

## Information for proposers of programmes: validation and accreditation

This document should be read in conjunction with a document entitled *Validation and Accreditation of Programmes: Regulations and Guidelines* (at <http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/ac.shtml>), which outlines the purpose of validation and accreditation and the procedures to be followed in the preparation of documentation.

### 1. Validation: management

#### 1.1 Approval mechanism - general

- 1.1.1 Validation proposals must be submitted for approval to the Education Committee<sup>1</sup>. This committee is serviced by the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar (specifically, by the Administrator and the Assistant Registrar)<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.1.2 Validation proposals may be submitted for approval to the EC only after they have completed the approval process (including approval in relation to financial matters) within the relevant Faculty or Faculties. Information on Faculty approval processes is available from Faculty Offices. Throughout this document, references to Faculty procedures should also be read, as appropriate and necessary, as references to Oscail procedures and references to procedures in the Linked Colleges. At all points in this document at which there are references to Schools and Faculties, it should be understood that, in the case of the Linked Colleges, standard practices with regard to internal approval, including approval by their Academic Councils, apply, and, where appropriate, standard practices with regard to liaison with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences apply.
- 1.1.3 Within the Faculty, a future Chair of the Programme Board (or equivalent title) should be identified. This person is referred to, for the purposes of validation and accreditation, as the *principal programme proposer*.
- 1.1.4 Liaison with the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar should normally be carried out by the principal programme proposer and the Faculty Manager (or the latter's nominee).
- 1.1.5 There are nine Education Committee meetings in each academic year. Validation proposals may be considered at five of these: September, November, January, March and May. The exact times and dates are indicated in the University schedule of meetings at [http://www.dcu.ie/timetables/meetings\\_10\\_11.shtml](http://www.dcu.ie/timetables/meetings_10_11.shtml). Programme proposers are not required to be in attendance at these meetings, however. Instead, if the EC decides that a proposal needs to be discussed with the proposers, such discussion will take place shortly after the EC meeting. It will be carried out either electronically (via the Assistant Registrar) or, more usually, at a meeting of the Validation Subgroup of the EC. The exact times and dates for the Validation

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<sup>1</sup> The membership and terms of reference of the Education Committee are available at <http://www.dcu.ie/internal/ec/index.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> Administrator: Valerie Cooke, x5938, [valerie.cooke@dcu.ie](mailto:valerie.cooke@dcu.ie)  
Assistant Registrar: Louise McDermott, x5926, [louise.mcdermott@dcu.ie](mailto:louise.mcdermott@dcu.ie)

Subgroup meetings are indicated in the University schedule of meetings at [http://www.dcu.ie/timetables/meetings\\_10\\_11.shtml](http://www.dcu.ie/timetables/meetings_10_11.shtml).

- 1.1.6 If the EC decides not to approve a validation proposal, the Assistant Registrar will let the programme proposers know this by e-mail following the relevant EC meeting. Further action to be taken by the proposers will depend on the circumstances. For example, in certain cases, they may be advised that the EC considers the programme as proposed not to be likely to be viable while, in others, they may be invited to submit a revised proposal to a future meeting of the EC.

## **1.2 Submission of documentation**

- 1.2.1 All submissions to the EC must be with the Administrator by 5.00 p.m. on the Friday week before the Wednesday on which a meeting takes place. The Administrator should be contacted as far in advance as possible of this Friday to arrange for the programme proposal to be placed on the agenda. Proposals are required in electronic format only, and hard copies should not be provided.
- 1.2.2 The programme proposers are welcome to submit a draft of the programme proposal to the Assistant Registrar in advance with a request for advice on issues such as whether or not all of the necessary areas have been adequately covered in the document.

