement of the course/program to enable responses and actions arising from a validation event to be addressed prior to delivery. The *Validation Planning Form* serves as a framework for the establishment of timescales and deadlines and is used to monitor progress against these targets.

A validation event is normally conducted over one full day though it may be shortened depending on the extent of change involved, e.g., if the changes affect between 25% and 40% of the MQF credit of the existing course. The program for the event is agreed in discussion between the Dean and QA.

A validation event will require, as a minimum, a meeting of the Validation Panel with the Dean and Course/Program Development Leader but this will be extended to include the full Course/Program Development Team where a new course/program is proposed or where changes affect more than 40% of the MQF credit of an existing course.

2.2.3 Validation Panels

Panels for validation events comprise a combination of external and internal members appropriate to the nature of the event, and the membership is derived with the aim of making available as wide a spectrum of external advice and comment as possible. The relevant professional or regulatory body should also be consulted, where appropriate, in respect of program requirements.

Validation Panels have a minimum composition as follows:

Convener*:* An internal member of staff appointed by the provost, from a central list of nominees submitted by Deans

One external member: Who must be an academic with relevant subject experience and who is not from the University.

Second internal member: Who must represent the appropriate industry, profession, or commerce.

For each external member of the Panel there must be a statement indicating previous involvement with the University/Department(s). Where there has been no involvement this should also be stated.

2.2.4 Observers

The University may invite internal or external observers to these events as it deems appropriate. For example, these events can be useful for staff development purposes if staff are likely to be involved in such events in their college.

2.2.5 Documentation Scrutiny and QA Approval

A Documentation Scrutineer (*normally the relevant Program Leader*) checks the documentation has been produced according to University Regulations, guidelines and Policies, and completes a *Validation Documentation Scrutiny Report.*

The Program\Course Leader ensures the course/program documentation is passed to Academic Affairs for approval, together with the *QA Approval Form.* As part of the pre-validation approval of the documentation, Academic Affairs is required to approve the following elements of the documentation:

- Course Aims (*Detailed Course Descriptor*)
- Course Learning Outcomes
- Mapping of Course Learning Outcomes to Modules
- Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies
- Course Assessment
- All *Module Descriptor*s

The Dean authorizes the validation documentation prior to it being issued to the Panel.

2.2.6 Distance Learning and Virtual Campus Delivery

Academic Affairs is required to approve the style and format of course/program materials for any provision being developed in distance learning mode or for delivery on the Virtual Campus. Course/Program Development Teams are required to consult with QA, and to make certain the Department is integrally involved in advising on developments in order that they comply with university standards and guidelines. The College always remains responsible for ensuring the integrity of the academic content of the distance learning/Virtual Campus materials.

2.2.7 Outcomes of Validation Event

The Validation Panel is asked to:

- formulate a recommendation for approval of the course subject to regular Internal Review events (*normally every 5 years).*
- impose conditions where these are necessary for the approval of the course.
- make such other recommendations where appropriate; or
- recommend that the course not be validated.

It is also University practice that when any conditions are attached to the approval of a course, the Panel should set a deadline for meeting these conditions. The Panel will also highlight issues for recommendation.

2.2.8 College Response to Outcomes of Validation Event

Following the validation event, the College is required to produce a response to any conditions and recommendations, which must be approved by the Dean and QA before issue to Panel members. Once the Panel confirms acceptance of the response the course/program can commence delivery.

The College Response should be set out in the following way:

- Each condition and recommendation should be re-stated, in bold, as it appears in the *Confirmed Report* of the event. Under each, the College should indicate how it will meet the condition or action the recommendation in as detailed a manner as possible/appropriate.

- If the conditions and recommendations require a re-write of some of the course/program documentation presented at validation, then the relevant revised sections should be attached as appendices to the response.

2.2.9 Validation Report

A formal report of each Validation event is prepared by officers in the Academic Affairs Department, who attended the event. After it has been approved by all members of the Panel, the Confirmed Report is made available from the Academic Affairs Department (or website).

The Confirmed Report is structured around the sections of the *Validation Documentation Evaluation Form.*

2.2.10 Evaluation of Process

As part of its commitment to continuous enhancement of its quality assurance procedures, the University reviews, on an annual basis, the efficiency and effectiveness of the validation process. To assist in this process, Panel members and the Dean involved in a specific validation event will be asked to complete *Panel Member Questionnaire or Dean Questionnaire,* as appropriate.

2.3 Documentation Requirements – Course/Program Validation Procedure

2.3.1 Structure of Validation Documentation

The documentation for a course/program validation comprises:

Part 1: Overview and Resource Document

Part 2: Detailed Course Descriptor

Part 3: Module Descriptors

Advice and assistance on the preparation of course/program validation documentation, its format and layout is available from the relevant Program Leader and other members of staff in the Academic Affairs Department. Reference should also be made to the **Writing Guide** for the *Course Information Database* and the **Documentation Guide**. *Where* the validation is a combined event with a PRB for accreditation purposes, it is essential the College studies the PRB requirements to establish its documentation properly.

Detailed Course Descriptors are required for every course and are generated within the *Course Information Database.* The Academic Affairs Department is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and currency of these documents and administers the *Course Information Database (CID)*.

The Academic Affairs Department will supply the Validation Panel with the following:

- Briefing Note for Members of Validation/Review Panels.
- a customized *Validation Documentation Evaluation Form*;
- the *Curriculum Development Committee Course Development Proposal Form* as approved by the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC), and/or other appropriate Course/Program Development Proposal documentation;
- *Undergraduate* and *Graduate Handbooks* (external members only).
- the *Academic Regulations Handbook* (external members only).
- *MFHEA course Benchmarks,* (as appropriate).
- an electronic link to the relevant *Program Specification*.

(Copies of the University's *Academic Quality Handbook, Organizational Regulations Handbook* are made available for reference at the event and/or on the web).

2.3.2 Production of Validation Documentation

The documentation is produced by the College concerned, with a good quality original hard copy being forwarded to the Graphics and Printing Department for production of the final document. The Graphics and Printing Department uses these originals for photocopying the required number of documents, producing them in a comb-bound format and in the University's corporate style.

2.3.3 Content of Volume 1: Overview and Resource Document

Part 1: Overview and Resource Document should include:

- the rationale for the development of the course/program (or for revisions, in the case of a re-validation), making reference to the University's Mission.
- the context of the course/program both within the College and the wider University.
- who the Course/Program Development Team liaised with when developing the course/program and associated documentation?
- external references and guidance, such as the MFHEA Course\Program *Benchmark Statements,* PRB requirements and so on
- details of additional staff resources required to deliver the course/program.
- details of any external input, e.g., in the case of sub-contracted elements within the course/program.
- a list of Module Coordinators and their summary CVs (*see subsection 2.3.6 below and Exemplar)*
- details of staff development required to support course/program implementation.
- an overview of the research and scholarly activities that underpin the course/program.
- details of any specialist support required from the University to support the development or delivery of the course/program.

2.3.4 Content of Volume 2: Detailed Course Descriptor

The *Detailed Course Descriptor* is generated from the *Course Information Database*, as is the MQF-compliant *Program Specification*. A **Writing Guide** details the required specifications

and provides exemplars, and further guidance is available from the Program Leader ad Academic Affairs.

2.3.5 Content of Volume 3: Module Descriptors

The *Module Descriptors* are individually generated from the *Module Database* and compiled, in numerical order and with a contents page, to produce Volume 3. A **Writing Guide** provides guidance.

2.3.6 Preparation of Summary Curriculum Vitae (Academic Staff)

CVs need to be customized for the specific validation event and should focus on the staff member's expertise in relation to the subject nature of the course/programmed. If a college wishes to provide further information an extended publications list can be included in *Volume 1: Overview and Resource*. Each summary CV must be no longer than two sides of A4.

The CV should include the following information:

(i) Name, abbreviated qualifications e.g., BSc (Hons).

(ii) Job Title/Post held within the University.

(iii) Qualifications (Academic, Professional and Current Professional Affiliations). Qualifications should be listed with the most recent last, indicating the year the award was gained and the awarding institution. College qualifications should not be listed.

(iv) Employment Experience. This should be listed in chronological order with the most recent last, indicating the job title/position held. Only experience directly related to the staff member's current area of expertise should be listed.

(v) Main Subject/Interest Areas and Related Public Output (preceding 5 years only). State the total number of items of public output staff member has produced in the last five-year period and provide up to six examples of relevant items of public output.

(vi) Research/Consultancy/Professional Practice (preceding 5 years only).
Only list experience directly related to the development under consideration.

A **Summary CV Exemplar** is available.

3. AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING COURSES AND PROGRAMMES

3.1 Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) Approval Procedure

For changes to an existing course title; additions/changes to mode(s) of delivery; changes to named exit awards; proposals for re-developments to the course curriculum affecting more than 25% of an award's MQF credit value (e.g., *learning outcomes, module content*); and course/programmed cessations.

1. If changes affect progression and/or assessment, External Examiners must be consulted, and written consent received. All students affected by change must be consulted and their views taken into consideration. Consultation with PRB if appropriate, and QA if distance learning or change involves conversion to distance learning. Course/Program Leader prepares to the *CDC Course Change Form*, confirming extent of all consultation, and obtains signature of the Dean in which course/program is delivered.

2. If course/program is distance learning or change involves conversion to distance learning, Program Leader completes *Distance Learning Change Planning Form.*

3. *CDC Course Change Form* considered by Curriculum Committee. Following approval, C*DC Approval Form* completed and distributed as specified and, if appropriate, course/program change referred to Dean of College or validation procedures initiated.
3. If changes involve Module Descriptors and/or Academic Affairs must scrutinize revised documentation and complete *QA Approval Form*
4. If change or new mode of delivery involves distance learning material, Program Leader scrutinizes Distance Learning to ensure it includes appropriate details of revised management arrangements. Program Leader completes *Validation Documentation Scrutiny Report.*

5. In liaison with Academic Affairs Department, course/program documentation (Module and Course Information Databases) updated.

6. Program leader liaises with the Dean to ensure completion of final documentation in Course Information Database and Module Database.

7. Once changes complete in Databases, Course/Program Leader requested to confirm in writing these are as per approved *CDC Course Change Form.*

3.2 Faculty Level Approval Procedure

For changes affecting less than or equal to 25% of an award's MQF credit value such as: changes affecting assessment (i.e., *module assessment plan, assessment weightings*); changes affecting progression; inclusion of new and/or revised modules (i.e., *module titles, MQF level/credit*); replacement of modules with other existing modules; and alteration to the timing of delivery of existing modules.

1. Preparation of amended *Module Descriptor(s)* for approval.

2. Appropriate consultation with External Examiners and students.

3. Course/Program Leader completes *Module and Course Change Form. This* along with the amended *Module Descriptors* are considered by Course/Program Management Team.

4. Amended Module Descriptor(s) passed to QA together with *QA Approval Form.* QA scrutinizes amended Module Descriptor(s) and completes *QA Approval Form.*

5. College considers *Module and Course Change Form* with amended Module Descriptors and supporting paperwork.

6. Course/Program Leader obtains signature of Dean on *Module and Course Change Form.*

7. Forms and all associated paperwork considered by Course\Programs Leader to confirm paperwork is in order. Course\Program Leader maintains information on course changes to monitor cumulative course changes.

8. *Module and Course Change Form* considered by Dean, with QA Approval Proforma appended (and other supporting documentation, if requested by Dean). Following approval, *College Approval Form* completed and distributed as specified. QA advised accordingly.

9. Course/Program Development Leader to ensure completion of final documentation in Course Information Database and Module Database.

4. MODULE APPROVAL PROCEDURE

1. Preparation of Module Descriptor(s) for approval. If new module is replacing existing module, Module Coordinator must discuss proposed amendments with all Course/Program Leaders responsible for courses/programs in which module is delivered.
2. Course/Program Leader completes Module *and Course Change Form* and submits it with new Module Descriptor(s) for consideration by Course/Program Management Team.
3. New Module Descriptor(s) passed to QA together with *QA Approval Form.* QA approval required for:

- Module Assessment Plan.

- Module Learning Outcomes.

- MQF level and credit.

4. New Module Descriptor(s) passed to External Subject Expert, who may be External Examiner, together with Module Approval - E*xternal Subject Expert Report.* External Subject Expert scrutinizes Module Descriptor(s) and completes Module Approval - *External Subject Expert Report.*
5. Dean considers *Module and Course Change Form* with new Module Descriptor(s) and with Module Approval - External Subject Expert Report
6. Course/Program Leader obtains signature of Dean on *Module and Course Change Form*
7. Form and all associated paperwork considered by Dean to confirm paperwork is in order. Dean maintains information on course changes to monitor cumulative course changes.
8. New Module Descriptor(s) submitted to Dean along with *Module and Course Change Form, QA Approval Form and Module Approval - External Subject Expert Report*. Following approval, *College Approval Form* completed and distributed as specified by Course\Program Leader and QA advised accordingly.
9. Module Database updated by Course\Program Leader

5. EXIT AWARD COURSE APPROVAL PROCEDURE

5.1 Exit Award Course Approval Procedure

The procedure for approving modules to be delivered as credit-rated non-award-bearing exit courses is the same as for the approval of new modules *(subsection 4)*. Such approval allows credits to be awarded for future delivery only; credits cannot be awarded retrospectively.

5.2 Third Party Collaboration

The University may wish to validate and credit-rate provision that will be developed and delivered by an external organization (e.g., *an employer, a professional body, or a non-degree awarding institution*). Please refer to *Section 6* of this Handbook for further guidance on the approval process.

5.3 Quality Assurance of Modules Delivered as Exit Awards

The following applies to modules delivered as short courses, and not part of an award-bearing course.

External Examiners
Existing External Examiners should be requested to consider credit-rated short courses as appropriate to their own discipline and will be paid a supplementary fee for such duties. The External Examiner's agreement to this additional responsibility should be confirmed in writing prior to the completion and approval of an *External Examiner Extension/Reallocation Application*. Decisions relating to the award of credit must be ratified by an Academic Council prior to the issue of certificates or transcripts. The External Examiners must either include reference to short course provision in their *External Examiner Annual Report* or, if the volume

of short courses merits it and with the College's agreement, complete a separate External Examiner Annual Report - Credit-Rated Short Course(s). For details of the procedures relating to External Examiners, and a template for the annual reporting of short courses, please refer to **Section 4** of this Handbook.

Academic Regulation A5*: External Examiners* provides additional information regarding the appointment of External Examiners.

Annual Course Review Credit-rated short courses are included into the Annual Review Process. A *Programme/Course Review Report* is completed by the Short Course/Program Leader on behalf of the host College for incorporation into the *Annual College Review Report*. For details of the Annual Review Process, please refer to **Section 2** of this Handbook.

Internal Review
Credit-rated short courses are subject to re-approval during the Internal Review process if they are delivered at least on an annual basis. A report should be prepared by the host College reviewing all credit-rated short courses developed in the College. For details of the Internal Review procedures, please refer to **Section 3** of this Handbook.

Evaluation
All participants on short courses are required to complete the *Module Evaluation Questionnaire* (refer **Section 2** of this Handbook). Short Course/Program Leaders are responsible for the distribution, collection, and analysis of the *Module Evaluation Questionnaire*. An analysis of the evaluation outcomes should inform the Annual Review Process and Internal Reviews.

6. AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING MODULES AND EXIT COURSES

6.1 Faculty Level Approval Procedure

If an existing module or short\exit course requires amendment, such amendments require approval by the Dean of College only if they affect:

- Module Assessment Plan (QA approval also required)
- Module Learning Outcomes (QA approval also required)
- MQF level or credit (QA approval also required)
- the mapping of Module Learning Outcomes to the Level Learning Outcomes (only relevant for modules that are delivered as part of award-bearing courses/programs) (QA approval also required)
- Module Reference Number
- Module Title.

Refer to *subsection 4 f*or the Approval Procedure. Any other changes to modules, other than those listed, should be made in liaison with the Program Leader.

7. PROFESSIONAL AND REGULATORY BODY (PRB) VISITS

1. Visit date confirmed by QA in consultation with Course/Program Leader
2. QA co-ordinates preparation of *PRB Planning Form* in consultation with Course/Program Leader, relevant Dean of College(s) and Academic Registrar.
3. PRB advises University of Panel composition.
4. Program confirmed in discussions with University and PRB.
5. QA, Course/Program Leader issues confirmed Program and Panel Membership to all relevant parties.
6. Dean and Course/Program Leader co-ordinates preparation of appropriate documentation in liaison with Academic Affairs and QA.
7. Before documentation is forwarded to Documentation Scrutineer, Dean should review it is of a satisfactory standard.
8. Dean approves documentation as being of satisfactory standard. Course/Program Development Leader passes approved documentation to QA, Program Leader acts as Documentation Scrutineer.
9. Documentation Scrutineer and Dean and QA check documents comply with University Regulations and guidelines (not academic content), receive signed QA *Approval Form*, confirm compliance with Academic Registrar by completing *Validation Documentation Scrutiny Report*, *and* attaching the completed *QA Approval Form* as an annex.
10. Dean of Faculty authorizes issue of event documentation, and documentation sent to Graphics and Printing by Course/Program Leader. Event documentation issued by College.
11. Panel undertakes visit. Preparation of report is coordinated by PRB.
12. Dean (through discussion with CDC) and QA produce response, as appropriate, to outcomes of visit and submit this to PRB.
13. QA advised of event outcomes and informed Academic Council accordingly. Curriculum Development Committee also considers event outcomes.
14. QA liaises with Course/Program Leader to ensure completion of final documentation in Course Information Database and Module Database.

