



Ollscoil Chathair  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City University

## **Validation and Accreditation**

Information for Proposers of Programmes

**Academic  
Secretariat**

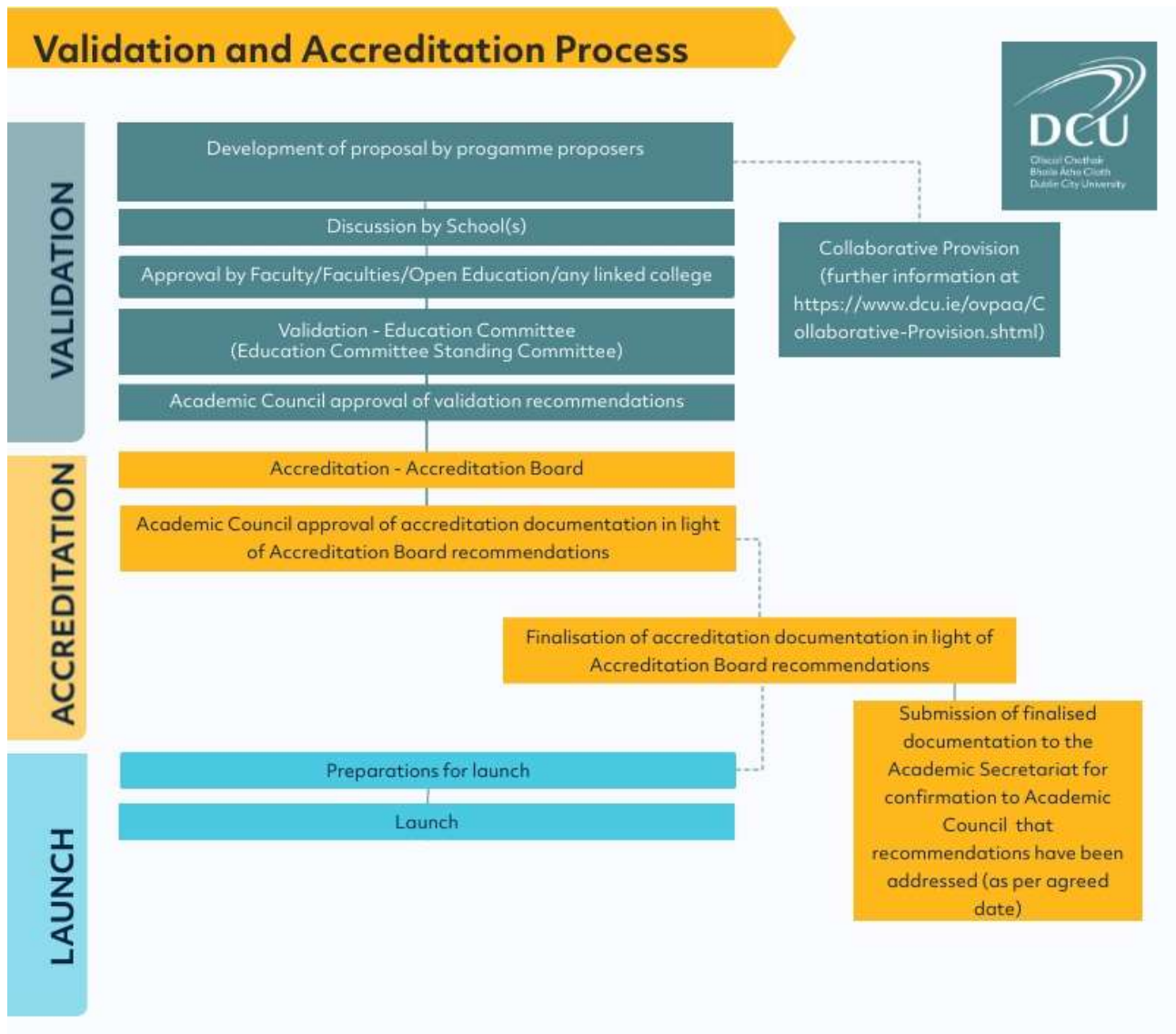
**OVPAA**  
September 2019

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

## Contents

<b>1. Summary Flowchart of Validation and Accreditation Process</b> .....	3
<b>2. Validation</b> .....	4
2.1 Approval Mechanism - General .....	4
2.2 Validation (AA) Forms .....	5
2.3 Completing the Validation Form.....	6
2.4 Submission of Documentation .....	7
2.5 The Education Committee Standing Committee Meeting .....	8
2.6 Following the ECSC Meeting .....	8
2.7 Academic Council Approval.....	9
<b>3. Accreditation</b> .....	10
3.1 Approval mechanism – general.....	10
3.2 Accreditation Proposal Documentation .....	10
3.3 Accreditation Board members .....	13
3.4 Arrangements for Board meetings.....	15
3.5 Accreditation proposal submission .....	16
3.6 The meeting.....	16
3.7 Following the meeting .....	19
3.8 Academic Council approval .....	19
3.9 Finalisation of accreditation documentation.....	20
3.10 Advertising a programme .....	20
4. Remote accreditation: management .....	21
<b>Appendix 1: Titles for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes</b> .....	23
<b>Appendix 2: Sign-off by the Executive Dean of Faculty (form)</b> .....	24
<b>Appendix 3: Outline curriculum vitae for proposed members of the Accreditation Board</b> .....	25
<b>Appendix 4: Curriculum Vitae of the Members of the Programme Team (template)</b> .....	26

# 1. Summary Flowchart of Validation and Accreditation Process



## 2. Validation

### 2.1 Approval Mechanism - General

- 2.1.1 Validation proposals must be submitted for approval to the Education Committee (EC).<sup>1</sup> This committee is managed by the Academic Secretariat.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.1.2 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<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.1.3 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*.
- 2.1.4 Liaison with the Academic Secretariat should normally be carried out by the principal programme proposer and the Faculty Manager (or the latter's nominee).
- 2.1.5 There are ten Education Committee meetings in each academic year. Validation proposals may be considered at any of these. The exact times and dates of EC meetings are indicated in the University schedule of meetings at <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Academic-Council-Sub-Committees.shtml-0>.
- 2.1.6 Programme proposers are not required to be in attendance at these meetings. However, if the EC decides that a proposal needs to be discussed with the proposers, such discussion will take place some days after the EC meeting at a meeting of the Education Committee Standing Committee (ECSC). The exact times and dates for the ECSC meetings are indicated in the University schedule of meetings at <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Academic-Council-Sub-Committees.shtml-0>.