## **1.3 The Validation Subgroup meeting**

- 1.3.1 Once the EC has decided that there should be further discussion of a proposal, either queries will be e-mailed to the proposers by the Assistant Registrar or a discussion will take place at a meeting of the Validation Subgroup of the EC (see 1.1.5 above) or both. Where discussion takes place at the Validation Subgroup, the Administrator notifies the proposers of the exact time at which the proposal will be discussed and at which they should therefore make themselves available to meet the Subgroup. This will normally be somewhere between 4.00 and 5.30 p.m., though it should not be assumed that this will always be the case.
- 1.3.2 The principal programme proposer should be accompanied to the Validation Subgroup meeting by a minimum of one and, normally, a maximum of two colleagues – the group may include, for example, the Head of School, the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning/Education or a staff member closely associated with the programme. If a programme is proposed in partnership with an external organisation, a representative of this organisation may also attend. The principal programme proposer should tell the Administrator in advance who will be in attendance.
- 1.3.3 The Administrator advises the principal programme proposer where he/she and colleagues should wait at the appointed time. They should not go directly to the room in which the Validation Subgroup meeting is held. Instead, they should wait until the Assistant Registrar leaves the Subgroup meeting to invite them in. Subgroup meetings are normally held in A204 on the second floor of the Albert College Building, and the place to wait is normally the foyer of the Albert College Building, but this cannot be assumed in all cases; the Administrator will advise.

- 1.3.4 The Subgroup members will, as appropriate and necessary, ask questions of the programme proposers and seek clarifications in relation to the proposal. When this process has been completed, the programme proposers leave the meeting.

#### **1.4 Following the Validation Subgroup meeting**

- 1.4.1 The Assistant Registrar advises the principal programme proposer and the Faculty Manager (or the latter's nominee), normally on the day on which the Subgroup meeting takes place, of the outcome of the meeting. This outcome will normally be a recommendation either to approve or not to approve the programme for development towards accreditation. The information communicated should be understood as being provisional, however, pending approval of the Subgroup's recommendations (as outlined in the validation report – see Item 1.1.4 below) by the full Education Committee. This process will normally be finalised by the Wednesday week following the Tuesday of a Subgroup meeting.
- 1.4.2 In the event of a recommendation to approve, there may be sub-recommendations which the programme proposers are to take into account in the development of the programme, and these will be communicated by e-mail by the Assistant Registrar.
- 1.4.3 If the Subgroup decides not to recommend approval, the Assistant Registrar will let the programme proposers know this by e-mail following the Subgroup meeting. Further action to be taken by the proposers will depend on the circumstances. For example, in certain cases, they may be advised that the Subgroup considers the programme as proposed not to be likely to be viable while, in others, they may be invited to submit a revised proposal to a future meeting of the EC.
- 1.4.4 In the event of a recommendation to approve a proposal, the Assistant Registrar drafts a validation report to be approved by the members of the Subgroup and the EC and then forwarded for approval to the next available meeting of Academic Council. This report includes a summary of each programme proposal approved together with a statement of the recommendation to approve and a list of sub-recommendations, if any. The Assistant Registrar forwards this report to the principal programme proposer, the relevant Faculty Managers(s) (or nominee(s)) and the relevant Associate Dean(s) for Teaching and Learning/Education as soon as it has been approved by the Subgroup and the EC. Normally, the sub-recommendations relate to matters that need to be addressed in the accreditation proposal. If that is not the case, the Assistant Registrar arranges with the principal programme proposer for confirmation to be submitted to the EC, at an appropriate date, that the sub-recommendation has been implemented.

#### **1.5 Academic Council approval**

- 1.5.1 Validation reports are placed in Section C of the agenda for Academic Council, which means that they are normally for formal approval only and will be discussed only if a member of Council requests, by a specified deadline before the meeting, that this be done. If there is a request for a discussion, the Administrator will notify the principal programme proposer of this.
- 1.5.2 If there is to be a discussion about the proposal, it should be ensured that there is a person present at Academic Council who can address any issues raised. This may be the principal programme proposer, if he/she is a member of Council; if not, a colleague who is a member of Council may address the issues, or the principal

programme proposer may submit a request to the President via the Administrator to attend the relevant part of the meeting.