8. PROCEDURE FOR CESSATION OF A COURSE/PROGRAMME

Proposals for the cessation of a course/program require the approval of Curriculum Development Committee.

1. Course/Program Management Team agrees to cease delivery of a course/program, prepares *Course/Program Cessation Form* and obtains signature of the Dean of College in which course/program is delivered.

2. Curriculum Committee considers proposal for cessation of the course/program. Following approval, *CDC Approval Form* completed and distributed as specified. Academic Council advised accordingly.

3. QA liaises with Course/Program Leader to ensure appropriate amendments to documentation in *Course Information Database* and *Module Database.*

APPENDIX 1.1: MARKETING AND RESEARCH FOR NEW COURSES

Effective marketing survey and research is vital for understanding the market and identifying market potential. It is a foundation for effective decision-making.

Good marketing survey and research can inform targeting and evaluation of marketing activities and help course developers to understand stakeholder decision-making processes.

Doing robust market survey which informs the development of new courses is vital if these courses are to succeed in the market, and to provide data which will allow for new courses to be marketed effectively.

Market research may be developed and carried out internally in collaboration with the University Marketing Department, or it may be outsourced (*if needed*) to a Marketing Consultancy recommended by the University Marketing Department. There will be a cost attached to all market research and this should be factored into all course development budgets.

When developing new courses, it is recommended that the following research is undertaken to establish both the demand for the course and the packaging of the course:

All the areas below should be addressed and robust evidence from a representative sample provided which will then be assessed by the Curriculum Development Committee:

1. evidence of current demand for the course within the current marketplace.
2. proof of a demonstrable need for the course – evidence could include the following:
   - exemplar job advertisements proving employer demand for the qualification.
   - requests for the course gathered from external sources which could include employers and potential students.
   - identification of future employment trends which prove that demand for the qualification will increase.
3. demonstrate the likely life cycle of the course.
4. at undergraduate level evidence should be provided that proves that the cohort identified for entry point of the course will have the necessary qualification required to study the course – this will require evidence drawn from subject choice trends at secondary school level.
5. at postgraduate level evidence should be provided that proves that there are enough at undergraduate level studying degrees suitable for progression.
6. evidence that provides a detailed breakdown of the target market for the course.

7. a description of how it is envisaged that the target market will be reached.
8. evidence of the suitability and marketability of course titles.

The above should be gathered and presented as a substantial dossier to Curriculum Development Committee\CDC (i.e., by completing and submitting a CDC *Course Development Proposal Form*, who will then use this evidence to assess the suitability of further development.

PART 2. ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Annual Review of teaching and learning is central to the University's quality assurance processes. It enables the University to ensure its portfolio of modules, courses and programs remains in good health and that it will satisfy the criteria for any review by the Quality Assurance Agency or any other external body. The process is designed to enhance the monitoring of quality and standards and to encourage the identification and dissemination of enhancement issues. Furthermore, it is designed to facilitate the provision of good quality feedback to students on an ongoing basis.

The process is informed by several key sources including feedback from students obtained through the staff/student liaison process and evaluation questionnaires, feedback received from *External Examiner Annual Reports*, as well as performance indicator data produced by the University.

Commencing with the completion, by students, of *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires* and relevant *Student Experience Questionnaires*, this is followed by the review, at college level, of individual modules, and courses/programs. Once all Course/Program Management Teams have completed this exercise, an *Annual College Review Report* is produced by the Dean. All *Annual College Review Reports* are considered by the Dean of College.

The Dean, assisted by the Program Leader, produces a *Dean's Report on the Annual Review Process*, which is submitted to the Quality Assurance office and has to be reported and approved by the Academic Council accordingly.

In parallel with the preparation of *Annual College Review Reports* by Deans, which contribute directly to the student learning experience are asked to complete a report on the *Review and Enhancement of the Student Experience.* These reports are considered by Curriculum Development Committee which, in turn, submits a summary report to QA office.

A fundamental principle of the *Annual Review Process* is that both strengths and weaknesses are identified at all levels of the process, the necessary action taken, and confirmation that the matter has been resolved reported to the appropriate Committee/body. Feedback is given throughout the process and, where appropriate, executive action taken.

The evidence gathered during this process is used to inform, incrementally, the program of Internal Reviews and to satisfy the requirements of external bodies such as the Quality Assurance Panels, External Evaluation Agencies or Regulatory Bodies.

2. ANNUAL REVIEW PROCEDURE

December, May
S*tudent Module Evaluation Questionnaires* and *Student Experience Questionnaires* completed by students.

Summer
Analysis of Questionnaires completed by QA and distributed to Course Leaders.

May - August
Examiners asked to submit *Annual Report* within four weeks after examination session

July - September
Performance Indicator issued by Registrar on Student Statistics to:

(a) *Module Coordinators*
- on student achievement at module level

(b) *Course Leaders*
- Applications/Enrollments
- Target Enrollments
- Entry Grade Point Averages
- Student Achievement Rates
- Non-Progression Analysis
- Graduate Output and Award Classifications
- Destination of Leavers from Higher Education

August - September
Module Coordinators/Course management team reviews courses/modules and *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaire* analysis report. Completes *Annual Module review Report*

August - September
Course/Program Leader reviews previous session's *Annual Course/Program Review Reports* and current session's experience. Reviews *External Examiner Annual Reports*, Annul Review reports, and *Student Experience Questionnaires* analysis report..

August – September

Course/Program Management Team reviews, amends, and approves *Annual Course/Program Review Report*.

September - October

College:

- considers all Annual Course/Program Review Reports for College
- provides feedback to Course/Program Management Teams on issues raised which can be dealt with at College level
- approves responses to External Examiner Annual Reports

September – October

Course leaders/teams contribute directly to the student learning experience. QA prepares summary report to Academic Council.

September – October

Annual Programme/Course Review Report produced by the College

October - November

Annual College Review Reports submitted to the Academic Council for consideration and approval in accordance with agreed process.

November

College prepares a Report on the Annual Review and also confirms:

- all External Examiner Annual Reports have been received and actioned
- all courses/programs within college have been reviewed.

November

QA considers Annual College Review Reports. Institutional issues identified for action and referred, as appropriate, to Committees/Working Groups/management areas.

QA considers Summary Report on the evaluation of the Student Experience

December

QA reports to the Academic Council on Annual Review on programme/course level and on institutional evaluation and major issues it has considered.

February

QA considers responses from Committees/Working Groups/management areas on issues requiring action.

3. GUIDANCE - QUESTIONNAIRES

3.1 Student Module Evaluation and Student Experience Questionnaires

The *Student Module Questionnaire* designed to obtain feedback from students about their learning experience. It consists of a high-level question asking the students to indicate their overall opinion of the module and to further indicate the module's strengths and areas for improvement from a list of pre-defined categories. Evaluation of the teaching staff on the module is also included and there is an opportunity for students to comment on other aspects of the module in a free-form comments box. The questionnaire is intended to be diagnostic and provide a basis for further investigation, if required. It provides some of the information required to complete the *Annual Programme/Course Review Report* and forms the basis of high-level statistical information on module performance which is available to all Colleges.

The questionnaire is accessed via the web-based online questionnaires system which allows it to be sent to students via their email accounts. If required, a paper copy of the questionnaire is also available but is used only in exceptional circumstances.

The responsibility for ensuring that *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires* are issued lies with the Module Coordinator. The online system also allows administrative staff to release the *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires*(s) on behalf of the Module Coordinator where Colleges choose to adopt this practice. In this case, the administrator can release the *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaire*, but the Module Coordinator will have online access to the results. The Academic Affairs Department issues a series of reminders to all Module Coordinators towards the end of each Semester prompting them to release *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires.*

Student Experience Questionnaires are designed to obtain feedback from students about their course and learning experience as part of an ongoing quality process. Several different types of questionnaires have been developed as follows:

First Year Experience Questionnaire

Experience (Final Year) Questionnaire

Graduate Experience Questionnaire

The development of different questionnaires has enabled the University to tailor the questions to different groups of students – for example the *First Year Experience Questionnaire*, which is aimed at first year students, focuses on the student's transition to university and how well they feel they have coped, whereas the AUM *Experience (Final Year) Questionnaire*, aimed at final year students, is designed to allow the student to give a reflective analysis of their entire University experience.

The Academic Affairs Department or QA is responsible for the release of *Student Experience Questionnaires,* in consultation with Course Leaders. Any member of staff requiring access to release questionnaires should contact the Academic Affairs Department for this to be authorized.

At the end of a pre-defined period, all student responses are collected and compiled electronically into analysis reports. Module Coordinators and Course Leaders are alerted by email, those results are available for the *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaire* and *Student Experience Questionnaires* respectively, which are accessed via the web-based online questionnaires system.

Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires

These reports are only accessible to the Module Coordinator who released the *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaire,* and no other lecturing staff. Course Leaders have access to all the module analysis reports pertaining to the modules in their course, and Deans have access to all module data available for all courses in their college, including both quantitative and qualitative data. Deans also have access to reports across the College, though this excludes the qualitative data. A high-level summary of student opinion of all modules in the College is provided to Deans by the Academic Affairs Department.

Student Experience Questionnaires

Reports arising from *Student Experience Questionnaires* are accessible to Course Leaders, and Deans have access to all the data available for all courses in their college, including both quantitative and qualitative data. Deans of College have access to all data excluding the qualitative data.

As there are questions in some of the *Student Experience Questionnaires* relating to Support Departments, separate analysis reports are issued annually by the Academic Affairs Department to each Support Department (Student Services, IT Services, the Library etc.) collating any relevant data from the questionnaires.

A Guide to Releasing Questionnaires and Running Reports provides further detail.

3.2 Feedback to Students arising from Questionnaires.

Feedback is provided to students to maintain students' engagement in the evaluation process. This feedback includes not only the results of the survey, but also the actions which are being undertaken as a result.

Once a *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaire* or a *Student Experience Questionnaire* has been completed, the Academic Affairs Department releases the results which students may access via the *Student Portal* or the *Student Involvement AUM website*. These results consist of the statistical returns for the survey, but do not include any staff evaluation information or qualitative data.

Once the *Annual Programme/Course Review Reports* and *Course/Program Review Reports* are approved, Module Coordinators are requested to upload their *Annual Programme/Course Review Reports* so they are accessible to students via the *Student Portal* or the *Student Involvement AUM website*.

Likewise, Course/Program Leaders are requested to upload an extract of their *Course/Program Review Reports,* containing Section 10.1, so they are also accessible to students via the *Student Portal* or the *Student Involvement AUM website,* thereby ensuring students have a full complement of information at their disposal.

Following consideration by Academic Affairs, information on actions taken by Support Departments is compiled from their reports on the *Review and Enhancement of the Student Experience* into a summary report for consideration by QA office, and made accessible to students via the *Student Portal* or the *Student Involvement AUM website*.

The Academic Affairs Department presents an overall analysis of the results from *Student Module and Experience Questionnaires* to Academic Council in Semester One of each session.

4. ANNUAL REVIEWS AND REPORTS

4.1 Annual Programme/Course Reviews

An *Annual Programme/Course Review* must be completed for each module within the University each session. *The Annual Programme/Course Review Report* should be compiled by the relevant Module Coordinator. Completed *Annual Programme/Course Review Report* must be forwarded to all Course/Program Leaders whose course/program includes the module.

4.2 Course/Program Review

4.2.1 Standard Courses/Programs

Every course within the University, and every collaborative course, must be appraised each session by the Course/Program Management Team.

Undergraduate Annual Program Reviewl - Undergraduate

If several named routes are grouped together into a program under a common management structure and share common modules, the Program Management Team should complete one of the following, as appropriate, rather than individual *Annual Course Review Report*:

Annual Program Review - Graduate

Separate performance indicator information (e.g., *Applications/Enrollments, Target Enrolments, Entry Grade Point Averages, Applications, Student Achievement Rates, Non-Progression Analysis, Graduate Output and Award Classifications, Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Statistics*) is provided for each named award. Where an issue arises, which is not common to all awards within the program, this must be explicitly stated, otherwise it will be assumed that it relates to the entire program.

4.2.2 Non-Standard Courses/Programs

To the *Annual Review of a* non-standard course/program is defined as one which does not adhere to the University's standard 30 week/two semester session running from August to May each year, and therefore does not fit within the normal timescale for review.

Course/Program Management Teams of non-standard courses should submit an *Annual Course\Program Review* which relates to the most recently completed cohort. In some cases, this cohort may have finished the course/program several months earlier and, therefore, it is

essential the Course/Program Management Team is proactive in the interim period before the formal *Annual Review Process*, in addressing those issues which require immediate action. Such action should be overseen by the College Academic Board and reported in the *Annual Course/Program Review.*

4.2.4 Credit-Rated Short Courses

An review must be completed in respect of all credit-rated short courses. For this purpose, Course Leaders should use the *Annual Programme/Course Review Report.*

Participants on credit-rated short courses are required to complete the *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaire*, the analysis of which should be used to inform the review of a short course(s).

4.3 Guidance for Completion of Annual Programme/Course Review Reports

The following guidance does not preclude the Module Coordinator from including any other information which is relevant.

The design of the *Annual Programme/Course Review Report* is intended to enable the College to address issues raised through student feedback, review of student performance and reflections of the module teaching team. It is also intended to prompt action in relation to the enhancement and development of the module. In addition, it should also help Course/Program Leaders and Deans to easily identify modules that need attention. It is suggested the module teaching team meet initially to discuss the module(s) following which the Module Coordinator produces an *Annual Programme/Course Review Report.* If any areas of particular concern are identified consideration should be given to clarifying these to aid completion of the report, for example, by arranging focus groups with students, raising issues through Staff/Student Liaison etc. However, it is appreciated the timescales involved may not always allow for this. The completed reports also form the basis of comprehensive feedback to students.

Section 1 **Progress against Proposed Actions and Enhancements**

Comment briefly on the outcomes of actions and enhancements proposed the previous session (staff completing the report should refer to Section 5 of the last completed *Annual Programme/Course Review Report* where this is available).

Section 2 **Student Achievement**

This section requires an analysis of the undernoted data produced by the Student Statistics and the data, which is provided in report format, should be appended to the *Annual Programme/Course Review Report* for ease of reference.

- *Number of students enrolled on module.*
- *Number of students assessed.*
- *Number of students passed.*
- *% Pass rate*

This data is produced after the resit diet to ensure all students who have undertaken the assessment are included for analysis purposes. To ensure that data is as current as possible, Colleges must provide confirmation to the Academic Registrar on Student Statistics that all re-assessment data has been updated within the University's OIS system. Data regarding student achievement will be based only on students who have undertaken the assessment.

Comment as appropriate on any specific issues that require to be brought to the attention of the Course/Program Management Team(s) concerned, in, pass rates falling below the defined University thresholds.

Section 3 **Student Learning Experience**

This section requires an analysis of the responses to the *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaire* (excluding the staff evaluation section of the Questionnaire, which remains confidential to the College).

Comment as appropriate on any specific issues that need to be brought to the attention of the Course/Program Management Team(s) concerned. Commentary should be limited to the key issues arising from the analysis of the data and should include reference to enhancement activity.

Section 4 O**ther Issues Relating to the Module**

This section provides the opportunity to highlight any other issues relating to the module not previously covered, for example, issues raised through staff/student liaison activity, feedback from Student Representatives, issues raised by External Examiners etc.

Other source material (e.g., *External Examiner Annual Reports, etc.*) need not be attached to the *Annual Programme/Course Review Report*, but it is advisable for each College to establish a mechanism for ensuring such documentation is readily accessible. It is also worth considering holding copies of all approved *Annual Programme/Course Review Reports* in the College Office for ease of access (for example, these will be required to inform future Internal Reviews).

Completed *Annual Programme/Course Review Reports* should be submitted to the Course/Program Management Team (within the host College) for approval prior to being circulated to all Course/Program Leaders on whose course/program the module is delivered to enable them to undertake a thorough review of their course/program. The Course/Program Management Team should also consider the content of the report in terms of its appropriateness for student feedback purposes prior to this being uploaded to the Student Portal.