- 2.1.7 If the EC or ECSC decide not to approve a validation proposal, the Secretary of Education Committee will inform the programme proposers by e-mail following the relevant EC or ECSC 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 or ECSC consider 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> The membership and terms of reference of the Education Committee are available at <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Academic-Council-Sub-Committees.shtml-0>

<sup>2</sup> Secretary to Education Committee: Margaret Irwin-Bannon, [margaret.irwinbannon@dcu.ie](mailto:margaret.irwinbannon@dcu.ie), ext: 7754  
Academic Secretariat Administrator: Valerie Cooke, [valerie.cooke@dcu.ie](mailto:valerie.cooke@dcu.ie), ext: 5938

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this document, references to Faculty procedures should also be read, as appropriate and necessary, as references to Open Education procedures and 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.

## 2.2 Validation (AA) Forms

- 2.2.1 The validation proposal (AA) form is an outline document aimed at making the business case for the proposal. Therefore, it is normally much shorter than the accreditation proposal, which contains a detailed description of the proposed programme. However, certain sections of each of the two types of document may be broadly similar.
- 2.2.2 A typical validation proposal might run to 10 A4 pages or approximately 4,000 words exclusive of appendices. Appendices might include detail of matters such as the outcomes of surveys conducted to ascertain demand for the proposed programme, or possible competitor programmes. Appendices should, however, be kept to a minimum and should be included only where absolutely necessary.
- 2.2.3 In every instance where reference is made to a document which is available on line, the appropriate web link should be included.
- 2.2.4 A standard validation is one in which the proposed taught award does not involve working with a proposed external partner or institution. The **AA1** validation form is used in such instances. The form is available at: <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Validation-and-Accreditation-of-Programmes.shtml>.
- 2.2.5 Where a proposed programme of study involves single or multiple partner institutions an alternative AA form is required. These alternative forms contain much of the same information as the AA1 form, while also requiring additional information in regards to the proposed partner, the partnership context and the justification for partner involvement in the programme. Further information on collaborative provision, and the relevant AA forms, is available at: <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Collaborative-Provision.shtml>