- 1.5.3 If there is no discussion about the proposal, it will be formally approved by Academic Council. If there is a discussion, various outcomes are possible: Council may approve, reject or amend the validation recommendations. In all cases, the decision (and recommendations, if any) of Academic Council will be communicated to stakeholders by the Assistant Registrar.
- 1.5.4 If approval is indicated by Academic Council, the programme proposers are in a position to prepare for accreditation. It is understood that, for practical reasons, they may already have begun the preparations following EC approval.

## **2. Accreditation: management**

### **2.1 Approval mechanism – general**

Accreditation is carried out by an Accreditation Board, composed of a number of external experts, a senior member of the University who acts as Chair, and the Assistant Registrar who acts as Secretary.

### **2.2 Accreditation Board members**

- 2.2.1 The identification of likely external members of the Accreditation Board is the responsibility of the programme proposers. Those nominated must be approved by the EC, which may delegate this responsibility to the Validation Subgroup. The process should be activated by the inclusion in the relevant section of the validation document of CVs for all those nominated, using the standard form<sup>3</sup>. Where a subsequent change has to be made, e.g. where an individual nominated and approved becomes unavailable and a substitute has to be sought, the CV of the substitute (on the standard form) should be forwarded to the Administrator, who will submit it electronically to the EC/Validation Subgroup, request responses by a specified date, and communicate the outcome to the principal programme proposer, the relevant Faculty Manager(s) (or nominee(s)) and the relevant Associate Dean(s) for Teaching and Learning/Education.
- 2.2.2 In the selection of nominees to the Accreditation Board, account must be taken of the following:
- The principal programme proposer and colleagues should ensure that there is appropriate professional distance between all nominated Board members and the University. No individual employed by the University, or a student of the University, in the previous five years may be considered. Nomination of individuals with a personal connection with the University should also be avoided, as appropriate. Reference should be made to the University's Conflict of Interest Policy at [http://www.dcu.ie/staff/conflict\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.dcu.ie/staff/conflict_guidelines.pdf)
  - It should be ensured that the Board includes senior academic and professional experts as appropriate. There should normally be a minimum of one individual of professorial rank.

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<sup>3</sup> Available in *Validation and Accreditation of Programmes: Regulations and Guidelines*, Section 4.2 (Section 11)

- It can be desirable, even necessary, for an individual to be appointed to a Board because he/she represents a professional accrediting body. In no circumstances, however, should an individual be appointed who is a member of an organisation which has commissioned a programme.
- Every effort should be made to ensure an appropriate gender balance and an appropriate balance between national and international expertise.
- An Accreditation Board should include no more than one representative from any one institution.
- Reciprocal arrangements between the University and other institutions should be avoided.
- In no circumstances may a staff member from DCU act as a member of an Accreditation Board in a linked college, or *vice versa*. Nor may a staff member of a linked college act as a member of an Accreditation Board in another linked college.

2.2.3 The number of external experts who actually sit on an Accreditation Board should never be less than three and should normally not be more than five. To allow for unforeseen events which might prevent an individual from attending a Board meeting as scheduled, it is recommended that a minimum of four be identified and invited. This ensures that, if one individual is prevented at short notice from attending, there will still be a minimum of three in attendance.

2.2.4 If one individual indicates, within a reasonable time period before the Board meeting (for example, a month in advance) that he/she cannot now attend, there may be time for the programme proposers to identify, nominate and request approval of a substitute. It is essential, in all cases, that a CV be supplied for the substitute (on the standard form) and that formal approval of this CV be sought. (See 2.2.1 above in respect of the relevant procedure.)

2.2.5 In certain cases, an individual may indicate that he/she cannot attend the Board meeting but would be willing to read the documentation and submit comments in advance. This can be accommodated on occasion, though it is not recommended because it does not allow the individual to interact with the other members of the Board or the programme proposers. The comments should be e-mailed to the Administrator at the earliest opportunity, but not later than 5.00 p.m. on the day before the meeting is to take place. The Administrator will make the comments available to the other Board members. They will not be made available to the programme proposers, as they have the same status as comments made by the Board during its private sessions.