4.4 Guidance for Completion of Annual Course/Program Review Reports

The following guidance does not preclude the Course/Program Management Team from including any other information which it feels is relevant. The following proformas are available:

Annual Course Review Report – Undergraduate

Annual Program Review Report – Undergraduate

Annual Course Review Report – Graduate

Annual Program Review Report – Graduate

The design of the proformas is intended to encourage systematic analysis of courses/programs, reporting by 'exception', the highlighting of any significant trends, and the extraction of key issues for the attention of the Dean of College and, ultimately, QA Office. The report consists of a series of tick box responses asking for comment only where an issue is identified. This will help draw attention to areas requiring further analysis/discussion.

Sections 2 and 4 requires an analysis of data produced by the *Student Statistics* and the data should be appended to the report for ease of reference (i.e., data should not be 'cut and pasted' into the report). Referring to the appended data, these sections should be completed as indicated and, where appropriate, commentary should be made on specific issues that need to be brought to the attention of the College Dean. The data for these sections for each College will be compiled onto one disk by the *Student Statistics* and forwarded to Course Leaders and Deans in September each year. The disk will contain an MS Excel™ file for each named award containing the relevant performance indicators.

It is stressed that commentary should be limited to the key issues arising from the analysis of the data and should include reference to enhancement activity.

The source material (e.g., *External Examiner Annual Reports*, analysis of *Student Experience Questionnaires*) need not be attached to the report, but it is advisable for each College to establish a mechanism for ensuring this documentation is readily accessible.

Section 1 **Progress against Proposed Actions and Enhancements**

Comment briefly on the outcomes of actions and enhancements proposed in Section 10 (Summary of Proposed Actions and Enhancements) from the preceding *Annual Course/Program Review Report*, indicating how and when they have been addressed (it is advisable to re-read the entire *Annual Course/Program Review Report* from the previous session and Section 10 from the *Annual Course/Program Review Report* from the session before that to ensure all issues have been addressed).

Section 2 **Student Enrolment**

This section will require an analysis of the undernoted performance indicators (supplied by the Academic Registrar on *Student Statistics* in July each year) and, where indicated (i.e., by answering 'yes' to any question), commentary should be provided, including action to be taken:

- *Applications/Enrolments* (including advanced entry) and *Target Enrolments*.
- *Intake Points* for previous session (undergraduate courses only).
- Comparison of *Applications* for the Maltese sector (by subject area) with university applications (for full-time undergraduate courses only).

Commentary may refer to, for example, poor conversion from application to acceptance, the effects of interviewing candidates, significant differences in intake numbers for home and overseas students, differences across awards in a program, action being taken to widen participation etc.

Section 3 **Student Evaluation of the Course/Programme**

This section requires an analysis of the responses to the *Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires, Annual Programme/Course Review Reports* and *Student Experience Questionnaires*. The source documentation does not need to be appended to the report. Where necessary (i.e., by answering 'yes' or 'no' as indicated), commentary should be provided, including action to be taken, for example, pass rates falling below University thresholds, planned enhancements. Where appropriate, commentary should be given on a stage-by-stage basis.

Section 4 **Student Achievement**

This section requires an analysis of the undernoted performance indicators (supplied by the Academic Registrar on *Student Statistics* in September each

year) and, where indicated (i.e., by answering 'yes' to any question), commentary should be provided, including action to be taken:

- *Student Achievement Rates* and *Non-Progression Analysis*.
- *Program Award Profile,* including comparison with national trends (Honors Degrees only).
- statistics provided for monitoring student performance for minority groups (students with disabilities and students from ethnic minorities).
- *Destination of Leavers from National Statistics Organisation (NSO)* published during the previous session.

Commentary may refer to, for example, factors influencing withdrawal and action being taken to retain students, significant differences in the achievement rates for different groups/types of students e.g., part-time, distance learning, wider access, students with needs, significant differences in employment of graduates from different awards within a program, above average unemployment, progression to further study etc.

Section 5 **Standards**

This section will draw on an analysis of relevant information/comments regarding standards extracted from *External Examiner Annual Reports* and, where indicated (i.e., by answering 'yes' or 'no' to any question as indicated), commentary should be provided, including action to be taken.

Draft Course/Program Management Team Responses to *External Examiner Annual Reports* should be appended to the report for submission to and approval by the Curriculum Committee. It is not necessary to append the *External Examiner Annual Reports.*

Section 6 **Teaching and Learning Development**

Details of planned changes and enhancement activity should be provided as appropriate.

Section 7 **Resources**

Comment as appropriate i.e., where answering 'yes to any question. Other issues might include:

- Central services (e.g., printing, IT Helpdesk, Careers Services).
- Central administrative support (e.g., including Student Services, Academic Affairs, IT Services, Library, QA, Finance, HR).
- Distance learning support.

Section 8 **Course/Program Organization and Operation**

Comment as appropriate, i.e., where answering 'yes' to any question. Issues might include, for example, the success of the Personal/Pastoral Tutor System, Staff/Student Liaison arrangements. In the case of collaborative courses/programs, this section could include reference to the interaction between the University and the partner institution. In the case of student placements, comments could include, for example, the ease of securing placements.

Section 9 **Positive Developments and Good Practice**

Examples of any positive developments including examples of good practice used to deliver/assess/administer the course/program, especially those that might be shared with other Colleges. Possible examples could be:

- New teaching methods.
- Introduction of computer-based assessments.

Section 10 **Summary of Proposed Actions and Enhancements**

This section should draw on previous sections of the report and summaries all proposed actions and enhancements, indicating timescales and the level of responsibility i.e., College or University.

4.5 Guidance for Completion of the Annual College Review Report

The purpose of the *Annual College Review Report*, which is produced by, or on behalf of, the Dean, is to draw on the main issues arising from the individual *Annual Course/Program Reviews*, and any other relevant issues, and to highlight those issues which require strategic attention at College or University level. It is also designed to provide an effective basis for Internal Reviews in that it considers subject development and issues relating to, for example, professional and regulatory bodies, employer interactions, external reviews etc. The *Annual College Review Report* should indicate what plans the College has to both improve and enhance the quality of provision and practice. The *Annual College Review Report* should be completed following consultation with the College Academic Board.

The *Annual College Review Report* is submitted to QA office, along with the *Dean's Report on the Annual Review Process* (in practice, the individual College reports may be made available online for reference).

4.6 Guidance for Completion of the Dean's Report on the Annual Review Process

Drawing on information within the *Annual College Review Reports* and any further comments made during discussions at College level, the Dean prepares a *Dean's Report on the Annual Review Process, assisted* by the Course\Program Leader, for consideration by QA office at its final meeting of Semester One each session. The *Dean's Report* must be written in accordance with the ethos of the University as a self-critical academic community.

The *Dean's Report on the Annual Review Process* has two primary functions:

(a) to enable Academic Council, through QA Office, to be informed in an objective way of the quality and health of its academic portfolio.

(b) to provide, along with the *Annual College Review Report*, source material for:

  (i) the Internal Reviews conducted by the University.

  (ii) accreditation process conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency\or MFHEA\or Professional Accreditation Agency.

The *Dean's Report* will confirm that the *Annual Review Process* has been completed within the College in accordance with the University's procedures. If there are any *Annual Course/Program Reviews* which have yet to be submitted, how these will be dealt with should be explained within the main body of the *Dean's Report*.

The *Dean's Report* should be a critical analysis reflecting on the operation of the faculty during the previous session and highlighting the significant issues which have been raised by the *Annual Review Process*, including appropriate reference to quality enhancement issues. The

Report should also identify those issues which require to be discussed/resolved by QA office. The Dean may discuss any other matters which he/she feels justified in raising in this *Report*.

4.7 Guidance for Completion of Support Departments' Review and Enhancement of the Student Experience

Support departments which contribute directly to the student learning experience are required to submit a report on the *Review and Enhancement of the Student Experience* to Curriculum Committee\College Academic Board. Reports are structured under the following main headings:

- Progress report on enhancement activities undertaken during the session in response to issues arising from the previous session's Annual Review.
- Analysis/review of performance over the session.
- Plan of enhancement activities for the following session.
- Feedback to students.

A template is issued by the Academic Affairs Department each session. The *Guidance Note for the Review and Enhancement of the Student Experience (**Appendix 2.1**) provides* further detail.

Following consideration of these reports, OIS produces a summary report on the main issues arising from the Support Department reports, which is submitted for consideration by QA.

APPENDIX 2.1: GUIDANCE NOTE FOR THE REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

This note provides guidance to Support Departments on the prescribed format for reporting to the Quality Assurance Office, via the Curriculum Development Committee\College Academic Board, on the review of, and proposed enhancements to, the student experience.

Please head your report:

REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE – SESSION 200X/XX

inserting the current session and identify your department. Thereafter, please follow the following structure.

1. PROGRESS REPORT ON ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN SESSION 200X/0X IN RESPONSE TO ISSUES ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL REVIEW FOR SESSION 200X/0X.

This should refer to activities undertaken during the previous session in response to issues raised in the session before that, e.g., for reporting in Session 2021/22, the activities should relate to those undertaken in Session 2021/22 for issues raised in Session 2021/22.

Please report each enhancement activity with the following structure:

Issue/Activity:
Provide a brief description of the issue or activity.

Source/Origin of Issue:
Indicate why this was undertaken (e.g., Self-Evaluation, Department initiative designed to enhance the student experience, student evaluation/feedback etc.)

Progress to Date: Provide a brief description.

Evaluation:
Evaluate how successful each initiative has been and describe the evidence on which this judgement is based.

Note: Enhancement is defined as "taking deliberate steps to bring about continuous improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students".

2. ANALYSIS/REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE IN SESSION 200X/0X

This should refer to activities undertaken during the previous session in response to issues raised in the session before that, e.g., for reporting in Session 20XX/XX, the activities should relate to those undertaken in Session 20XX/XX.

Describe areas of strength and areas for improvement identified from analysis of feedback from the following sources, reporting with the following structure:

(a) *Student Experience*

Questionnaires **Areas of**

Strength:

–
–
–
–

Areas for Improvement:

-
-
-
-

(b) Other sources of feedback (e.g., external review, audit, self-evaluation etc.)

Areas of Strength:

–
–
–
–

Areas for Improvement:

–
–
–

3. PLAN OF ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR SESSION 2021/2022

This should refer to activities planned for the current session in which you are reporting, e.g., for reporting in Session 2021/22, the activities should relate to those planned for Session 2021/22.

The enhancement activities recorded in this section should distinguish between those that are short term (to be completed in the current session), and those that are longer term for possible incorporation into the Departmental *Quality Enhancement Implementation Plan* and, thereafter, the University's *Quality Enhancement Implementation Plan*. Please report each enhancement activity with the following structure:

3.1 Enhancements to be Undertaken During the Current Session

3.2 Enhancements for the Following Session(s)

4. FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS FOR SESSION 200X/XX

This should refer to feedback provided to students on actions undertaken in the previous session, e.g., for reporting in Session 2021/22, the activities should relate to those undertaken in Session 2021/22.

The text within this section should provide summary feedback to students on the above - bullet points/one or two paragraphs would be indicative. This information will be compiled into a 'student friendly' report and fed back to students via the Student Portal.

SECTION 3 INTERNAL REVIEW: GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

1.OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

Internal Review is the process adopted by the University to formally review, on a five-year cycle, its major curriculum and programme offerings. Following the formal review, there is an *Annual Internal Review* to monitor progress against actions/issues raised through the review process.

The primary purpose of an *Internal Review* is to assure that there is effective and responsible management of the quality and standards of its programme provision, and there is evidence of a commitment to continuous development and enhancement.

The Internal Review is organized on a College basis with programme provision as per MQF accreditation requirements, or by programme by a professional body, since there may also be some additional requirements for the University to follow as prescribed by a professional body.

The Internal Review is conducted by a *Review Panel* (minimum 3 members) consisting of both internal and, if the College decides, external members (*industry or academic experts*). The internal membership also includes a representative of the University's student community.

During the Internal Review event, the Review Panel will have the opportunity to view supplementary material, inspect facilities, and meet with staff, present and former students, and employers.

Responsibility for preparing for an Internal Review rest with the appropriate Dean of each College, or the nominee, or the Programme Leader. Normally, approximately six months prior to the event, a preliminary meeting is held with the QA, Academic Affairs, Registrar, relevant Faculty Program\Course Leader, the Dean of College, and key staff involved in preparing for the event where the Convener of the event is a QA Officer. The purposes of this preliminary meeting are:

- to clarify the review process.
- to confirm the content of the review (i.e., programmes to be reviewed).

- to confirm whether programme/course review will be conducted within the event.
- to ensure that the Dean or nominee checks that the documentation meets the requirements of both the professional and regulatory body, should the Internal Review event be combined with an accreditation event for a professional, or regulatory body.

2. INTERNAL REVIEW PROCEDURE

1. QA confirms date of Internal Review in consultation with Programme Leaders, Academic Affairs, Registrar, and co-ordinates preparation of *Internal Review.*

2. Six months prior to event, QA, Academic Affairs, and Registrar meet with the Dean or the nominee, Programme Leaders, and key staff.

3. The Provost prepares the Rationale and Composition of Review Panel and forwards it to Academic Council for approval 6 months prior to the IQA event *(Appendix 2).*

4. College prepares *Analytical Data,* and course documentation (*Appendix 3 Internal Review Documentation Evaluation Form*) in accordance with University and PRB requirements, as appropriate, in liaison with QA. Consultation takes place as appropriate with students and Support Departments.

7. Dean or Programme Leader ensures copies of *Course/Program Portfolio* – Submission of all Program descriptors and Module Descriptors to the Review Panel. (*Appendix 4 internal Review Scrutiny Report)*

9. The Review Panel undertakes the event and prepares Internal Review Report in 1 weeks' time after the event .

10. College prepares response to conditions and recommendations arising from the Report and submits it to Review Panel members not later than 3 days.

11. Chair of Review Panel advises of event outcomes and reports to the Academic Council accordingly.

12. Confirmed Report uploaded on QA's website (intranet only).

13. The response of the College will include a detailed improvement plan on how to deal with actions that need to be taken following the recommendations of the review.

14. Dean, or the nominee, ensures completion of final documentation in *Course Information Database and Module Database.*

15. Students, graduates and employers who participated in event receive copy of the report.

3. GUIDANCE

3.1. Planning and Scheduling of the Internal Review Event

The Program of Internal Review is overseen by the University's Quality Assurance Director who ensures that all the proper procedures are applied in a timely manner. The *Internal Review Planning Sheet (Appendix 1)* serves as an agreed framework of timescales to be adhered to.

The Internal Review event normally spans approximately two and a half days.

The program for the Internal Review event and the composition of the Review Panel are considered and approved at the meeting of the Academic Council, where the President and the Provost decide the composition and the QA Director in consultation with the Provost and president, the programme

3.2 Review Panels

Panels for Internal Review events should consist of external and internal members appropriate to the nature of the programme under review, and the membership is selected ensuring wide spectrum of external advice and comments as possible. ((*Appendix 2 Review Panel Membership Proforma)*

An Internal Review Panel has the following minimum composition:

Chair: Appointed by the President. His/her role is to manage the event, ensure it is conducted in accordance with the University's requirements.

Three-four internal members: Internal members of staff appointed by the Provost and approved by the Academic Council. One of the internal members will normally be a Programme Leader.

One internal student member: An enrolled student at the University appointed in liaison with the Student Union. The student will be from outside the host College, may be a part-time, full-time or distance learner and will normally have experience of representing students' interests at college or institutional level.

One or two external members (if applicable): External member must be an academic or represent the appropriate industry, profession, or commerce.

Three Review Panel members is the minimum, maximum 5 or 7 members is the composition for a Panel. It may be preferable to include more external academic/professional representation depending on the discipline(s) covered by the review.

3.3 Programme/Course Documentation and Approval

A Documentation Scrutineer *(Appendix 3 Documentation Evaluation Form)* (normally the relevant Program\Course Leader) checks the documentation has been produced according to University Regulations and guidelines.

