

NEW COURSE APPROVAL/PERIODIC REVIEW EVENTS AT PARTNER INSTITUTIONS GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

The University of Essex approves course(s) for delivery at your Institution which lead to the awards of degrees, diplomas and certificates. These guidance notes provide information on the process for the approval of new courses in order that the course can be delivered as well as the process for the ongoing review of current courses, known as 'Periodic Review'. Periodic Reviews normally take place every five years.

The notes have been written to support students involved in the process, either as a member of a review panel or as a participant in a student meeting at a review event.

What is a new course approval event?

A new or significantly revised course usually undergoes a new course approval event which allows a panel of experts to evaluate the academic structure, content, quality and fitness for purpose of the proposed new course(s) before it can be delivered. The new course approval panel judges the academic integrity of the course in relation to the regulations of the University and the national standards expected of the type of award proposed.

What is a Periodic Review event?

A Periodic Review event provides an opportunity for a course, or a group of related courses, to be reviewed to ensure that they continue to provide students with a high-quality learning experience. The process allows the course team an opportunity to step back from the day-to-day running of the course and evaluate whether the course remains fit-for-purpose. It also provides an opportunity for the University to oversee the ongoing quality of courses on offer at the Partner Institution.

Why is my involvement at these events important?

The University of Essex is keen to capture your views on the courses you are undertaking and the facilities for learning and support that are available to you. We value your opinion on your experiences, are keen to ensure that you are able to take an active role in developing and improving the learning opportunities available to you.

What happens at a new course approval/Periodic Review event?

A panel is formed to consider the course(s) and there are typically around 6 members of the panel, including academic staff, administrative staff, students and external representatives (including employer representatives). Approximately two weeks before the event, panel members are sent the documentation which contains details on arrangements for the event and information on the course (prepared by the course team). This gives panel members a chance to find out more about the course before the event and to identify any things that they would like to discuss on the day.

For events taking place in person - the panel meets at the site where the course is delivered. During the event (which usually starts at around 9:15am and finishes by 4pm), the panel gets a chance to view facilities, meet with students and discuss the course with the course team.

For events taking place virtually – the panel would usually meet on zoom and would usually start around 9.15am and finishes by 4pm. There will be the same meetings as an in-person

meeting, but without the chance to view the facilities although there may be a presentation from the course team.

At the end of the event whether it took place in person or virtually, the panel reaches a decision about the quality and future of the course and can commend positive aspects of the course and identify areas where there is scope for improvement. These conclusions are recorded in a summary report. The course team is expected to revise the course considering any conditions or recommendations by the panel, and this is overseen by the University of Essex.

I am a panel member – what is my role? (Periodic Reviews)

You are a full and equal member of the panel, and your views will be valued by other panel members. Please participate honestly and constructively, and don't be afraid to ask questions, make suggestions or tell the panel and the course team how you and other students feel about your experiences on your course.

Some of the things you might want to consider are:

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

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

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

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

New course approval/Periodic Review panels find it incredibly useful to meet with students, to get a real feel for how current courses are operating and how they are viewed by students. Members of the panel will ask you questions about your study experiences some of which may be similar to the questions in the section above.

Although it can seem a daunting prospect to meet with the panel, please do not feel intimidated as the panel will be keen to hear your views. Please speak freely and honestly about your experiences on your course, highlighting any aspects of the course that you like, any areas where you think there is room for improvement and if it is a new course that is proposed what

your views are about the content. If the panel does not ask questions about something that you feel is important, do not be afraid to bring it to their attention.

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

What's in it for you?

Firstly, you will be helping to contribute to the introduction of a new course or improve your course for yourself and fellow students. You get to have your views listened to and taken seriously, and you will have a real input into decisions that are made that will affect your course or other courses at your Institution. You will get to meet new people, and it will also provide an opportunity to gain new skills and enhance your CV. It is a real chance to put your communication skills into action, and for student representatives on the panel it provides an opportunity to demonstrate your teamwork, time management, negotiation, and presentation and meeting skills.

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