2.2.6 The principal programme proposer should ensure that the Administrator has a complete street address and e-mail address for each of the external experts. (The standard CV form, if completed fully, should include this information. However, the principal programme proposer should check, in each case, whether or not there is an additional street address, different from the professional address, to which documentation is to be sent, and notify the Administrator if this is the case ).

## **2.3 Arrangements for Board meetings**

2.3.1 To arrange a date for the meeting, the principal programme proposer must first contact the Administrator. In no circumstances should dates be arranged with the external experts, even tentatively, without prior consultation with the Administrator. The approximate time period in which the meeting will take place depends on a number of factors, including the likely amount of time required by the programme

proposers to prepare the accreditation proposal and the availability of those who must be present for all or part of the meeting. These include, besides the members of the Board itself, the principal programme proposer and others closely associated with the proposal, the relevant Dean(s) of Faculty and Head(s) of School and the module co-ordinators. If it appears likely that it will be impossible for an individual to attend, a substitute should be identified who will be able to speak on the individual's behalf.

- 2.3.2 The Administrator gives the principal programme proposer a list of possible dates within the general time period identified. Each date includes both a morning and an afternoon slot, and only one of these is used for accreditation. Therefore, within a range of four dates, there are potentially eight slots. The morning slot lasts from 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m., and the afternoon slot lasts from 12.30 to 5.30 p.m. Both include lunch for the members of the Accreditation Board.
- 2.3.3 The principal programme proposer negotiates with all relevant parties about these slots and will advise the Administrator, as soon as possible, which one is most suitable. This slot will then be entered into the accreditation diary.
- 2.3.4 The principal programme proposer advises the Administrator how many people will be in attendance for the discussion of individual modules (i.e. the section of the meeting that begins with coffee at either 10.30 a.m. or 3.00 p.m. – see timetables at 2.5.2 below).
- 2.3.5 The Administrator books the room for the meeting of the Accreditation Board. Where possible, this is A204 on the second floor of the Albert College Building, though it cannot be assumed that this room will always be available.
- 2.3.6 The Administrator contacts Trispace Ltd. to arrange catering for the meeting.
- 2.3.7 The Assistant Registrar and the Administrator – not the programme proposers – identify a senior member of the academic staff of the University to chair the meeting. This person will usually be a Dean of Faculty. In no instance will a meeting be chaired by the Dean(s) of Faculty from which the programme proposal has come.

## **2.4 Accreditation documentation**

- 2.4.1 The final accreditation proposal must be submitted to the Administrator at least two weeks in advance of the date of the meeting. Both an electronic copy and the appropriate number of hard copies are required. The number of hard copies required is one for the Chair, one for the Assistant Registrar, one for each external expert and one spare. A table of contents should be provided. If possible, for ease of reading, hard copies should be colour-coded (e.g. one colour used for the module descriptors, another for the CVs and white for all the rest).
- 2.4.2 Programme proposers are welcome to submit an electronic draft of the accreditation proposal to the Assistant Registrar in advance with a request for advice on issues such as whether or not all of the necessary areas have been adequately covered in the document.
- 2.4.3 Two weeks before the date of the meeting (never later than this), the Administrator sends an electronic copy of the accreditation proposal to each member of the Accreditation Board and, on the same day, sends each member a pack containing the following:
  - a hard copy of the proposal

- a covering letter
- a list of the members of the Accreditation Board
- a timetable
- a copy of the University's regulations and guidelines on validation and accreditation<sup>4</sup>
- the validation recommendations approved by Academic Council (extracted from the validation report)
- a campus map
- a travel expenses claim form.

- 2.4.4 When the above have been despatched, the Administrator e-mails the following documents, for information purposes, to the principal programme proposer with a request to forward them to the relevant staff members:
- the covering letters
  - the list of the members of the Accreditation Board
  - the timetable
  - a copy of the University's regulations and guidelines on validation and accreditation<sup>4</sup>
  - the validation recommendations approved by Academic Council (extracted from the validation report).