The Documentation Scrutineer ensures the course documentation is passed to the Chair of the Review Panel for approval. Documentation scrutiny and QA approval is often undertaken in parallel. *(Appendix 4 Internal Review Scrutiny Report)*

QA is required to approve the following elements of the updated course documentation for all courses being submitted for review:

- **Course Aims (Detailed Course Descriptor (DCD)**
- **Course Learning Outcomes (DCD).**
- **Mapping of Course Learning Outcomes to Modules (DCD).**
- **Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies (DCD).**
- **Course Assessment (DCD).**
- **All Module Descriptors**

Reading List

Supplementary items of documentation are made available to Panel members, where possible, in advance. Data and supplementary documentation for each programme/course is likely to include:

- **academic, technician and research staff.**
- **programme management** and a description of their integration within the overall College management structure
- **Summary of External Annual Reports** over the last three sessions, prepared by the Course\Program Leader.
- **Course/Program Management Team Responses** from the last two sessions.
- **Annual Review documentation** covering the last two sessions (if applicable).
- Data relating to **Student Course and Module Evaluation Questionnaires** (a sample from across the last two sessions)

- **Annual Student Experience Survey, Student Survey, Graduate Survey**: data on achievement and employability
- **Data on student enrolment, retention, and achievement**: for example, entry qualifications, student achievement rates, course completion rates (including research)
- **Graduate First Destination Statistics** (graduate, employment statistics) etc.
- **Reports of accreditation visits by PRBs** and an indication of how outcomes have been addressed.
- **Teaching Excellence** survey
- **Employer's survey** (if applicable)

Documentation on collaborative arrangements:

- **Notes of University - Industry meetings (two sessions per year).**
- **Notes of College Academic Board meetings (two sessions per year).**
- **Notes of Curriculum Development Committee meetings (Course/Program Management Team) (two sessions per year).**
- **Notes of Staff/Student Liaison meetings (two sessions per year).**
- **Curriculum Development Committee's Plans (***where appropriate***).**
- **Summary staff CVs and publication lists.** *(Appendix 5 Template of CV)*
- **Schedule of Visiting Lecturers (***where appropriate***).**
- **Examples of Student Handbooks, Programme and Course Handbooks and any other course materials.**
- **Samples of student work/artefacts (for the purpose of demonstrating the range, and not for the purpose of confirming standards).**
- **Information provided by central Support Departments (***where appropriate***).**
- **Programme/Course Review Reports (***published***)**

3.4 Production of Review Documentation

The Internal Review documentation is produced by the College concerned, with a good quality original being forwarded to the Graphics and Printing Department for production of the final documents. The Graphics and Printing Department uses these originals for photocopying the required number of Internal Review documents, producing them in an appropriate format. These are sent to the Panel members.

3.5 Outcomes of Internal Review

The Review Panel will make one of the following judgments in respect of the assurance of quality and standards and of evidence of commitment to continuous development and enhancement for each of the courses reviewed:

- Confidence, fulfils minimum standards
- No confidence, does not fulfil minimum standards

In reaching a judgment of "confidence" the Panel will have the opportunity to make recommendations. In reaching a judgment of 'no' confidence the Panel should clearly indicate the basis whereby this judgment has been reached and indicate to the University what steps could be taken to address this outcome.

In terms of the review of courses, the Panel can make the judgment either to approve a course with recommendations, or to not approve a course. In reaching the latter judgement, the Panel should clearly indicate the basis whereby this judgement has been reached.

3.6 College Response to Outcomes of Internal Review

The College is required to produce a response to the conditions and recommendations arising from the Internal Review event. This must be sent to the Review Panel members for their consideration and/or approval.

The College Response should be set out in the following way:

- Each condition and recommendation should be re-stated, in bold, as it appears in the Confirmed Report of the event. Under each, the College should indicate how it will meet the condition or action on the recommendation.

- If the conditions require a re-write of some of the course documentation presented at the review, the relevant revised extracts should be attached as appendices to the response.

3.7 Review Report

A formal report of each Internal Review event is prepared by the Review Panel, and is structured around the sections of the *Internal Review Scrutiny Report (Appendix 6)*. After it has been approved by all members of the Panel the Confirmed Report is made available on the QA's website.

A copy of the Confirmed Report is also forwarded to students, graduates and employers who participated in the event.

3.8 Evaluation of Process

As part of its commitment to continuous enhancement of its quality assurance procedures, the University annually reviews the efficiency and effectiveness of the Internal Review process. To assist in this process, Panel members and the Dean involved in a specific Internal Review event are asked to complete a *Panel Member Questionnaire (Appendix 7*) *or Dean Questionnaire* (*Appendix 7 Dean Questionnaire*), as appropriate.

4. HOW TO WRITE A GUIDELINES TO INTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

SECTION 1 - OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief overview of programme/course provision and relevant background information, before engaging with the more detailed content.

Typical content will include:

Part 1.1 The programmes/course(s) being reviewed and their location within the academic structure of the University, i.e., College, Curriculum Development Committee etc.

Part 1.2 Main issues arising from previous Reviews (programme/College/PRB) and subsequent actions taken.

Part 1.3 A brief description of significant developments/issues since the last review relating to the context of the subject and pertinent to the current review. This should be restricted to institutional and College developments, e.g., relocation to a new building, change in organizational structures, etc. Guidance on developments at an institutional level will be provided in the preliminary meeting.

Programme/course developments should not be included in this section as these will be addressed in Section 2.

Part 1.4 Overview of the main source of evidence and benchmarks which will be used to inform the subsequent sections of the Analytical Account, e.g., Annual Course/Program Review, External Examiner Annual Reports, MQF requirements, etc.

SECTION 2 - CRITICAL REVIEW OF PROGRAMME/COURSE PROVISION

In addition to including reference to the portfolio of evidence, cross reference should be made within the following subsections to supplementary documentation which will be

available to the Panel. Where more than one programme/course is being addressed within the Analytical Account, content common to all courses should be presented first, followed by course specific details.

Subsections 2.2 – 2.9 inclusive should conclude with a brief evaluation of the current situation and an indication of planned further developments and enhancements.

Part 2.1 Aims of programme/course area

This should provide:

- A brief statement of the aims of the programme/course area.
- Demonstration of the relevance of programme/course aims to the University's Mission and Vision.
- A brief description of how the subject engages with industry/professions to ensure the relevance and achievement of its aims.

Part 2.2 Programme/course developments

Highlight the key developments (and associated rationale) in the programme/course provision since the last review. Address changes/developments in respect of the following:

- capability, i.e., areas of expertise.
- capacity, i.e., faculty/staff complement.
- course provision, i.e., new course developments, course cessations and major subject content changes in continuing courses.
- research

The influence of relevant national/international developments/best practice underpinning these developments and/or proposed enhancements should be highlighted where appropriate.

Each programme/course for which review is sought should be considered the following information provided:

(a) A summary of the main issues arising at the last approval and actions taken in the light of these.

(b) A critical review of other developments to the course/program over the period since the previous review, *e.g., new awards, course structures etc*. This should include a rationale for the developments, e.g., student feedback, compliance with the Malta Qualifications Frameworks (MQF) etc., and an evaluation of the success of these developments.

(c) A summary evaluation of the performance of the programme/course drawing on the data and content.

(d) Discussion of, and rationale for, any changes incorporated within the programme/course now being submitted for review. Where appropriate, there should be reference to any resourcing/development requirements.

Part 2.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This subsection should provide a critical review of current teaching, learning and assessment practices, highlighting key developments, evidence of effectiveness and proposed future enhancements. Reference should be made, where relevant, to the influence on practice at course/subject level of university-wide strategies/initiatives for the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Topics for inclusion include:

- pedagogy and assessment practices/policies.
- modes of delivery, e.g., online, face-to-face, blended, distance learning
- work-based learning, where relevant.
- equity and diversity, and wider access.

Part 2.4 Programme/Course Standards

This subsection should contain a critical review of key practices and developments designed to secure appropriate intended and output standards.

Intended standards for taught courses relate to *curriculum design and content* and so emphasis should be placed on highlighting the mechanisms for ensuring their appropriateness, along with supporting evidence to confirm the achievement of this. This would, therefore, relate to adherence to MFHEA requirements, Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF), PRB requirements, where relevant, influence of employers and features of and relevant outcomes from course validation.

For research degree provision, a brief explanation should be provided of how research programmes are developed and approved.

Output standards relate to student achievement. Reference should be made to any developments designed to enhance consistency/security of standards. This could involve some cross-referencing to relevant aspects of Section 2.3.

Part 2.5 Student Enrolment, Retention and Achievement

This subsection should provide a critical review of key performance data relating to the taught course portfolio over the period since the last review. This should include appropriate cross reference to changes in the course portfolio, i.e., where analysis has led to course cessations, new course developments or significant course changes. Associated tabulated data for the programme/course provision should include reference to entry profiles, Student Achievement Rates, application to enrolment ratios, award profiles, first destination statistics, and comparability against national benchmarks (e.g., award of honors). Relevant data relating to wider access and equity and diversity should also be included.

Part 2.6 Learning Infrastructure

This subsection should provide a critical review and evaluation of the effectiveness of key developments and enhancements in respect of the learning infrastructure. The content of this section could be considered under two categories:

− resources and facilities at college and institutional level. This in turn would include reference to accommodation, equipment, library services and provision, IT facilities and e-learning platforms.

− student support at college and institutional level. This would include reference to developments in the personal tutorial system, College learning resources, developments to central services, e.g., academic support services, tutoring, careers services, etc.

Appropriate liaison/consultation should take place with relevant staff in Support Departments in producing this subsection.

Part 2.7 Student Evaluation of the Learning Experience

This subsection should deal with two aspects of student evaluation:

− a critical review and evaluation of the key developments in enhancing the mechanisms for obtaining and responding to student feedback, e.g., development of evaluation questionnaires, course/program management, staff/student liaison mechanisms, student representative training, etc.

− the key issues arising from student evaluation, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. An indication should be given of key changes which are taking place because of this feedback and may well involve cross referencing to previous sections of the document.

Appropriate liaison/consultation should take place with students/student representatives in producing this subsection.

Part 2.8 Research

This subsection should provide, for each programme/course within the Review, a critical review of research activity, including how the research underpins taught provision. In each case, this should conclude with the proposed research strategy for the next Review Period. Cross referencing should be made to the quantitative data. Associated tabulated data should be provided including e.g., number of research staff, research students, annual publications, research income etc.

Part 2.9 Scholarly Activity and Staff Development

This subsection should provide a critical review of scholarly activity and staff development pertinent to each programme/course area. The underlying rationale for the strategies adopted should be discussed, along with proposed future strategies.

PART 4. EXTERNAL EXAMINER ARRANGEMENTS

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The appointment of External Examiners is one of the most important features of the University's system of quality assurance. The function of the External Examiner is crucial to all aspects of the assessment process and his/her presence ensures the objectivity of an Assessment Board, comparability of awards and standards in the national context, the fair and equitable treatment of students, and correct application of the Academic Regulations.

The remit of the External Examiner extends to all assessments that contribute to the award of academic credit.

2. EXTERNAL EXAMINING PROCEDURES

2.1 Approval of External Examiners

1. College forwards pre-nomination pack containing Guidance Note on External Examiner Role and Expectations (Appendix 4.1), Detailed Course Descriptor, relevant Module Descriptors and rates of fee payments and expenses, to potential External Examiner to enable them to determine if they will be able to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Where an External Examiner also requires approval by an external body (e.g., professional, statutory, or regulatory body) the College should consult with and advise the Course\Program Leader to ensure this is managed in parallel with university approval.

2. Course/Program Management Team submits nomination for appointment of External Examiner to College Academic Board in time for Semester One meeting of the session before External Examiner is due to take up office. Nomination is submitted using External Examiner Appointment Application*.
3. College Academic Board approves Course/Program Management Team nominations and submits forms to Course\Program Leader for checking (see External Examiner Application Checklist), prior to submission to the Dean. External Examiner Appointment Applications should be submitted in order that they can be considered before recommending approval to the Semester Two meeting of Academic Council.
4. The Dean recommends approval of External Examiner to the next meeting of Academic Council. This approval should be at least 6 months before the first assessment for which they will be responsible.

NB: *The normal period of appointment of an External Examiner is October to September, to coincide with the Academic Calendar*.

2.2 Procedure following approval of Nominee by Academic Council

1. Academic Registrar issues copy of standard appointment letter to External Examiner together with fee scales, details of how to claim expenses, Academic Regulations, Organizational Regulation, Section 4 of the Academic Quality Handbook, Assessment Handbook, a copy of the Checklist for External Examiners, QA Policy: Section 4 (External Examining) and a hard copy and electronic version of the External Examiner Annual Report. A separate External Examiner Annual Report - Credit-Rated Short Course(s) proforma is used for credit-rated short courses.
2. Academic Registrar issues copy of standard appointment letter to External Examiner together with fee scales, details of how to claim expenses, Academic Regulations, Organizational Regulation, Section 4 of the Academic Quality Handbook, Assessment Handbook, a copy of the Checklist for External Examiners, QA Policy: Section 4 (External Examining) and a hard copy and electronic version of the External Examiner Annual Report. A separate External Examiner Annual Report - Credit-Rated Short Course(s) proforma is used for credit-rated short courses.
3. College issues dates of summative assessments/Assessment Board meeting(s) to External Examiner and arranges visit of new External Examiner to be briefed on course/program aims and outcomes, curriculum, syllabus, teaching methods, Subject Benchmark Statements if appropriate, Regulations, and assessment methods. College advises of date of briefing visit. Wherever possible, the QA should be invited to attend briefing to highlight a variety of University-wide issues, including emphasizing the importance of the External Examiner Annual Report. Where an External Examiner is appointed to a franchised or collaborative course/program it is the responsibility of the Dean to ensure that the External Examiner receives appropriate briefing.

1. Assessment Process

1. College issues draft Instruments of Assessment for first and second assessment diets to External Examiner for approval. This should be at least one month in advance of the first assessment diet to allow sufficient time for scrutiny and amendment. Following a response from the External Examiner, the School should undertake to inform External Examiners of amendments which have been made to draft Instruments of Assessment.
It is also important that External Examiners should have access to all assessment scripts and any other work contributing to final awards of courses/programs to have sufficient evidence to determine that grading and classifications are of an appropriate standard.
2. College implements processes of assessment and of Assessment Board, according to University Regulations. External Examiners perform duties of assessment, including sample scrutiny of student scripts/assessment, submission of External Examiner Module Feedback Report and Module Coordinator Analysis Form, where appropriate, and attendance at Assessment Board(s).
3. At Assessment Board, Officer in Attendance provides External Examiner Expenses Claim and External Examiner Annual Report.
4. External Examiner Fees Claim completed by Course/Program Leader on receipt of External Examiner Annual Report. Thereafter, it is submitted by Course/Program Leader to the Dean and Academic Registrar for certification

External Examiner Annual Report

1. Each External Examiner shall report annually to the University on the conduct of assessments concluded during the year and on issues relating to those assessments. Failure to report may result in the termination of an appointment. External Examiners are required to submit an *External Examiner Annual Report* to the University as soon as possible, and not later than four weeks after the first diet/PgDip Assessment Board. A supplementary report may be submitted after resit/MSc Assessment Boards and should similarly be submitted within four weeks. A supplementary report would only be produced if any major issues had been identified because of the resit/MSc Assessment Boards. The *External Examiner Annual Report* must be in accordance with the standard University *External Examiner Annual Report* proforma. Academic Registrar confirms receipt of *External Examiner Annual Report*.

2. Academic Affairs Department distributes *External Examiner Annual Report* to the Principal, Senior Vice-Principal, Dean, Course Leader and partner institution (if appropriate). Program\Course Leader undertakes initial scrutiny of *External Examiner Annual Reports* on their receipt, alerts Dean to any problem areas and action is agreed for issues highlighted for the attention of senior management. Program\Course Leader produces a summary report for consideration by QA.

In addition, the Program\Course Leader highlights unsatisfactory *External Examiner Annual Report*s to the Provost who reviews the case and corresponds with the External Examiner if appropriate.

3. Course/Program Leader circulates *External Examiner Annual Report* to Course/Program Management Team.

4. Course/Program Management Team receives *External Examiner Annual Report*, *and* is required to address each of the points raised in the Report by completing *Course/Program Management Team Response to External Examiner Annual Report*. *Course/Program* Management Team Response is submitted to the College Academic Board for approval. In the case of a franchised course/program the host Course/Program Management Team must sign off the response to the *External Examiner Annual Report*. *With* regard to a validated course/program delivered by a collaborating institution, the institution concerned should sign off the response and ensure a copy is lodged with the University.

Appropriate reference to the *External Examiner Annual Report* is also made as part of Annual Review Process. (See **Section 2** of this Handbook).

5. Dean issues a copy of Course/Program Management Team's response to the External Examiner to advise of course of action adopted in respect of each comment raised in *External Examiner Annual Report*. Even if no obvious action is required in the *External Examiner Annual Report*, the School must still respond. A copy of the response is also sent to the other External Examiners for the course/program as appropriate and to the Academic Registrar for internal distribution to the Provost, Dean. In addition, it is considered good practice for the college to share the External Examiner Annual Reports among all the External Examiners. The College retains the response, together with the *External Examiner Annual Report*, *on* file for a period of five years. The Dean will confirm in their *Annual School Review Report* that all responses have been submitted to External Examiners.

6. At the November/December meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee, the Dean of each College should be in a position to report that all *External Examiner Annual Report*s have been received and acted upon and that a response has been issued to the External Examiner(s) concerned.

APPENDIX 4.1: GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS

Authority and Responsibilities of External Examiners

- To ensure that students are assessed fairly and impartially, and that the standard of a particular University award is comparable with those of other awarding bodies.

- To approve, as appropriate, the form and content of draft examination papers, coursework and/or other forms of assessment that contribute to the assessment in award-bearing stages.

- To approve proposed changes to assessment regulations where these affect students currently registered for the course.

- To approve, as appropriate, proposed course/module changes.