These additional forms are outlined here:

DCU Award, DCU Delivery (No Partner)	New Award	AA1 form
DCU Award, DCU and Partner Delivery, Partner Delivery of DCU Credits	New Award	AA2 form
DCU Award, DCU and Partner Delivery, Partner Credits	New Award	AA3 form
	Existing Award	AA3a form
	Revision of Existing Programme	AA3b form
DCU Award, Off-site or distance delivery by DCU	New Award	AA4 form
	Existing Award	AA4a form
Joint Taught Award, Joint Parchment	New Award	AA5 form

## 2.3 Completing the Validation Form

2.3.1 The AA1 validation form should contain the following information<sup>4</sup>. Please note, the alternative AA forms (those required for collaborative provision purposes) will also require this information but also contain further sections relating specifically to the proposed collaborative arrangements.

Section	Heading	Notes
1	General information	Refer to appendix 1 for a full list of agreed undergraduate and postgraduate titles.
2	Strategic fit	
3	Likely demand and proposed intake	In indicating the extent to which the programme is expected to run over a limited period of years, or on an open-ended basis reference must be made to standard programme review procedures.  Where market research does not apply, e.g. where a proposed programme has been commissioned by an external agency, 'not applicable' should be indicated.
4	Entry requirements, and progression and exit routes	Undergraduate Programmes: Normally, students will progress through to degree level. If it is planned to permit exit at Certificate and/or Diploma levels, state this and state the number of credits which must be obtained for such exit (these must be in accordance with Marks and Standards).  Postgraduate Programmes: It is assumed that standard entry procedures for international applicants and for applicants with disabilities apply. This should be stated. Details should not be given. There should be no reference to 'mature' applicants, as this concept does not apply to postgraduate programmes.
5	Purpose of the Programme	
6	Programme learning outcomes	It is assumed that the information will be identical with that submitted to Akari (subject to such modifications as may be required on the basis of recommendations at validation and, in particular, accreditation).
7	Aptitudes and proficiencies	It is assumed that the information will be identical with that submitted to Akari (subject to such modifications as may be required on the basis of recommendations at validation and, in particular, accreditation).  Postgraduate programmes: For proposed taught postgraduate programmes, this section should be left in the document (i.e. it should

<sup>4</sup> Resources at the following link may be of assistance to programme proposers: <http://www.dcu.ie/teu/index.shtml>

		not be omitted, nor should the subsequent sections be renumbered). The following should be stated: 'The University's initiative with respect to graduate attributes applies in particular to undergraduate programmes at present'.
8	Outline structure of the Programme	The standard Programme Academic Structure, Registration Schedule and Assessment Schedule should be completed and inserted here.
9	Resources required	<p>A template for outlining the resources required to run a programme is available from the Finance Office. This template <u>must</u> be used for validation. Advice on completing it is available from Faculty Offices. Only the overview page is required by the EC/ECSC, though the more detailed pages which provide the background information to this overview page may be required for School and Faculty approval and may also be requested at the discretion of the EC/ECSC. (They should not, however, be submitted to the EC/ECSC as a matter of course.)</p> <p>Physical space requirements: Please contact the Office of the Chief Operation Officer to provide the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An indication if additional resources are required within the existing timetable.</li> <li>2. Specialist space required e.g. science lab, computer lab, specialist classroom.</li> </ol>
10	Implementation plan	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with CAO (via the Registry), if relevant, including timescales</li> <li>• Advertising and marketing plans, including timescales.</li> </ul>
11	Membership of the proposed Development Team	
12	Membership of the proposed Accreditation Board	See section 3.3 for further information.
13	Endorser sign off	

## 2.4 Submission of Documentation

2.4.1 Validation forms must be submitted to the Academic Secretariat Administrator in accordance with submission dates for Education Committee which can be viewed at:

<https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Academic-Council-Sub-Committees.shtml-0>. All notifications of forthcoming submissions must be made in accordance with this schedule. Proposals are required in electronic format only, and hard copies should not be provided.

- 2.4.2 The programme proposers are welcome to submit a draft of the programme proposal to the Secretary of Education Committee 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.