- 2.4.5 It is important to note that, where a proposed new programme incorporates both new and existing modules, the latter are not of themselves deemed due for accreditation (as they have already been accredited in a previous context). What is due for accreditation is (a) the new modules, and (b) the programme as a whole, including the appropriateness of the relationship between the new and the existing modules. The members of the Accreditation Board need not necessarily comment on existing modules *per se*, though it is open to them to make suggestions for amendments to them where they consider it appropriate to do this as well as to consider the appropriateness of the relationship between the existing modules and the proposed new modules.

## **2.5 The meeting**

- 2.5.1 The programme proposers are responsible for liaising with the external experts in relation to travel arrangements and accommodation, as required. It is quite usual for the external experts to book and pay for their own travel and accommodation and claim reimbursement later. Any additional activities, such as evening meals, site visits or lectures in which the external experts are to be involved, are the responsibility of the programme proposers. To avoid any possible confusion on the part of the external experts as to which staff members are responsible for the various aspects of the preparation for accreditation, the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar should not be copied on correspondence relating to any of the above activities.

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<sup>4</sup> This is *Validation and Accreditation of Programmes: Regulations and Guidelines*, in an abbreviated and adapted version to meet the needs of external readers. Programme proposers will also be familiar with the full version.

2.5.2 The timetable for morning meetings is as follows:

9.00 a.m.	The members of the Accreditation Board assemble in A204 (if the meeting is being held there) or elsewhere as directed (if the meeting is being held elsewhere)
9.00 a.m.	Private meeting of the Accreditation Board
9.45 a.m.	Meeting with the Dean, principal programme proposer and senior staff associated with the programme
10.30 a.m.	Coffee (for the Board members and all those associated with the programme)
10.45 a.m.	Meeting with all other academic staff associated with the programme for detailed discussion of the academic content and other programme-related matters
12.15 p.m.	Private meeting of the Accreditation Board to review the outcome of discussions and formulate the recommendations
12.45 p.m.	Final meeting with the Dean, principal programme proposer and senior staff
1.00 p.m.	Close of proceedings
1.00 p.m.	Lunch for the members of the Accreditation Board

The timetable for afternoon meetings is as follows:

12.30 p.m.	The members of the Accreditation Board assemble in the foyer of the Albert College Building
12.35 p.m.	Lunch for the members of the Accreditation Board
1.30 p.m.	Private meeting of the Accreditation Board
2.15 p.m.	Meeting with the Dean, principal programme proposer and other staff associated with the programme
3.00 p.m.	Coffee (for the Board members and all those associated with the programme)
3.15 p.m.	Meeting with all other academic staff associated with the programme for detailed discussion of the academic content and other programme-related matters
4.45 p.m.	Private meeting of the Accreditation Board to review the outcome of discussions and formulate the recommendations
5.15 p.m.	Final meeting with the Dean, principal programme proposer and senior staff
5.30 p.m.	Close of proceedings

2.5.3 During the first private meeting of the Accreditation Board (9.00 a.m. or 1.30 p.m.) the members agree on the issues to be raised with the senior staff. These are normally generic issues relating to the programme rather than module-specific issues.

2.5.4 The coffee (10.30 a.m. or 3.00 p.m.) is available in the room in which the meeting is held and is for everyone: members of the Accreditation Board, senior staff and all associated with the programme.

- 2.5.5 The sessions at 10.45 a.m. or 3.15 p.m. are intended to allow detailed discussion of individual modules with the module co-ordinators. If possible, the Dean(s) and Head(s) should be present at this point. The principal programme proposer should in all cases be present at this point.
- 2.5.6 During the second private meeting of the Accreditation Board (12.15 p.m. or 4.45 p.m.) the members agree on the main recommendation to be made, i.e. that the programme either be launched, or not be launched, at the time and on the basis proposed. If the recommendation is that the programme be launched, there will normally also be sub-recommendations which are also formulated. If the recommendation is that the programme not be launched, the reasons are agreed.
- 2.5.7 During the final meeting with the Dean and senior staff (12.45 p.m. or 5.15 p.m.) the Chair of the Accreditation Board summarises verbally the main recommendation to be made, as well as the main sub-recommendations (where relevant) or the reasons for a negative recommendation (where relevant).
- 2.5.8 In no instance should anyone due to join the meeting at the following times:
- 9.45 a.m. or 2.15 p.m.
  - 10.30 a.m. or 3.00 p.m.
  - 12.45 p.m. or 5.00 p.m.