- To attend meetings of the Assessment Board, as appropriate, and have right of access to the work of students where such work is subject to assessment for academic awards within the Board's jurisdiction.

- To have access to the work of those students recommended for the highest category of the award(s) and of those deemed to have failed the assessment for the award. External Examiners shall also have authority to request representative samples of work for each category of the award to ensure that the relative placing of the students in order of merit is fair and impartial.

- To moderate the grades awarded by the internal examiners.

- To conduct a viva voce examination in the case of any student.

- To participate, as required, in the review of any decision relating to an individual student award.

- Every recommendation for the conferment of an award of the University by an Assessment Board shall be subject to the written consent of at least one of the External Examiners for the award.

- Where an External Examiner(s) declares the subject of any contention to be a matter of principle, the Assessment Board shall either accept the view of the External Examiner(s) or refer the matter to the Academic Council for a decision. Similarly, any unresolved disagreement between the External Examiners shall be referred to the Academic Council for resolution.

- About modules that are shared between Schools:

  - To ensure comparability of awards (national) and standards (University).
  - To ensure fair and equitable treatment of students who share modules across courses.
  - Duties of moderation of assessment, reading of scripts as appropriate.
  - Receives *Module Results Listing*, immediately following assessment periods in Semester 1 and Semester 2, from Module Coordinator.
  - Analysis's profile of grades (all students in host and guest Schools).
  - Prepares *Module Feedback Report* and submits to Module Coordinator.

- To undertake their responsibilities in accordance with the Academic Regulations and AUM Organizational Regulations.

Administrative Responsibilities

- Each External Examiner shall complete a standard written Annual Report to the University on the conduct of the assessments concluded during the year and on issues relating to those assessments.

- The Course/Program Management Team, under the direction of the Dean and Course/Program Leader, is required to address each of the points raised in the External Examiner's report; the Dean shall subsequently respond formally, in writing, to the External Examiner(s) to advise him/her of the course of action adopted in respect of each of the comments raised in the report.

- Where an External Examiner considers that any aspect of an assessment erodes or jeopardizes the standard of the University's awards, he/she shall report such concern, at the earliest opportunity, in writing to the Provost of the University.

APPENDIX 4.2: GUIDANCE NOTE ON SUMMATIVE INSTRUMENTS OF ASSESSMENT AND EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Guidelines for the Preparation and Internal Moderation of Summative Instruments of Assessment and their Model Answers/Grading Schemes and Associated External Examiner Liaison

1. **Introduction to Key Principles**

The aim is to provide a good practice guideline for the preparation of summative Instruments of Assessment (for example, examination papers and coursework). **The guidelines apply to the early stages of courses as well as the final award bearing stages.** The detailed processes adopted within the Colleges may vary according to local circumstances, however, it is essential that the following three key functions of the system are efficiently coordinated and implemented:

- preparation of summative Instruments of Assessment and associated model answers/grading schemes.
- internal moderation of summative Instruments of Assessment and associated model answers/grading schemes.
- communication with External Examiner(s), where relevant.

The Dean has overall responsibility for the management of course/program assessment; however, this function is normally delegated to the Course/Program Leader or his/her representative (which in some Colleges might be the Examination Officer). At the start of each session or semester the Course/Program Leader, or his/her nominee should identify Principal Examiners (refer section 2 below) and also establish internal moderation procedures, so it is clear were responsibilities rest with individuals.

Based on the Academic Calendar, which specifies the examination periods during the year, and the course/program assessment schedule, the Course Leader or his/her representative should establish timescales to produce summative Instruments of Assessment and their model answer(s)/grading scheme(s).

Draft Instruments of Assessment for first and second diet assessments, along with their model answer/grading schemes, should be sent to the External Examiner(s) at least one month in advance of the first diet to allow sufficient time for scrutiny and amendment.

The process for the external scrutiny of coursework should be the subject of consultation with the appropriate External Examiners. Where External Examiner scrutiny has been confirmed, draft first and re-sit diet Instruments of Assessment, along with their model answers/grading schemes, should be sent to the External Examiner(s) at least one month in advance of the first diet to allow sufficient time for scrutiny and amendment.

The following amplifies the three key functions.

2. **Preparation of Summative Instruments of Assessment and Their Model Answers/Grading Schemes**

The Principal Examiner has overall responsibility for the development of summative Instrument(s) of Assessment and their model answer(s)/grading scheme(s) for a module(s) and is a member of academic staff teaching on the course/program. The Principal Examiner must:

- co-ordinate the input of relevant members of staff to ensure the form and content of summative Instrument(s) of Assessment are appropriate.
- forward draft (first diet and referral) summative Instrument(s) of Assessment and model answer(s)/grading scheme(s) for internal moderation.
- provide finalized versions of summative Instrument(s) of Assessment and model answer(s)/grading scheme(s) to the Course/Program Leader.
- ensure comments made, where required, by External Examiner(s) are properly considered and incorporated.
- ensure that the final summative Instrument(s) of Assessment is proofread.

3. **Internal Moderation of Summative Instruments of Assessment and Their Model Answers/Grading Schemes**

The process of internal moderation must ensure that Instruments of Assessment are unbiased; of an approved standard; reflect learning outcomes; and are in the standard format. For example, the criteria specified in Annex 1 provide a check against which examination paper(s) and model answer(s)/grading scheme(s) can be scrutinized. These criteria are based on current good practice used within some areas of the University.

Internal moderation can be undertaken in one of two ways: by an Internal Moderator (a member of academic staff, normally having expertise in the subject area, but is not currently teaching on the module for which the assessment is being developed); or alternatively, Colleges might wish to develop a panel system for moderation. Whichever system is adopted, it is essential that the criteria are consistently used and that the Principal Examiner is given feedback through this process.

4. **Liaison with External Examiners**

The Course/Program Leader or his/her nominee should be the central point for communication/liaison with the External Examiner(s) and should ensure that:

(a) the moderated summative Instrument(s) of Assessment and their model answer(s)/grading scheme(s) are sent to the External Examiner(s) at least one month before the date of the assessment.

(b) comments made by External Examiner(s) are forwarded to the Principal Examiners for consideration for possible incorporation into the final drafts of summative Instrument(s) of Assessment and their model answer(s)/grading scheme(s).

(c) the External Examiner(s) is notified as to what action has been taken on his/her comments.

(d) the External Examiner(s) is informed, as appropriate, of any changes made to the summative Instrument(s) of Assessment and their model answer(s)/grading scheme(s) after his/her approval.

ANNEX 1

EXEMPLAR CHECKLIST FOR INTERNAL MODERATION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS AND MODEL ANSWERS/GRADING SCHEMES

College .....
Principal Examiner .....
Course/Program .....
Module Title .....

Tick as appropriate

Examination Question paper	*yes*	*no*
1. Does the time allowed for the examination match what is stated in the Module Descriptor and any other course/program documentation or student guides?		
2. Do the questions cover the syllabus adequately do they reflect the Learning Outcomes as specified in the module descriptors?		
3. Is each question of a standard appropriate to the level being assessed?		
4. Do questions allow for discrimination between different Honors Classifications?		
5. Are the questions clear and unambiguous?		
6. Are the grade/mark allocations appropriate?		
7. Is the presentation and layout of the examination paper in the approved University format?		
8. Are all the additional materials listed (for example, tables, graphs, etc.) included in the examination paper and		

referred to in the relevant questions?		
9. Does the cover sheet provide clear instructions to students?		
10. Have examination papers for special needs students been set in an appropriate format where relevant?		
11. Has a model answer/grading scheme been prepared for this examination paper?		
12. Is the solution accurate for each question involving calculations?		
13. Are the salient points listed for the answers to all descriptive questions?		
14. If the question is divided into sections have the weightings of the grades been specified?		

General Comment and Impression of the Paper

Internal Moderator's Signature..... Date.....

SECTION 5 PLACEMENT PROVISION

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

This Section of the Handbook covers the University policy and procedures for the quality assurance of student placements.
Many courses/programs within the University are regulated by the requirements of professional and regulatory bodies. Where this is the case, any additional requirements should also be met for student placements.

The following terminology is used throughout this Section of the Handbook:

Placement Coordinator	-	overall placement organizer for the College
Academic Placement Tutor	-	tutor based within the College
Placement Provider	-	the organization providing the placement
Placement Supervisor	-	tutor employed by the Placement Provider

The University is responsible for ensuring that, where placement learning is an intended part of a course/program:

- the responsibilities for placement learning are clearly defined.
- the intended Learning Outcomes contribute to the overall aims of the course/program.
- any assessment of placement learning is part of a coherent assessment strategy.

These aspects are also currently covered by the following Sections of this Handbook:

Section 1: Module, Course and Program Developments
Section 2: Annual Review Process
Section 3: Internal Review.

2. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Placement Arrangements

It is important students are aware of the basic requirements of their placement. The University requires that all students undertaking a placement period be issued, well before the start of the placement, with a document clarifying:

(i) Who is responsible for securing the placement? If the College is primarily responsible, it should be stated whether the student is permitted, or encouraged, to find his/her own placement opportunity. If the student is primarily responsible, detail of any assistance available should be given.

(ii) The procedure for approving placements.

(iii) The consequences of failing to secure a placement or failing to satisfactorily complete a placement.

An exemplar document depicting the organization of placements is given in *Appendix 5.1,* and should be modified to fit the requirements of each course/program.

2.2 Placement Provision

The University wishes to be assured of the ability of the Placement Provider to:

- provide the learning opportunities to enable the specified Learning Outcomes to be achieved.
- support students on placement.
- fulfil responsibilities under health and safety legislation in the workplace, having regard to the level of skill and experience of placement students.

2.2.1 Academic and Support Issues

Documentation provided to the Placement Provider should include:

- a synopsis of the learning and skills possessed by the students prior to commencing placement.
- a statement of the Module Learning Outcomes to be achieved.
- if a learning contract is to be developed, some guidance on the process, including examples.
- a statement of any key targets to be met, e.g., interim report dates.
- if the Placement Supervisor is to be involved in assessment, an explanation of how this is to be carried out, preferably with proformas to be completed which include detailed definitions of grades.

When approving a new Placement Provider, the Placement Coordinator should assure him/herself the above issues are well understood by the Placement Provider and adequate learning opportunities and support in terms of staff and facilities are available.

Where a learning contract is to be developed, this process should be completed at an early stage of the placement; for a year-long placement, it should be completed by the end of the first four weeks. In all cases, final approval of the learning contract is the responsibility of the College, and this should include a check that all the stated Module Learning Outcomes are adequately covered.

2.2.2 Health and Safety

Whilst the primary responsibility for the health and safety of the student rests with the Placement Provider during the placement period, the University has responsibilities to both the Placement Provider and to the students on placement. The University's Students Affairs has developed Student Placement Risk Management Policy and Procedure. Colleges should ensure all the procedures detailed in the current version of this are implemented. Copies of the Student Placement Risk Management Policy and Procedure are also available at the website.
For all placements, Colleges should pay special attention if a student has specific needs. Additional checks on the suitability of the premises in which the student will work and the support to be provided by the Placement Provider must be made about the specific needs, and a report lodged with the Placement Coordinator. The University's *Adviser for Students with Disabilities* may be consulted or involved in the process, as necessary.

2.2.3 Placement Providers

Visits by Academic Placement Tutors should be used to reinforce, as necessary, the awareness of Placement Providers of their responsibilities relating to the provision of learning opportunities and support, the health and safety of students and, where appropriate, assessment.

3. STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Colleges should address issues regarding students' rights and responsibilities by conducting student briefings ahead of the placement. It is essential students also receive guidance in written form. Whilst the items to be covered will depend on the College and the placements involved, the list given in *Appendix 5.2* provides an indication of items which might be covered.

4. STUDENT SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Colleges should ensure adequate support and information is provided for all placement students by conducting student briefings ahead of the placement, covering what the student may expect leading up to, during and after the placement. It is essential students also receive the guidance in written form. The Placement Provider should be sent a copy of any written guidance provided. Whilst the items to be covered will depend on the College and the placements involved, the list given in *Appendix 5.3* provides an indication of items which might be covered.

5. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The University is responsible for ensuring the staff who are involved in placement learning are competent to fulfil their role. The following procedures should be adopted and documented:

5.1 College Responsibilities

(i) Wherever possible, Placement Coordinators should be members of groups comprising staff with similar responsibilities in other institutions.

(ii) Placement Coordinators should brief new members of staff on what is expected of an Academic Placement Tutor, and this should be accompanied by the issue of written guidance.

(iii) Guidelines and checklists/forms covering progress towards Learning Outcomes, any problems and remedial actions taken should be drawn up by each College for Academic Placement Tutor visits to students on placements. The checklists/forms should be completed and returned to the Placement Coordinator to form a permanent record of each placement.

(iv) An annual meeting of all staff involved in placements should be held to discuss the operation of placements during the previous session and possible modifications for the forthcoming session. Ideally, this meeting should include staff from Placement Providers as this will raise the awareness of Placement Supervisors and involve them in developments.

(v) Where applicable, College staff development policies should ensure the provision of arrangements to train academic staff involved in placement activity.

(vi) Provision should be made so an efficient immediate transfer of all placement duties is possible in the event the Placement Coordinator is absent for a prolonged period.

5.2 University Responsibilities

(i) The University will organize a meeting of Placement Coordinators at least once per session to review University-wide issues relating to the provision of student placements.

(ii) The University will provide training opportunities as required and in consultation with Placement Coordinators.

6. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

The University's Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints applies equally to the placement period as to any other activity in connection with study at the University.

Colleges must ensure students, University staff and Placement Providers are aware how to access Academic *Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints.*

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PLACEMENT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The following procedures should be followed and documented:

7.1 During Placements

Colleges should:

(i) Encourage Placement Supervisors and students to communicate any concerns over any aspect of the placement timeously.

(ii) Ensure progress is monitored at regular intervals, with appropriate recording of information gathered.

(iii) Ensure continuous communication is maintained between the Academic Placement Tutor and the Placement Supervisor.

7.2 After Conclusion of Placements

Colleges should:

(i) Collect information on the effectiveness of the learning during placement. This may be achieved by the issue of questionnaires to, and/or by reports from, students and Placement Supervisors. External Examiners may make an input, where appropriate, at Assessment Boards and in *External Examiner Annual Reports*. Informal input from students and Placement Supervisors may be obtained through meetings either in groups or individually.

(ii) Process and evaluate the information, including ensuring the quality and standards of achievement of all the placements are reviewed. The University's quality system provides several mechanisms by which this may be achieved and recorded: through Assessment Boards, with External Examiner participation where appropriate, and the Annual Review Process.

(iii) Ensure participation of Placement Providers in the review of procedures to facilitate effective learning opportunities during placement. The many informal opportunities for this process should be supplemented by more formal occasions. The proceedings of these formal occasions should be recorded and may include, for example, group meetings between representatives from the staff of Placement Providers and the College.

APPENDIX 5.1: EXEMPLAR DOCUMENT FOR PLACEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

COLLEGE OF ……

Students undertaking the BSc …… are required to undertake a ..... week period of work experience (placement) within an approved organization. The placement will normally be undertaken after successful completion of Stage 3 of the course.

1. Procedures for securing and allocating placements.

Staff in the College will generate placement opportunities, this will be coordinated by the College's Placement Coordinator.

All placement opportunities will be advertised to students

Students may apply for any position of interest to them.

Placement Providers will receive all applications and will draw up a shortlist for interview with no assistance from the Placement Coordinator.

The successful candidate will be selected after progressing through the Placement Provider's own recruitment process.

2. Procedure for approving placements

Organizations interested in employing a placement student are required to produce a description of the tasks to be undertaken (task description) during the proposed placement.

Before advertising any placement opportunity, this task description will be judged against the Learning Outcomes for the placement element of the course to ascertain its suitability.

Any student identifying a potential placement using his or her own connections is required to submit a task description to the Placement Coordinator. This will be subject to the same approval procedure as above.

3. Consequences of failure to secure a placement or failing a placement.

Any student failing to secure a placement by the end of September will be required to undertake a research project in the College. Any student failing the placement, or alternative project, should be aware only one further attempt to achieve success in this element is possible. Any student who ultimately fails the placement, or alternative project, will not be eligible for an award.

APPENDIX 5.2: SUGGESTED LIST - STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

1. Act as good representatives both of themselves and of the University. The work placement will form an important part of a student's CV, particularly in the early stages of his/her career. For the student, a good impression is important to get the most out of the placement and possibly a useful referee for future applications; for the University, future placement opportunities for future students are at stake.

2. Pay due attention to all health and safety issues, attend briefings before the commencement of the placement and carefully read the contents of the *University Health and Safety Pack.*

3. Return the *Health and Safety Induction Checklist* promptly by the end of week 1 of the placement.

4. Be professional, this includes respect for any ethical, legal, confidential, or other considerations as appropriate.

5. Manage inter-personal relationships with the employer, its clients, and employees.

6. Wear appropriate dress and present a good personal appearance.

7. Report for work punctually and work as specified by the Placement Provider.

8. Work efficiently, alone or with others as required.

9. Record progress and achievements.

10. Produce material for assessments and/or as required for other purposes by your employer to meet given deadlines.

11. Alert the employer at the start of the day in the event of illness preventing attendance. If the illness persists for 5 days or more, the Placement Coordinator at the School should also be alerted.

