

## The programme approval process at Edinburgh Napier

The University's process for approving taught provision has been designed to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and to meet the common and core practices for standards and quality. It is a University-level activity, undertaken on behalf of Academic Board, by a panel (the 'Programme Approvals Board) composing a student, academic and professional experts from within the University and an external peer, who meet to scrutinise each proposed taught award or credit-bearing programme, then meet with the programme team and School representatives at a formal event. A programme information set is provided to the panel prior to the approval event. This will previously have been subjected to a local scrutiny process within the School.

The role of the Programme Approvals Board is to:

- Assess, using the academic and professional experience and judgement of members, whether University expectations for the academic standard and quality of the student learning experience for a taught award or credit-bearing programmes are met;
- Provide comment and feedback, in a collegiate and supportive manner, on the overall appropriateness, quality and standard of the proposal;
- Having scrutinised and discussed the proposal with the programme team, collectively reach a decision on the outcome, which may be: 'Approved without amendment'; 'Approved with recommendations'; 'Approved with conditions'; 'Not approved'.
- The process is set out in detail in the [University's Quality Framework, Section 1c, Approving Taught Provision](#)

## The role of the external peer

The external peer will be a subject expert from academia or industry, and will be able to demonstrate breadth and depth of experience in the design and delivery of higher education provision, and relevant, current knowledge and expertise of development in the subject area, at the level of the provision being considered<sup>1</sup>.

The external peer is specifically expected to:

- provide an independent and objective view of the programme/s under consideration;
- provide comment and feedback on the academic standard and the quality of learning opportunities associated with each programme, and whether these meet sector expectations;

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<sup>1</sup> Representatives from the professional, statutory or regulatory body may also serve on the Programme Approvals Board.

- take a holistic view of the programme, considering the contribution of the modules to the programme as a whole to ensure this provides a coherent package of learning (note however, that if a significant issue is identified in relation to a module, this may be explored);
  - provide to the clerk, in advance of the approval event, a brief written commentary of points they wish to explore with the programme team and School representatives during the meeting (informed by the [Programme Approval Board Guide, Quality Framework, Section 1c, Appendix 4](#));
  - contribute to deciding a review outcome, and comment on the draft approval report (a record of discussions and decisions).

The external peer is not expected to:

- scrutinise the contribution of the programme/s to the University's Strategy;

The external peer should also be aware that modules presented within the programme structure(s) may already be approved and in use in other programmes. As such making amendments to these modules is not within the scope of the Programme Approvals Board, though feedback may be provided,

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As a guide, [The Quality Framework, Section 1c, Approving Taught Provision](#) includes a list of topics which may be considered when assessing the proposed provision (Programme Approval Board Guide, Appendix 4).

Restrictions regarding appointment of an external academic peer

As the role of the external peer is to provide an independent and objective view, the following restrictions apply:

- An individual who has been involved in the design or delivery of the proposed provision, or who has been involved in any research, consultative or collaborative work with the School, is not permitted to participate in an approval event;
- Current external examiners cannot be appointed as an external panel member (a former external examiner may be considered for the role if five academic years have passed since they ceased their appointment).

Further information is available from the University's Quality Framework, Section 0b

Appointing External Peers: <http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/quality/qualityframework>

You will have the opportunity to speak to a member of the University's Quality & Standards Team in advance of the review if you wish.