go to the room in which the meeting is taking place. They should instead assemble in the foyer of the Albert College<sup>5</sup> and wait there until the Assistant Registrar leaves the meeting to invite them in. The principal programme proposer is responsible for ensuring that all involved know this. It is very important that this arrangement is adhered to, as otherwise the management of the meeting becomes problematic.

## **2.6 Following the meeting**

- 2.6.1 After the meeting, each external expert may, as appropriate, submit a completed travel expenses claim form and bank transfer form to the Administrator. The bank transfer form is used to request details of the bank account into which the travel expenses, as well as the honorarium due to each external expert, is to be paid. It should be noted that bank transfer is the only means of effecting payment, as the University no longer issues cheques. The Administrator will submit the documentation to the Finance Office, which will arrange for the appropriate bank transfer to be made. The honorarium is €250 (or €25 in the case of an individual who submitted written comments but did not attend the meeting in person).
- 2.6.2 In the event of a positive recommendation, the Assistant Registrar will draft an accreditation report to be approved by the members of the Board and then forwarded for approval to the next available meeting of Academic Council. This report will include a summary of the programme proposal approved together with a statement of the recommendation to approve and a list of the sub-recommendations. Once the members of the Accreditation Board have approved the report, the Assistant Registrar forwards it to the principal programme proposer, the relevant Faculty Manager(s) (or nominee(s)) and the relevant Associate Dean(s) for Teaching and Learning. Depending on the circumstances, this may happen some time before the meeting of Academic Council to which the report is submitted for approval.

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<sup>5</sup> Or elsewhere, as directed, if the meeting is not held in A204.

- 2.6.3 In the event of a negative recommendation, the Assistant Registrar drafts a report to be approved by the members of the Board. This report contains the reasons for the recommendation and any further recommendations that may be made. Once the members of the Board have approved the report, the Assistant Registrar forwards it to the principal programme proposer, the relevant Faculty Manager(s) (or nominee(s)) and the relevant Associate Dean(s) for Teaching and Learning/Education.
- 2.6.4 Board members are typically requested to approve, or propose amendments to, draft reports within two weeks of the date of the meeting of the Accreditation Board. If necessary and with the agreement of the Board, however, this time period can be shortened.

## **2.7 Academic Council approval**

- 2.7.1 Accreditation reports are placed in Section C of the agenda for Academic Council, which means that they are normally for formal approval only and will be discussed only if a member of Council requests, by a specified deadline before the meeting, that this be done. If there is a request for a discussion, the Administrator will notify the principal programme proposer of this.
- 2.7.2 If there is to be a discussion about the proposal, it should be ensured that there is a person present at Academic Council who can address any issues raised. This may be the principal programme proposer, if he/she is a member of Council; if not, a colleague who is a member of Council may address the issues, or the principal programme proposer may submit a request to the President via the Administrator to attend the relevant part of the meeting.
- 2.7.3 If there is no discussion about the proposal, it will be formally approved by Academic Council. If there is a discussion, various outcomes are possible: Council may approve, reject or amend the accreditation recommendations. In all cases, the decision (and recommendations, if any) of Academic Council will be communicated to stakeholders by the Assistant Registrar.

## **2.8 Finalisation of accreditation documentation**

In the event of a positive recommendation, the Assistant Registrar requests the principal programme proposer to ensure that finalised documentation is lodged with the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar before the beginning of the next academic year. This finalised documentation consists of the following:

- (a) the accreditation proposal, now incorporating the accreditation recommendations, with all changes tracked<sup>6</sup>
- (b) the above document with all changes untracked<sup>6</sup>
- (c) a copy of the accreditation report, with an indication under each recommendation of where and how it has been addressed in the revised accreditation proposal.