12. Negotiate any days off with the Placement Supervisor.

13. Be enthusiastic, set out to gain as much from the opportunity as possible.

14. Avoid openly criticizing the Placement Provider or individuals within the organization.

15. Report all accidents to the Placement Supervisor and to the Placement Coordinator.

16. Promptly inform the appropriate person in the event of any problem developing which is inhibiting progress towards achieving the Learning Outcomes on the placement.

Student Rights

Students may expect:

1. The Placement Provider to provide a safe placement environment.

2. The Placement Provider to provide work and support that allows the student to develop appropriate skills. The University has systems and procedures in place to check this is the case. Students should be aware that, exceptionally, (e.g., equipment breakdown, loss of contract) projects may need to be changed or re-negotiated.

3. To be treated in accordance with applicable legislation.

APPENDIX 5.3: SUGGESTED LIST - STUDENT SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Before the start of the Placement

Students should be informed of:

1. Details of the placement process including:

    - How details of placements will be made available to students.
    - The channels for applying for specific placements and for responding to any interest expressed by Placement Provider (whether directly or through the Placement Coordinator).
    - Guidance on preparation of a CV, if appropriate.
    - Guidance on preparation for placement interviews, if appropriate.
    - The provision which is made for the development of additional skills if appropriate (e.g., General/specific foreign language support, cultural orientation).
    - The need for personal insurance cover, if appropriate.
    - Reinforcement of the student's obligations in respect of health and safety, particularly in the new environment, and that they should pay particular attention to the health and safety briefing that the Placement Provider will give. Also, the need for any vaccinations if relevant.
    - Reinforcement of any special obligations which may apply relating to, for example, legal, ethical or confidentiality issues.
    - The stage at which a student is obliged to accept a placement, and the consequences of a refusal at this stage.

2. The length of the placement.

3. Any arrangements for time off during the placement.

4. The Module Learning Outcomes.

5. Any specific Learning Outcomes or how and when these will be determined in the case of a learning contract or learning plan which is yet to be finalized.

6. What they are expected to produce as evidence of meeting Learning Outcomes or how and when these will be determined.

7. Assessment details and criteria or how and when these will be determined.

8. When/if they may expect a visit from the Academic Placement Tutor.

9. What to do in the case of a problem arising which has the potential to seriously affect their work on the placement.

10. Telephone number and e-mail contact details for university staff.

11. Their position during placement in respect of:

    - Any grant or funding they may receive, and how receipt of salary may affect this.
    - Holidays during the placement.
    - Matriculation at the University, fees and University services that remain available to students during the placement (e.g., Library access).

12. Students should also receive from the Placement Provider a letter:

    - Confirming their placement, and dates.

- Stating the time, place, and person to whom to report on the first day.
- Stating any salary to be paid.
- Giving details of any specific clothing requirements if these are to be met by the student.

During the Placement

Placement Providers should:

1. Provide a health and safety induction and participate in the completion and return of the relevant checklist in week 1.

2. Provide the support and facilities agreed with the Placement Coordinator and Academic Placement Tutor.

3. Respond to any problems brought to their attention by the student or Academic Placement Tutor.

The College should:

1. Ensure regular contact is maintained via telephone and/or e-mail.

2. Maintain regular contact with the student.

3. Respond to any problems brought to their attention by the student or Placement Supervisor.

4. Provide any regular monitoring of progress detailed in the Module Descriptor or in documentation provided to the student/Placement Provider.

5. Visit the student at the stage(s) in the placement, unless this proved impracticable for staff in the College itself to undertake such a visit, in which case alternative appropriate arrangements should be agreed prior to the placement commencing. detailed in the Module Descriptor or in documentation provided to the student/Placement Provider.

After the Placement

The College should assist student re-orientation. Examples of how this may be achieved are:

1. The provision of an individual debriefing session for each student.

2. By conducting group seminar(s) at which learning from placement may be discussed. It is desirable that upcoming prospective placement students attend this seminar.

SECTION 6 ACADEMIC COLLABORATION

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

1.1 Introduction

Collaborative arrangements are generally agreed based on individual courses, programs or short courses and the Curriculum Development Committee of the University has responsibility for approving all forms of academic collaboration.

This Section of the Handbook has been structured in order that subsections 2 to 5, which provide details of the respective approval procedures, are self-contained and should be read in conjunction with subsections 1, 6, 7 and 8.

1.2 Types of Academic Collaboration

The University recognizes the following forms of academic collaboration:

- **Franchised Course**
  A whole course/program, or part of a course/program, designed by the staff of the University, but delivered and assessed in the partner institution or organization.

- **Validated Course**
  A whole course/program, or part of a course/program, designed, delivered, and assessed by the staff of the partner institution or organization.

- **Credit-rating of External Provision**
  A credit-rated non-award-bearing course designed and delivered by the staff of the partner institution or organization (in this case an employer, a professional body, or a non-degree awarding college). Normally, assessment is undertaken by the University.

On occasion, the University may seek to enter into an agreement to design, and/or deliver and/or assess a course/program in conjunction with one or more partner institutions or organizations with degree-awarding powers. Such joint arrangements would be subject to mutually agreed and clearly defined quality assurance processes based on those of the University and the partner institution or organization. In such arrangements, the award(s) would be jointly conferred by the University and the partner institution or organization.

In addition, the University participates in the following:

- Student Exchange Study Periods
- 2+2 Articulation Agreements
- SOCRATES Bilateral Partnership Agreements are distinct from Student Exchange Study Periods, and advice on these may be obtained from the *European Office*. Advice on contracts for research collaboration may be obtained from the Commercialization, Research and European Development Office (CREDO).
- ERASMUS and others

1.3 Overview of the Approval of Academic Collaboration

The approval of academic collaborations involves two stages. The Academic Council has responsibility for approving proposals for all forms of academic collaboration. In the case of validated courses, the Academic Collaboration may require that a visit to the partner institution or organization take place to inform its decision. No further work on the proposed collaboration should be undertaken until approval has been granted by Academic Collaboration\AC. The University, in all instances, must satisfy itself that any form of academic collaboration fulfils its educational principles and that the partner institution or organization(s) provides a suitable learning environment for students on courses/programs leading to awards of the University.

Applications to the AC are made using the *Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma*, and staff should familiarize themselves with the type of collaboration they are seeking to pursue to assist with completion of the *Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma* and use of the *Risk Assessment Tool* that accompanies the *Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma*.

After the approval by Academic Collaboration, a formal validation or approval event is required, following the University's procedures, and this normally takes place at the partner institution or organization. The University will charge a fee to the partner institution or organization for conducting this event. This fee is a one-off payment and is normally payable in advance of the approval/validation event. The fee is in addition to the annual fees payable by the partner institution or organization to the University for each student registered on the course/program. This fee is discussed prior to the approval/validation event. In addition to considering the facilities at the partner institution or organization, the Approval/Validation Panel will consider if the professional and research activities of staff teaching on approved courses/programs can sustain the aims of the course/program and its development and ensure they will be able to deliver the course/program to an appropriate standard.

For validation or approval events, the partner institution or organization must be prepared to supply the documentation according to the requirements of the University. Documentation detailing the human and physical resources available to support the program are required. In addition, a copy of the equivalent regulations/quality handbook (if one exists) should also be provided. (Full details of the required documents will be supplied by the University).

Partner institutions or organizations should note that accreditation by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies will not automatically occur with the approval of the collaboration.

Normally, the University will not consider entering collaborative arrangements where delivery and assessment is in a language other than English, given the University's quality assurance mechanisms have not been designed to deal with provision in a foreign language.

1.4 Guidance: Preparing an Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma

A partnership with another institution needs to be built on knowledge, trust and soundly based agreements and procedures. It is important both partners understand and appreciate that a considerable investment of time and staff resources may be necessary, even before a decision to proceed towards the formal approval or validation event is taken.

Prior to the formal establishment of any collaborative arrangement, the University would wish to become sufficiently familiar with the partner institution or organization, its resources, facilities, staff, traditions, ethos, academic and non-academic capability, and achievements to allow it to satisfy itself the partner institution or organization is fully able to meet any requirements which may be placed upon it to assure quality and standards.

The approval of a partner institution or organization as suitable for the delivery of courses/programs leading to awards of the University implies that the partner institution or organization:

- has a compatible and complementary mission statement to that of the University.

- is financially stable with appropriate resources to support higher education courses/programs.
- has an effective management system suited to assuring the quality of courses/programs?
- offers an ethos and environment for teaching and learning appropriate to higher education; and has an appropriate regulatory framework and academic and administrative policies and practices, e.g., regulations governing cheating or plagiarism should be in place as should mechanisms and resources be available to support staff development.

1.5 Guidance: Contract of Collaboration

All forms of academic collaboration which involve the conferment of a university award or academic credit must be covered by an appropriate *Contract of Collaboration* prior to their implementation. This is produced by the University and sets out the responsibilities and duties of each partner, specifying the financial arrangements and entry requirements to the course/program (where these apply).

Contract templates may be obtained from …….

In the case of **Student Exchange Study Period**, the following documentation is required:

(i) *Contract of Collaboration (Student Exchange Study Period),* signed by the University Provost (or designated nominee).

(ii) *Bilateral Agreement* (annex to the *Contract of Collaboration (Student Exchange Study Period),* signed by the University Provost (or designated nominee).

1.6 Guidance: Quality Assurance

Where courses/programs lead to the conferment of awards by a partner institution or organization or another type of collaborating body, they are subject to the quality assurance processes of the University, and the approval of courses/programs in the partner institution or organization is normally conducted through the University's procedures. Similarly, the arrangements for student assessment and the conferment of the award should satisfy the University's own normal requirements.

All collaborative agreements are subject to periodic review (see subsection 7) normally annually and every five years. This may be at course/program or institutional level, dependent on the number of courses/programs involved. In most cases, collaborative arrangements are considered as part of the course re-approval aspect of the Internal Review of the host School. The University also reserves the right to require a review of any collaboration following a shorter period of operation.

In addition, for overseas collaborations the University requires overseas partner institutions or organizations to:

- secure written confirmation that the implementation of the course/program has the approval of the Government or appropriate authority of the country concerned, to forward this to the University and, confirm annually through the Moderator, that any changes to legislation do not affect the status of the agreement.
- not place the quality and standards of their collaborative arrangements at risk for financial gain or in circumstances of financial exigency.

1.7 Guidance: The Role of the Moderator

A Moderator is normally appointed by the University to take responsibility for the overall administration, general operation, co-ordination, and monitoring of the collaboration.

The Moderator:

- oversees the overall administration, general operation, monitoring and quality of teaching and learning of the collaboration.
- provides the academic link between the University and its partner institution or organization to ensure adequate ongoing communication between the two institutions.
- normally undertakes a minimum of two visits per year to the partner institution or organization (including attendance at the Assessment Board or Committee) at the partner institution or organization's expense.
- attends the Assessment Committee (if applicable) and Assessment Board for the collaboration (though the Moderator does not make decisions concerning student awards as this is the role of the External Examiner) to ensure arrangements for the conduct of Assessment Committees and Assessment Boards are appropriately carried out and the University's Academic Regulations are adhered to;
- produces a Moderator's Annual Report for the University on the operation of the collaboration, assessment, and examination arrangements (in the case of a franchised course/program this role may be undertaken by the host Course Leader, but this need not be the case), which informs the Head of School/Associate Dean when they complete the *Annual Course/Program Review*.
- makes reference to issues raised in the *Annual Course/Program Review* (see Section 2 of this Handbook) and issues relating to student care and the student experience;
- has a quality enhancement role.

The *Moderator Visit Checklist* is used to assist Moderators fulfil these functions.

1.8 Guidance: The Role of the External Examiner

For all forms of collaboration, the primary responsibility of the External Examiner is to ensure that candidates for a particular award, or credit, of the University are assessed fairly and impartially, and that the standard of the award is comparable with those of other awarding bodies.

Wherever possible and appropriate, the duties of one (or several) of the University's own External Examiners are extended to cover the collaborative agreement. This is seen as the most effective means of ensuring consistency of the University's standards. Appropriate remuneration is made to the External Examiner for these additional duties.

The University briefs all External Examiners involved in the collaboration on their duties. Where practical and appropriate, External Examiners for collaborative courses/programs are invited to attend any induction or briefing workshops offered by the University.

Where the course/program is one which is also offered by the University, the University's External Examiner is expected to undertake additional duties in respect of the collaborative course/program, thereby providing a valuable mechanism for assuring consistent standards. The extension of the External Examiner's duties requires approval by the relevant College Academic Board and the Dean (see *Section 4* of this Handbook).

External Examiners are required to submit an *External Examiner Annual Report* to the Principal of the University. Relevant *External Examiner Annual Reports* are copied to the partner institution or organization by the Academic Affairs Department.

The Course Management Team of the partner institution or organization is responsible for responding to comments raised by the External Examiner(s) in their *External Examiner Annual Report*. In the case of a franchised course/program the host Course/Program Management Team must sign off the response to the *External Examiner Annual Report*. In the case of a validated course/program, a copy of the response should be lodged with the University. Responsibility for payment of External Examiner fees and expenses rests with the partner institution or organization.

The duties of an External Examiner are detailed in the Academic Regulation A5: External Examiners. In addition, reference should be made to Section 4 of this Handbook and notably the need to ensure that External Examiners approve draft *Instruments of Assessment*.

2. APPROVAL PROCEDURE: FRANCHISED COURSES

2.1 Introduction

Franchised Course: A whole course/program, or part of a course/program, designed by the staff of the University, but delivered and assessed in the partner institution or organization.

Such courses/programs are approved using the University's procedures, and subsequently are subject to an approval event. Thereafter, the course/program is subject to the quality assurance processes of the University. The award(s) is always conferred by the University.

A franchise agreement is normally considered only with a university course/program that has been operating successfully for some time. The University will require the partner institution or organization to deliver the franchised course/program(s) in accordance with the requirements laid out in the Detailed Course Descriptor and Module Descriptors.

2.2 Preparation and Submission of Paperwork to Curriculum Development Committee/CDC

The Dean proposing the collaboration should firstly liaise with the QA. If the Dean is satisfied of the value in pursuing the collaboration (also refer to *subsection 1.3*), the *Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma* should be completed and submitted to the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) for consideration. No further work should be undertaken on the proposal until the CDC has reached a decision.

2.3 Planning the Approval Event

Once CDC has granted approval to proceed to an approval event, the Course\program Leader shall prepare an *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet* in consultation with the Dean and Academic Registrar. A copy of the approved *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet* is distributed to relevant parties, including the College and partner institution or organization.

Thereafter, the Dean will prepare a *Contract of Collaboration*, in consultation with QA. The *Contract of Collaboration* shall be accompanied by two annexes: *Annex I - Academic Quality and Standards*, and *Annex II - Financial Annex*. The provost, or nominee, has overall responsibility for approving *Annex I*. The Financial Director, or nominee, has overall responsibility for approving *Annex II*. If a draft *Contract of Collaboration* differs significantly from the standard contract, the CDC is required to approve it.

Prior to a formal approval event, it would be expected that one or more visits to the institution seeking partnership would be made to verify the feasibility of the franchise proceeding further. Such visits would usually be made by the relevant Dean (or nominee) and discipline specialists

from the College considering the franchise. The Approval Panel would consider the capacity of the partner institution or organization franchising the course/program to deliver it to an appropriate quality and standard.

2.4 Approval Event

The nature of the Approval Event is determined by CDC and the Provost, or nominee, taking due cognizance of the nature of the proposed collaboration, the details contained within the *Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma*

As a minimum, an Approval Panel composed of the provost, or nominee, and Dean shall undertake a quality visit to the proposed partner institution or organization. However, depending upon the scope of the collaboration, it may be considered appropriate to have a more extensive Panel, which may comprise both internal University members and external members incorporating practitioners and subject specialists.

The University Course Leader should be present as a member of the partner institution or organization team so that issues relating to communication and operations between the University and partner institution, or organization can be fully explored by the Approval Panel.

2.5 Purpose of the Approval Event

The aim of the approval event is to ensure the educational experience of the student on a franchised course/program is of an equivalent standard to that for students following the course/program at the University. The major objectives of the Approval Panel are to:

- ensure the staff of the partner institution or organization can deliver the course/program to an appropriate standard.
- ensure the partner institution or organization has adequate physical resources.
- ensure other elements of the overall student experience are comparable to that provided by the University.
- ensure all parties to the franchise can deploy sufficient resources to support the collaboration.

