Standing Approval Panel: Guidelines for panel members

Contents

1. Purpose of the Standing Approval Panel

Standing Approval Panels (SAPs) are the University level approval mechanism for new courses, periodic course reviews and significant course changes which fall outside the faculty course change process.

Standing Approval Panels are arranged by the Quality and Standards Office (QSO) and act as a quality assurance mechanism to confirm that in-faculty scrutiny processes for course proposals have been conducted appropriately and in line with University processes. Detailed information about course planning and approval and about periodic course review can be found on the QSO web pages. This quick guide shows a summary of the steps in the course approval process prior to the SAP.

If a panel member would like further information, they should contact the Quality Officers for advice.

2. Terms of Reference

Deriving its authority from the University's Academic Board, the Standing Approval Panel will:

1. Review the submitted documents to confirm that University processes have been followed

2. Confirm through the scrutiny of Faculty approval that the course will deliver the expected student experience

3. Establish and implement arrangements to ensure that where courses are returned to Faculty for further consideration, future submissions are appropriately considered

4. Make a recommendation to the Academic Board for the approval or otherwise of the course

3. Operation of the Standing Approval Panel

Each panel will consider up to three courses which may be a mix of approvals, periodic reviews or major modifications and which will usually come from a single Faculty. A panel meeting will be approximately 2.5 hours long and panels will not meet with course team members.

Course teams submit their proposal and required course documentation for internal faculty scrutiny. The SAP must receive a sign-off from the faculty (alongside the course documentation) confirming that this process has taken place.

Faculty sign-off enables the panel to focus on confirming that robust faculty scrutiny and University processes have been followed, rather than interrogate each proposal. The process flows for course approval and periodic course review, showing the faculty level scrutiny points, can be viewed on the QSO website.

4. Membership and roles

The membership of the Standing Approval Panel includes a range of individuals with specialist skill sets and is designed to bring institutional diversity.

As SAPs will review up to three sets of course documentation, QSO suggest that each panel member conducts a sampling exercise based on the themes outlined in the table below to confirm that the course documentation meets University requirements and that the faculty scrutiny process has been conducted appropriately.

The documentation set for each SAP consists of the following:
1. Course Document (which includes course and module specifications)
2. External Advisor Report
3. Faculty Sign-Off

Fig 1: Panel roles and areas for focus, showing where information can be located in each document by section (S), page (P), box (B).

Role	Who	Main focus	Where located in documents	Secondary focus	Where located in documents
Chair:	Head of School / Centre / Dean of Faculty	The faculty scrutiny process,	Faculty Sign-off External Advisor Report	Engagement with students and stakeholders	Course document Sections 6,7,9
Academic Panel Member:	e.g. Experienced course director or experienced subject lead	Student experience, student voice and student support Recruitment logistics, where there is variance from standard University criteria e.g. process, interviews, auditions, consideration of	Course doc S6,7,9 Course specification section of course document for course learning outcomes, calendar structure Course specification, box 30 for non-standard	Course management Placement (where relevant)	Course document sections 6,8,9 Module specs S1 Course Doc S7

		accessibility, inclusivity for students	recruitment criteria		
QSO Panel Member:	Quality Manager	PSRB requirements	Course Doc S 9	Module descriptors – technical check and learning outcome mapping Work-related learning or placement	Course document Course document S7
Learning and Teaching Panel Member:	Assistant Director of L and T, Senior Academic Developer or Faculty Director of L and T	Learning, teaching and assessment strategy, module aims and learning outcomes	Course Doc Sections 1, 4, 5 Module Specifications	Graduate skills, work-related learning	Course Doc S4,5 Module specifications
Senior Member of PAA / Faculty Registrar	Faculty Registrar or senior member of Planning and Academic Administration	Course structure (and efficiency), Student experience, Information for data set-up	Course Doc S1,2,3 Module specs S1 scheduling, core/options, assessment submission	Student facing information Placement (where relevant)	Course doc S1-4 Course Doc S7

5. Timeline to look at submitted documentation

Panel members will receive documentation from QSO at least two weeks prior to the event via MS Teams.

6. Outcomes of the Standing Approval Panel

Fig 2. SAP Decisions and further actions.

This table shows the steps which follow each possible panel decision.

Panel out-come	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Responsible for Approval of Changes	Standing Approval Panel Signoff
1 – Recommend the course to ESEC and AB for approval in the form it is presented.	SAP to recommend approval to University	QSO to progress to University approval	N/A	N/A	Date of event
2 – Ask for minor drafting alterations, to be approved via Chair's Action and recommend as above.	Course team to correct minor changes	Course Director	2 weeks	Head of School	SAP Chair's Action
3 – Return the proposal to the Faculty for further	Dependent upon the nature and scale of the issues the SAP will request the Faculty	Dependent upon the issue Course Director working with	Head of School in consultation with the	Head of School	SAP (or SAP Chair's Action dependent on scale)

Panel out-come	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Responsible for Approval of Changes	Standing Approval Panel Signoff
consideration, setting out where further development is required and agree a resubmission date which may be, dependent on the scale of development, the following academic year.	and course team to work on specified areas	Faculty Director of Quality / Faculty Director of Learning & Teaching / Head of School / Faculty Registrar	SAP dependent on scale of work and proposed start date		
4 – Reject the proposal in its current form.	Chair, supported by QSO and LTE, to meet with HoS, FDLT, FDQ and PD to go through areas for development	Head of School	If taken forward the proposal will return to the SAP in the following academic year.	Go through the faculty scrutiny and approval processes again	SAP

7. Following SAP approval

The Quality and Standards Office will arrange for:

1. A report of the approval / review event with the Panel's decisions is sent to the course team for any required action. Once the course team have responded appropriately, the panel chair will sign for the course proposal to proceed to University level sign off.

2. Education Student Experience Committee (ESEC) and Academic Board (AB) sign off; this is the formal approval by the University for the course to be added to its academic portfolio.

3. Registry and central service areas will carry out curriculum set-up (Student Systems), advertising (Marketing), timetabling and rooming and finalise communications to prospective students (Admissions)

4. **It is at this point that students can be recruited to the course.**