These documents are required in electronic copy, not hard copy. The document at (b) becomes the definitive accreditation document which describes the programme as it was accredited and should be used as the basis for any future revisions. The Administrator archives all such documents. A copy should also be held by the relevant Faculty/Faculties and School(s).

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<sup>6</sup> Where documentation was submitted originally in pdf format, it can be converted to Word for tracking purposes. The programme proposers should discuss this with the Assistant Registrar.

## 2.9 Advertising a programme

A programme should not be advertised before the EC has approved the validation proposal (see 1.4.1 above). After this, and before the meeting of the Accreditation Board, the programme may be advertised as ‘subject to accreditation’. Between the meeting of the Accreditation Board and approval of its recommendations by Academic Council, and if the recommendation of the Board is positive, the programme may be advertised as ‘subject to final approval’.

## 3. Remote accreditation: management

- 3.1 In certain circumstances, accreditation may be carried out remotely, i.e. by e-mail, without the necessity for the Board members to meet in person. These circumstances may include the re-accreditation of a programme, after it has been running for some years, where the changes are relatively straightforward.
- 3.2 Procedures for identifying the members of the Board are as at 2.2.1 above except that, in certain cases, (re)validation will be deemed not to be necessary so there will be no validation document.
- 3.3 Procedures as at 2.2.2, 2.2.4 and 2.2.6 above should be followed. 2.2.5 is not relevant. With regard to 2.2.3, it is still desirable to identify and have approved a minimum of four people, though if only three are identified and approved this can be accommodated because the chances of an individual being unable to participate at the last minute are lower than in the case of an actual meeting. The Education Committee/Validation Subgroup must approve the CVs of the nominated Board members; to facilitate this, the summary list of nominees and CV template should be copied and pasted from *Validation and Accreditation of Programmes: Regulations and Guidelines*, completed in respect of all nominees and sent to the Administrator, who will forward them to the EC/VS for consideration.
- 3.4 The principal programme proposer should discuss with the Administrator an approximate time period during which the accreditation takes place. Normally, about three weeks are required from the point of view of the members of the Board, though this can be extended to four if required. The principal programme proposer should confirm the availability of the members to undertake the work within this time period.
- 3.5 The principal programme proposer, the Administrator and the Assistant Registrar then agree a number of key dates:
  - the date on which the accreditation proposal is to be submitted to the Office of the Deputy President/Registrar (in electronic format only)<sup>7</sup>
  - the date on which the proposal is to be e-mailed to the Board members (this is normally the same date)
  - the date by which responses are to be requested from the Board members (normally – as noted at 3.4 above – about three weeks from the date on which they get the proposal, though this can be extended to four if required)<sup>8</sup>
  - the date by which the Assistant Registrar completes the accreditation report and agrees it with the Board members (normally about one week from receipt of responses from the members of the Board).

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<sup>7</sup> As with Accreditation Board meetings, the principal programme proposer is welcome to submit a draft to the Assistant Registrar in advance to check for completeness.

<sup>8</sup> Board members are asked to use the ‘reply all’ facility when commenting to facilitate the discussion.

- 3.6 As well as the accreditation proposal, the Administrator sends the Board members a copy of the University's regulations and guidelines on validation and accreditation<sup>9</sup>.
- 3.7 Once the accreditation report has been agreed by the members of the Board, the Assistant Registrar forwards it to the principal programme proposer, the relevant Faculty Manager(s) (or nominee(s)) and the relevant Associate Dean(s) for Teaching and Learning/Education.
- 3.8 The Administrator arranges for an honorarium of €125 to be sent to each of the external experts.
- 3.9 Procedures as at 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9 apply.

*Office of the Deputy President/Registrar  
February 2011*

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<sup>9</sup> This is *Validation and Accreditation of Programmes: Regulations and Guidelines*, in an abbreviated and adapted version to meet the needs of external readers. Programme proposers will also be familiar with the full version.