In addition, the Panel may also consider the aims and learning outcomes of the course/program and how these would be met within the partner institution or organization, arrangements for admission of students, optimum student numbers, assessment arrangements, student support, appeals, complaints and misconduct etc. In terms of adequacy of physical resources, the Approval Panel must satisfy itself of the adequacy of library facilities, computing facilities, etc. The basic requirements must be in place and a franchise will never be approved based on a promise to provide the facilities in the future.

2.6 Documentation Requirements for the Approval Event

To be supplied by the University to the partner institution or organization:

- *Academic Quality Handbook*
- *Academic Regulations*
- *Organizational Regulations*
- Module Descriptors and syllabus information
- Draft *Contract of Collaboration*

- Detailed Course Descriptor for the franchise.

To be supplied by the partner institution or organization to the University:

- *Supporting Information and Resources* document
- Prospectus
- Business Plan

- Organizational and Management Structure
- Draft *Student Handbook**
- Copy of the equivalent regulations/quality handbook.

* The Student Handbook should be produced in association with the host School at the University and should follow guidance provided by the University. The Handbook should clearly detail any local arrangements relating to the implementation of the University's Academic Regulations or Procedures by the partner institution or organization, particularly in respect of Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints.

2.7 Format and Layout of the Supporting Information and Resources Document

The *Supporting Information and Resources* document, provided by the partner institution or organization, will include information under the following headings:

Background Information
A brief historical account of the partner institution or organization. In the case of an overseas collaboration, this section should also include an assurance (in writing) that necessary permission has been obtained from local government or agencies of the country concerned to offer the University's course/program(s).

Human Resources
To include:

- Tabular information showing academic and support staffing numbers within the partner institution or organization, with details of the academic staff age distribution.
- Staff CVs and publications and a summary of research activities (for staff involved in the teaching and delivery of the franchised course/program).
- Staff development plans and policies (particularly for staff involved in the teaching and delivery of the franchised course/program). (N.B. In the case of an agreement involving distance learning and/or an overseas partner institution or organization, advice from the University should be sought as to what should be included here).
- Staff appointment, induction, and review mechanisms/procedures.

Physical Resources
To include information on the following facilities to support the franchised course/program(s):

- Library provision.
- Teaching rooms and laboratories.
- Computer facilities.

Teaching and Assessment
A statement of how it is intended the course/program will be delivered and assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Detailed Course Descriptor and *Contract of Collaboration*.

2.8 External Examiner Arrangements

Refer also to *Section 4* of this Handbook.

MALTA

The duties of the External Examiners appointed for the host course/program or subject area at the University are extended to include consideration of students under all associated franchise agreements.

The partner institution or organization would constitute an Assessment Committee to initially consider student results and make recommendations to the University Assessment Board. All student results would be formally ratified by the University's Assessment Board. Samples of student work from the partner institution or organization are sent to the University's External Examiners for consideration in advance of the University's Assessment Board. The University Moderator attends (in person or via a video-conference link) both the partner institutions or organization's Assessment Committee and the University's Assessment Board.

The University normally schedules two Assessment Boards per annum - in June and September.

The University's External Examiners are required to refer to the performance and standards of students on the franchise in their *External Examiner Annual Report*.

Overseas

An External Examining Team would be constituted, comprised of the appropriate External Examiners for the host course/program or subject area at the University, and one External Examiner nominated by the partner institution or organization from the local area. The role of this Examiner would include raising any contextual issues arising from the local cultural differences. The partner institution or organization would be responsible for payment of all fees and expenses to this External Examiner and would also contribute to the fees and expenses of the University's External Examiners relating to the additional work involved with the franchise.

The partner institution or organization constitutes an Assessment Committee to initially consider student results and make recommendations to the University's Assessment Board. The local External Examiner attends the Assessment Committee. All student results are formally ratified by the University's Assessment Board. Samples of student work from the partner institution or organization are sent to the University's External Examiners for consideration in advance of the University's Assessment Board. The University Moderator attends (in person or via a video-conference link) both the partner institution or organization's Assessment Committee and the University's Assessment Board.

The University normally schedules two Assessment Boards per annum - in June and September.

The University's External Examiners are required to refer to the performance and standard of students on the franchise in their *External Examiner Annual Report*.

3. APPROVAL PROCEDURE: VALIDATED COURSES

3.1 Introduction

Validated Course: A whole course/program, or part of a course/program, designed, delivered, and assessed by the staff of the partner institution or organization.

Such a course/program is approved using the University's procedures, and the course/program is subject to the quality assurance processes of the University (see Section 1 of this Handbook). The award(s) is always be conferred by the University.

3.2 Preparation and Submission of Paperwork to AC

The Dean proposing the collaboration liaises first with the AUM Dean of College. If the Dean of College is satisfied of the value in pursuing the collaboration (also refer s*ubsection 1.3)* then an *Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma* is completed along with the accompanying *Risk Assessment Tool* and submitted to the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) for consideration. No further work should be undertaken on the proposal until the CDC has reached a decision.

Generally, the CDC will require that a visit to the partner institution or organization take place to inform its decision. Normally, a team composed of the Provost, QA, or nominee, the Program/Course Leader or/and Dean will undertake such an approval visit.

3.3 Planning the Validation Event

Once CDC has granted approval to proceed to a Validation Event, the Dean prepares an *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet* in consultation with the QA and Academic Registrar. A copy of the approved *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet* is distributed to relevant parties, including the College and partner institution or organization.

Thereafter, the Dean will prepare a *Contract of Collaboration*, in consultation with the provost. The *Contract of Collaboration* shall be accompanied by two annexes: *Annex I - Academic Quality and Standards*, and *Annex II - Financial Annex*. The provost, or nominee, has overall responsibility for approving *Annex I*. The Executive Director (Administrative and Finance), or nominee, has overall responsibility for approving *Annex II*.

3.4 Validation Event

The nature of the Validation Event, held at the partner institution or organization, is determined by CDC and the Provost, or nominee, taking due cognizance of the nature of the proposed collaboration, the details contained within the *Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma*. Organization of the Validation Event will reflect the requirements of the University's for its own courses and programs. The University's *Validation Procedure* for new courses and programs is used and documents prepared accordingly. The University will appoint a *Course Development Consultant* to assist in this matter.

The Dean should be present as a member of the partner institution or organization team so that issues relating to communication and operations between the University and partner institution, or organization can be fully explored by the Validation Panel.

The University-appointed Moderator for the validated course should be present as a member of the partner institution or organization team so that issues relating to communication and operations between the University and partner institution, or organization can be fully explored by the Approval Panel.

3.5 Documentation Requirements for the Validation Event

To be supplied by the University to the partner institution or organization

- *Academic Quality Handbook*

- *Academic Regulations*
- *Organizational Regulations*
- Draft *Contract of Collaboration*

To be supplied by the partner institution or organization to the University

- Course documentation required for a new course/program validation (see ***Section 1, subsection 2.3*** of this Handbook)
- Draft *Student Handbook**
- Copy of the equivalent regulations/quality handbook.
- Prospectus
- Business Plan
- Background information - brief historical account of the partner institution or organization. In the case of an overseas collaboration, assurance (in writing) that necessary permission had been obtained from local government, or agencies of the country concerned, to offer the University's course/program(s) should be supplied.

* The Student Handbook should be produced in association with the host School at the University and should follow guidance provided by the University. The Handbook should clearly detail any local arrangements relating to the implementation of the University's Academic Regulations or Procedures by the partner institution or organization, particularly in respect of *Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints.*

3.6 External Examiner Arrangements

Refer also to *Section 4 of* this Manual.

Malta

The partner institution or organization is responsible for nominating External Examiners to the University for approval. Such External Examiners will have all the authority and responsibilities stated in the University *Academic Regulation A5: External Examiners.* The partner institution or organization is responsible for payment of all fees and expenses of these External Examiners. An Assessment Board is held at the partner institution or organization at which the University-appointed Moderator is present (in person or via a video-conference link). The Moderator is responsible for conveying the results to the Student Administration Department of the University.

Overseas

In addition, when nominating the External Examiners to the University, at least one of the nominations should be Malta-based and have experience of examining students under the Maltese higher education system. It is expected the Malta-based External Examiner will attend all Assessment Boards relating to the validated course/program.

4. APPROVAL PROCEDURE: CREDIT-RATING OF EXTERNAL PROVISION

4.1 Introduction

Credit-rating of External Provision: A credit-rated non-award-bearing course designed and delivered by the staff of the partner institution or organization (in this case an employer, a professional body, or a non-degree awarding college). Normally, assessment will be undertaken by the University.

Such a course is validated using the University's normal procedures, and the course is subject to the quality assurance processes of the University (see *Section 1, subsection 4* of this Handbook). The credit(s) are **always** conferred by the University.

4.2 Preparation and Submission of Paperwork to CDC

The Dean proposing the collaboration liaises first with the Dean of College. If the Dean of College is satisfied of the value in pursuing the collaboration (also refer *subsection 1.3)* then an *Academic Collaboration Proposal Proforma* is completed and submitted to the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) for consideration. No further work should be undertaken on the proposal until the CDC has reached a decision.

4.3 Planning the Approval Event

Once CDC has granted approval to proceed to an approval event, the Dean prepares an *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet* in consultation with the QA and Academic Registrar. A copy of the approved *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet* is distributed to relevant parties, including the College and partner institution or organization.
Thereafter, the Dean will prepare a *Contract of Collaboration*, in consultation with the provost. The *Contract of Collaboration* shall be accompanied by two annexes: *Annex I - Academic Quality and Standards*, and *Annex II - Financial Annex*. The provost, or nominee, has overall responsibility for approving *Annex I*. The Executive Director (Administrative and Finance), or nominee, has overall responsibility for approving *Annex II*.

4.4 Approval Process

Following the approval of the proposal to collaborate, the credit-rated non-award-bearing course descriptor (i.e. the Module Descriptor) is submitted to the appropriate Collge Academic Board and Dean of College for approval in accordance with the procedure described in *Section 1, subsection 4* of this Handbook.

4.5 External Examiner Arrangements

Refer also to *Section 4* of this Handbook.

The duties of the appropriate External Examiners appointed to the subject area at the University are extended to also include consideration of students under all credit-rated external provision agreements. All student results are formally ratified by the University's Assessment Board. Samples of student work from the partner institution or organization should be sent to the University's External Examiners for consideration in advance of the University's Assessment Board. The University Moderator attends (in person or via a video-conference link) the University's Assessment Board.

The University normally schedules two Assessment Boards per annum - in June and September.

The University's External Examiners are required to refer to the performance and standard of students on credit-rated external provision in their *External Examiner Annual Report*.

5. APPROVAL PROCEDURE: STUDENT EXCHANGE STUDY PERIODS

5.1 Introduction

The University offers courses/programs which include both mandatory and optional Student Exchange Study Periods and, for the purposes of assuring quality, no distinction is made between them. The following also applies to the University's involvement in ERASMUS, SOCRATES Bilateral Partnership Agreements (the European Credit Transfer Scheme [ECTS]) which should adhere to the principles and procedures defined for Student Exchange Study Periods.

By enabling opportunities for Student Exchange Study Periods, the University is demonstrating its commitment to enhancing a student's learning experience whilst ensuring the student can achieve the learning outcomes of the University's course/program. In doing so, and in common with all its collaborative arrangements, the University remains accountable for the quality and standards of any course/program, or part of a course/program, that contributes to its own award.

In specifying the principles and procedures for Student Exchange Study Periods, the University aims to provide a mechanism that is both systematic and open to scrutiny. Consideration must be given, therefore, to the academic content, the system for quality assurance, and the pastoral support offered to students whilst undertaking a Student Exchange Study Period.

It is the University's responsibility to ensure that any Student Exchange Study Period provides the necessary underpinning required for a student to progress to a subsequent stage of the University's course/program. This requires the University to assure itself that an appropriate and comparable learning experience could be offered by a partner institution or organization, though the University does not require this to be quantified as a proportion of equivalence. It does demand, however, that the learning outcomes of the course/program can be met and, if the University course/program is accredited by a Maltese professional, statutory or regulatory body, that its requirements will also be met through study undertaken either on a mandatory or optional Student Exchange Study Period.

When considering the appropriateness of a course/program for a Student Exchange Study Period, it is not necessary to require a student, for example, currently studying MQF Level 6/7 modules, to study elements delivered in Stage 3 of the partner institutions or organization's course/program. In this respect "Level", "Stage" and "Year" are not synonymous (refer also to *Academic Regulation A1: Courses).*

Students should only undertake a Student Exchange Study Period with a partner institution or organization if the University has a formal agreement with that institution.

Prior to completing a formal agreement, the University is required to make several checks concerning the academic content of a Student Exchange Study Period program, the system for quality assurance in operation at the partner institution or organization, and the pastoral support offered to students by the partner institution or organization whilst undertaking a Student Exchange Study Period. This applies irrespective of whether the University or another institution initiates the establishment of a Student Exchange Study Period agreement.

5.2 Approval Process

1. The Dean indicates, in principle, willingness to consider Student Exchange Study Period arrangement with proposed partner institution or organization.

2. The College undertakes background check, using *Student Exchange Study Periods Checklist,* covering quality assurance mechanisms, and pastoral and support services provided to Exchange Students.

3. On considering information supplied, the Dean decides whether to proceed. If deemed appropriate, the Dean may request further information from proposed partner institution or organization.

4. Head of School/Associate Dean decides to formalize agreement and, in liaison with Course Leader and Academic Affairs/ European Office, prepares contracts and agreements as appropriate.

5. *Contract of Collaboration (Student Exchange Study Periods)* and appropriate annex (two complete copies) forwarded for signature by the University's Provost.

6. *Contract of Collaboration (Student Exchange Study Periods)* (two complete copies) forwarded by European Office to Principal (or equivalent) of partner institution or organization for signature. One signed copy returned to and retained in European Office.

7. For agreements under the auspices of SOCRATES, European Officer submits Application for Socrates-Erasmus Student and Teaching Mobility, signed by the University Principal, by annual deadline [normally May] containing all expected student and teaching mobility that will take place, this information being provided by European Course/Program Managements, based on figures contained in Bilateral Agreements.

5.3 Responsibilities of the Dean in Approval Process

Acting on behalf of the College and the University, the Dean must take all reasonable efforts to:

(i) ensure the Student Exchange Study Period provides the necessary underpinning for the student to progress to the next stage of the University's course/program on their return, and the study offered by the partner institution or organization complies with the relevant learning outcomes for that stage of the course/program.

(ii) be satisfied the information provided by the partner institution or organization in support of the arrangement is reliable.

(iii) maintain documentation in support of any decision taken in respect of the Student Exchange Study Period arrangement, which would be available for scrutiny by representatives of either the University or external agencies.

(iv) be satisfied the Student Exchange Study Period, whether optional or mandatory, would meet the requirements of an associated professional, statutory, or regulatory body.

(v) be satisfied the examination and assessment procedures, including instruments of assessment and grading/marking schemes, at the partner institution or organization, are equivalent to those of the University, particularly if the period of Exchange contributes to the classification of a degree or an award with distinction.

(vi) be satisfied the resources to support the course/program and proposed delivery are appropriate.

(vii) be satisfied that, if the language of instruction or assessment is other than English, appropriate mechanisms are in place to support Exchange Students.

(viii) ensure the partner institution or organization produces, timeously, a suitable transcript for the Exchange Student, providing sufficient detail of achievements during the Student Exchange Study Period to inform the University's Assessment Board.

(ix) be satisfied with arrangements for removing a student from a Student Exchange Study Period subsequently considered unsuitable (for academic, quality, or pastoral reasons).

(x) ensure the partner institution or organization has the means and intention to undertake regular and formal communication with the University throughout the duration of the Student Exchange Study Period.

(xi) remain responsible for the overall administration, general operation and monitoring of the Student Exchange Study Period arrangement and ensure that any follow-up action required is undertaken.

5.4 External Examiner Arrangements - Student Exchange Study Periods

In addition to those specified in *Section 4* of this Handbook and *Academic Regulation A5: External Examiners*, External Examiners involved in University courses/programs incorporating mandatory or optional Student Exchange Study Periods have the following responsibilities:

(i) may insist on seeing the assessments undertaken by Exchange Students prior to agreeing to progression or award (including the classification of a degree or award with distinction as appropriate), to satisfy themselves the standards applied to those assessments were equivalent to those undertaken in the University's course/program.

(ii) may not alter or moderate the specific marks/grades/credits conferred by a partner institution or organization; this does not preclude the Assessment Board's right to allow a student's overall performance to compensate for partial failure.

5.5 Ongoing Management and Monitoring

The University must satisfy itself, on an ongoing basis, that the administration, general operation, and monitoring of the Student Exchange Study Period arrangement continues to meet its requirements.

The Dean must:

(i) consider, as part of the home course/programmer's *Annual Review Process*, the European Office's Evaluation Form.

(ii) request and consider formal written student feedback on the Student Exchange Study Period.

(iii) ensure the University's External Examiner(s) continues to receive all information deemed appropriate concerning the Student Exchange Study Period.

(iv) take all reasonable efforts to ensure the ongoing suitability of the communication links between the University and the partner institution or organization.

(v) take all reasonable efforts to ensure the ongoing standard of performance of Exchange Students studying at the partner institution or organization.

The European Office must (SOCRATES Bilateral Agreements and other arrangements with European Union Member States only) as part of the University's ongoing commitment to offer Student Exchange Study Periods:

(i) maintain an accurate and detailed database of Student Exchange Study Period Agreements.

(ii) maintain an accurate file of *European Officer Reports* to Deans.

(iii) provide a report to the Dean highlighting areas of concern.

(iv) ensure the Colleges involved in Student Exchange Study Periods continue to meet their obligations as specified above.

(v) provide an Annual Status Report on Student Exchange Study Period agreements to the Curriculum Development Committee.

5.6 Review of a Student Exchange Study Period Agreement

The University must satisfy itself, on an ongoing basis, that the Student Exchange Study Period arrangement continues to meet its requirements. After a successful approval, the Dean must, prior to a new student or cohort of students commencing a Student Exchange Study Period (whether this be on an annual basis or more frequently):

(i) re-confirm arrangements to ensure that the Student Exchange Study Period continues to:

- provide the necessary underpinning for the student to progress to the next stage of the University's course/program on their return,
- comply with the relevant learning outcomes for that stage of the course/program,
- comply with professional or statutory body requirements, if appropriate.

(ii) be satisfied that the period of Student Exchange Study Period offered by the partner institution or organization continues to meet all other requirements investigated during the Approval Procedure.

(iii) ensure visits to the partner institution or organization are undertaken by a relevant member of staff, and the *Student Exchange Study Periods Checklist* is completed

satisfactorily, at least every three years. In the event that a partner institution or organization has not been visited during this time, students cannot be sent to that partner institution or organization until such time as the *Student Exchange Study Periods Checklist* has been completed. The European Office/RGU Questionnaire should also be completed annually via electronic contact with partner institution or organizations.

6. ONGOING MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

6.1 Overview

All forms of academic collaboration are subject to the quality assurance processes of the University.

The quality control procedures, or equivalent, of the partner institution or organization must be equivalent to those of the University but need not duplicate these exactly. It is important there is a mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review of both the course/program(s) and the relationship between the institutions.

Ultimate responsibility for course/program monitoring and maintaining the standard of the course/program lies with the University. The partner institution or organization must ensure that students have accurate information about the collaborative course/program and must take responsibility for the general welfare and discipline of students.

6.2 Recruitment and Advertising

All initial recruitment or advertising proposed by the partner institution or organization in advance of the formal validation or approval event must indicate that the collaborative course/program has still to be validated/approved. In addition, always prior approval from the provost must be obtained for any material using the University's name and/or logo. The University will retain effective control over all information, publicity and promotional activity relating to programs and awards for which it has responsibility. The standard of the course/program and the good reputation of the University must be always maintained.

6.3 Admission

Exceptions to the approved entry requirements, as detailed in the University's *Academic Regulations/Contract of Collaboration*, would require the direct approval of the University. Where appropriate, the partner institution or organization must provide the College concerned, and the Student Affairs Department, a signed statement confirming that all students enrolled possess the approved entry requirements. The partner institution or organization must agree to abide by the agreement as defined in the *Contract of Collaboration* and provide prompt transmission of student enrolment information.

6.4 Course/Program Management

A group of staff involved with each course/program must be appointed to deal with the day-to-day operation and monitoring of the course/program (the University calls this a Course/Program Management Team).

One of this group should be appointed to take overall responsibility for the course/program (the University calls this a Course Leader).

The University requires formal minutes to be taken of Course/Program Management Team meetings and for these to be submitted to the host Course/Program Management Team at the University for consideration. In addition, partner institutions or organizations should ensure that students on collaborative courses/programs have a role in course/program monitoring and evaluation, (e.g., by staff/student liaison groups, use of questionnaires etc.).

The University will, where appropriate, provide the partner institution or organization with copies of Course/Program Management Team minutes for the host course/program at the University (and extracts from the minutes of other committees where these relate to that course/program). The host Course/Program Management Team will also, where appropriate, inform the partner institution or organization promptly of any amendments to the host course/program or changes to University Academic Regulations or procedures which would affect the operation of the collaboration.

The Course Management Team at the partner institution or organization is responsible for:

- the delivery of the teaching program of the course/program in accordance with the Detailed Course Descriptor.
- the review and evaluation of the course/program (refer to *subsection 6.7).*
- the review of resources required for the operation of the course/program and.
- for the nomination of one or more External Examiners (dependent on the type of collaboration involved) to the host Course Management Team/College at the University (see *subsection 1.8).*

6.5 Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate they have fulfilled the learning outcomes of a course/program and achieved the standard required for its associated award.

All courses/programs leading to an award of the University are subject to University Regulations that relate assessment requirements to the course/program learning outcomes and it is on the basis of these requirements that examiners judge students' performance (see *Academic Regulation A4: Assessment and Recommendations of Assessment Boards).*

All courses/programs leading to an award of the University are normally taught and assessed in the English language. The University may exceptionally approve a collaborative arrangement delivered and assessed in a language other than English. In such circumstances there would need to be rigorous quality assurance arrangements in place concerning work to be translated, the costs of which would be borne by the partner institution or organization.

Students should be notified of assessment schedules and the regulations for progression and award. The administration of student assessment procedures must be conducted to a standard comparable with that of the University. The partner institution or organization should maintain an accurate set of student records, including all assessment results, and transmit these to the University (as noted in the *Contract of Collaboration*).

In addition, for franchised courses/programs, the University's host Assessment Boards formally ratify all student results. University Assessment Boards take place at their scheduled times and students will, on occasion, must wait until after these Boards to receive ratified grades. They can, in the interim, be given provisional grades but would have to wait to receive their award. On occasion, an Extraordinary Assessment Board may be convened and exceptionally might be conducted via video conferencing.

6.6 Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints

The University's *Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints* must be applied and students notified of its requirements and associated procedures, although some flexibility would be required in respect of timescales. Furthermore, any local arrangements relating to the implementation of the University's Academic Regulations or procedures would need to be agreed at the approval event.

In the event of an appeal proceeding to the student (Academic/Disciplinary) Appeals Committee stage, use could be made of video-conferencing facilities or special arrangements negotiated. In respect of partner institutions or organizations, students may be required to attend the University; this would be at their own expense.

6.7 Annual Course/Program Review

The Course Leader at the partner institution or organization must produce an *Annual Course/Program Review.*

This *Review* should provide a concise overview of the course/program operation over the year and should include student comment as well as address any issues raised by the External Examiner(s). A University proforma is available for this purpose and further information can be obtained from *Section 2* of this Handbook. The *Review* should be submitted to the host Course/Program Management Team at the University within eight weeks of the final Assessment Board meeting for each intake of students. The University will, where appropriate, provide the partner institution or organization with the *Annual Course/Program Review* from the host course/program at the University.

6.8 Staffing

The partner institution or organization must take responsibility for the appointment and conduct of teaching staff for the collaborative course/program and should brief all teaching staff on the expectations and requirements of the collaborative agreement.

The Dean must approve the involvement of any new staff appointments prior to their teaching on the collaborative course/program. The Dean must also be notified of any resignations where they affect the collaborative course/program.

6.9 Financial Arrangements

The partner institution or organization must agree to abide by the agreement as defined in the *Contract of Collaboration* and provide prompt transmission of payment of approval/validation and annual student fees to the University.

For overseas collaborations, the University expects its overseas partner institutions or organizations will provide financial accounts, certified by an auditor or independent accountant, on an annual basis to the University's Financial Department which, in turn, reports annually to the CDC.

7. REVIEW PROCEDURES

7.1 Overview

Academic collaborative agreements are subject to a period of review. In the majority of cases, collaborative agreements are considered as part of the course re-approval activities of the Internal Review of the host School (refer to *Section 3* of this Handbook). However, the University reserves the right to conduct a discrete review at the partner institution or organization at any time during the operation of the collaboration. The partner institution or organization would be given formal notification of the date of a review normally four months in advance.

For a franchised course/program, the purpose of the review is to consider the partner institutions or organization's continuing ability to deliver the course/program and the health of the collaborative agreement in general (and not to conduct a re-approval of the host course/program at the University).
For all other forms of collaboration, the course/program(s) would be subject to re-approval.

If a discrete review of a collaborative agreement is required an event is held at the partner institution or organization (at the partner institutions or organization*'s* expense), and is coordinated by the Academic Registrar (see the diagram below). The University will charge a fee to the partner institution or organization for conducting this event, normally payable in advance. Wherever possible and practical, all collaborative agreements with a partner institution or organization would be considered at the same event.

1. The Dean co-ordinates preparation of *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet* and confirms date of Review Event in consultation with QA, Academic Registrar and partner institution or organization.

2. Academic Registrar writes to partner institution or organization indicating date of Review Event and enclosing copy of approved *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet.*

3. Academic Registrar appoints Convener and internal members of Collaboration Review Panel. Convener selected from approved database of Internal Conveners.

4. Partner institution or organization prepares *Rationale and Composition of Review Panel* in liaison with the Dean .

5. Collaboration Review Panel composition approved by Convener of QA on recommendation of Dean and Academic Registrar.

6. Partner institution or organization prepares Volumes 1 and 2 for Review Event in liaison with College and Documentation Scrutineer (see **subsection 7.4**).

7. Partner institution or organization submits required documentation by deadline stated in *Academic Collaboration Planning Sheet*.

8. Documentation Scrutineer checks documents comply with university guidelines and confirms this with Dean and Academic Registrar.

9. Dean authorizes issue of event documentation by Academic Registrar.

10. Collaboration Review Panel undertakes Review Event. Preparation of report of the Review Event coordinated by Academic Registrar, in consultation with Convener of Collaboration Review Panel.

11. Partner institution or organization produces response **(see Section 3, subsection 3.5** of this Handbook) to conditions and recommendations arising from Review Event and submits this to Academic Registrar.

12. Academic Registrar co-ordinates authorization of response by Dean and Convener of QA. Dean issues authorized response to Collaboration Review Panel members.

13. Collaboration Review Panel confirms acceptance of response to conditions/recommendations.

14. College Academic Board advised of event outcomes and considers, as appropriate, issues arising from these.

15. QA advised of event outcomes and informed Academic Council accordingly.

16. Dean liaises with partner institution or organization, to ensure completion of final documentation in *Course Information Database* and *Module Database* as appropriate.

17. Academic Registrar produces annual report to QA giving an review of all events that session.

7.2 Nature of the Event

The Review Event is used to monitor and assess the following:

- teaching and learning experience for students.
- communication links between partner institutions or organizations.
- student numbers and success profiles.
- student and staff support arrangements.
- academic management and administrative procedures:
    - admission of students and transfer of registration information to the University
    - *Annual Course/Program Reviews* and follow-up action
    - *Moderator's Annual Reports* and follow-up action

- *External Examiner Annual Reports* and follow up action.
- student involvement (questionnaires and participation on committees)

- assessment matters.
- staffing and staff development.
- resources.
- value for money - requiring a costing from the University of staff and other costs.

7.3 Composition of Collaboration Review Panel

Collaboration Review Panels normally have a minimum of three members of university staff and normally have the following minimum composition:

Convener: An internal member of staff appointed by the Academic Registrar, from a central list of nominees submitted by Deans, from out with the host School.

A second internal member: An internal member of staff appointed by the Academic Registrar, normally a Course/Program Management Team from out with the host School.

A third internal member: A member of the QA to act as advisor on quality procedures, Course/Program Management, and secretary.

Two External members: One academic with relevant subject expertise; and one practitioner with appropriate industry, profession, or commerce expertise.

An exemplar *Rationale and Composition of Review Panel* is available.

7.4 Structure and Content of Review Documentation

The documentation required for consideration at the Review Event comprises two main volumes. The Academic Affairs Department provides the Collaboration Review Panel with copies of the original Approval/Validation Report(s) and all *Moderator's Annual Reports* for the period being reviewed.

VOLUME 1 - ANALYTICAL ACCOUNT – CRITICAL REVIEW

This volume is produced by the partner institution or organization in consultation with the appropriate College/Department of the University, for the period being reviewed. It includes the following sections:

1. Overview and Context – Detail of the course(s) being reviewed and their location within the academic structure of the University, i.e. College, appropriate reference should be made to the subject provision.

2. A brief description of significant developments/issues since the last review relating to the context of the subject provision and pertinent to the current review.

3. Cost and revenue analysis - (to also include an estimate of indirect financial gains e.g., students coming here to undertake postgraduate courses/programs). N.B. This should be prepared in conjunction with Financial Services.

4. Commentary on the following:

4.1 Communication between partner institutions or organizations
4.2 Teaching and Learning and the student experience.
4.3 Assessment
4.4 Academic Course Management
4.5 Other administrative activities

5. A brief critical review of the collaboration including areas of good practice, areas of concern and other issues which have arisen e.g., through *Moderator's Annual Reports, External Examiner Annual Reports*, *Annual Course/Program Reviews*).

VOLUME 2 – ANALYTICAL ACCOUNT - CRITICAL COMMENTARY

This volume is produced by the partner institution or organization in consultation with the appropriate College/Department of the University, for the period being reviewed. It includes commentary on the following:

- Students - numbers of students enrolled for each course/program, success profiles, student support arrangements, student involvement in annual review/monitoring processes.
- Staff - summary of staff changes, staff development activities (including staff registered for higher degrees and research interests), staff support arrangements.
- Physical Resources - changes to facilities.
- Communication between partner institutions or organizations.
- Teaching and learning and the student experience.

- Assessment.
- Academic Course Management - e.g., *Annual Course/Program Reviews*, Assessment Boards, Course/Program Management Teams, etc.
- Other administrative activities - e.g., admission of students, conferment of awards.
- Areas of good practice and areas of concern (only areas which remain unresolved by other means).
- For validated courses/programs, a review of the development of the course/program over the review period should be provided.

7.5 Documents to be supplied by the University.

The Academic Affairs Department supplies Collaboration Review Panel members with the following documents in advance of the event.

- Original Approval/Validation Reports and approved responses.
- *Moderator's Annual Reports* for the period of the review.
- *External Examiner Annual Reports* and responses by the Course/Program Management Team.
- In the case of a franchise agreement, a current copy of the Detailed Course Descriptor.

7.6 Documents to be supplied by the Partner Institution or Organization

The following documentation should be made available for scrutiny by the Collaboration Review Panel at the time of the event.

- For all collaborations other than a franchise, revised copies of the Detailed Course Descriptor(s) and Module Descriptors for re-approval.
- All *Annual Course/Program Reviews* and an agreed sample of completed *Student Course* and *Module Evaluation Questionnaires*.
- Summary staff CVs.
- *Student Handbooks.*

7.7 Partner Institution or Organization Response to Review Panel Report

Conditions and recommendations may have to be met because of the Review Event. The partner institution or organization is required to produce a response to these conditions and recommendations. The response should be set out in the following way:

- Each condition and recommendation should be re-stated, in bold, as it appears in the *Confirmed Report* of the event. Under each, the partner institution or organization should indicate how it will meet the condition or action the recommendation.
- If the conditions require a re-write of some of the course documentation presented at the review, the relevant revised extracts should be attached as appendices to the response.

The response is approved by the Dean and the Provost before being issued to the Collaboration Review Panel members.

8. CESSATION PROCEDURES

Proposals for the cessation of a collaborative arrangement require the approval of the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC).

1. Head of School/Associate Dean agrees arrangements for cessation of academic collaborative agreement and prepares *Academic Collaboration Cessation Proforma*. The Dean signs *Academic Collaboration Cessation Proforma* confirming proposal has approval of Faculty* concerned.

2. CDC considers *Academic Collaboration Cessation Proforma*. CDC *Approval Proforma* completed, and signed by CDC Convener. Academic Council advised accordingly through Strategy Committee.

3. On confirmation of approval from CDC, Academic Affairs Department updates central file and notifies relevant College, Financial Services, Student Affairs Department, and QA (where appropriate).

9. 2+2 ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

The University operates various forms of articulation between its courses/program and courses at Further Education Institute.

In general, such articulation is on a 2+2 basis, i.e., students who successfully complete a relevant Higher National Diploma course over 2 years (or part-time equivalent) at a college, are assured access to the third year of the appropriate University degree course. However, there may be instances where a college offers a course to Higher National Certificate level only in which case the articulation would take the form of a 1+3 arrangement.

Full details of the process for establishing 2+2 Articulation Agreements can be obtained from the *CDC* though, as a minimum, this involves: a course mapping process; the drafting of Course Level Agreements; the provision of Student status of AUM, to students while completing their courses; and the establishment of a joint liaison group to monitor and oversee the agreement.

As part of the monitoring process of 2+2 Articulations, biannual status reports are submitted to the Curriculum Development Committee.