## 2.5 The Education Committee Standing Committee Meeting

- 2.5.1 Where the EC has decided that there should be further discussion of a proposal, a discussion will take place at a meeting of the Education Committee Standing Committee. Where discussion takes place at the ECSC, the Secretary of Education Committee 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 ECSC.
- 2.5.2 The principal programme proposer should be accompanied to the ECSC 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.
- 2.5.3 The Academic Secretariat 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 ECSC meeting is held. Instead, they should wait until the Secretary of Education Committee leaves the ECSC meeting to invite them in.
- 2.5.4 The ECSC 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.

## 2.6 Following the ECSC Meeting

- 2.6.1 The Secretary of Education Committee advises the principal programme proposer and the Faculty Manager (or the latter's nominee), normally on the day on which the ECSC 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 ECSC's recommendations by the full Education Committee. This process will normally be finalised not later than two weeks after the ECSC meeting.
- 2.6.2 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 Secretary of Education Committee.



- 2.6.3 If the ECSC decides not to recommend approval, the Secretary of Education Committee will let the programme proposers know this by e-mail following the ECSC 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 ECSC 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.
- 2.6.4 In the event of a recommendation to approve a proposal, the Secretary of Education Committee drafts a validation report to be approved by the members of the ECSC and the EC and then forwarded for approval to the next available meeting of Academic Council.
- 2.6.5 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 Secretary of Education Committee 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 ECSC 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 Secretary of Education Committee 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.

## 2.7 Academic Council Approval

- 2.7.1 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 that this be done. If there is a request for a discussion, the Secretary of Education Committee 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 validation recommendations. In all cases, the decision (and recommendations, if any) of Council will be communicated to stakeholders by the Secretary of Education Committee.
- 2.7.4 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.
- 2.7.5 Before a programme can proceed to accreditation, the Executive Dean of Faculty must confirm that all recommendations of the EC/ECSC, and any recommendations from

Academic Council have been implemented/addressed. The form for signature can be found in appendix 2 or at: <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Z-of-Forms.shtml>.

### 3. Accreditation

#### 3.1 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 a senior member of the Academic Secretariat team, who acts as Rapporteur.

#### 3.2 Accreditation Proposal Documentation

3.2.1 The accreditation proposal is a detailed document aimed at describing the proposed programme. It is much longer than the validation document, however, certain sections of the two documents can, in principle, be the same as, or similar. Where this is the case it is indicated below.

3.2.2 Where recommendations have been made at validation stage, these must be incorporated into the accreditation proposal. In addition, the information in the accreditation proposal may sometimes need to be more details than in the validation documentation.

3.2.3 The accreditation proposal consists of three main sections:

Section 1: The description of the proposed programme (sections 1 to 9 below)

Section 2: The module descriptors (using the approved template in Akari)

Section 3: The curricula vitae of the members of the programme team (using the template provided in appendix 4 (or download from <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Z-of-Forms.shtml>)).

3.2.4 A typical accreditation proposal might run to 15-20 A4 pages or approximately 6,000-8,000 words in terms of 1. above, with the length of 2. and 3. being determined by the number of modules and the size of the programme team.

3.2.5 In every instance where reference is made to a document which is available on line, the appropriate web link should be included. If the online access is internal to DCU only, consideration should be given to providing a hard copy of the relevant document as an appendix to the proposal (but these should be kept to a minimum).

3.2.6 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 (Section 10), another for the CVs (Section 11) and white for all the rest (Sections 1-9 inclusive). The CVs should normally be omitted from any additional copies of the documentation which are made available to the programme team. Documentation should be in Word, not PDF, format, with the exception of the module descriptors, which are necessarily in PDF format because they are produced by Coursebuilder.

3.2.7 If possible, for ease of reading, hard copies should be colour-coded – i.e. white for Sections 1-9 inclusive, a second colour for Section 10 and a third colour for Section 11. It should be

ensured that the document forms a coherent and readable whole and that appropriate cross-referencing is in place.

### 3.2.8 An accreditation proposal should contain the following information<sup>5</sup>:

Section	Content	What to include
1	Summary description of the background to and development of the proposal	Adopted from section 1 of AA form, incorporating any AC recommendations
2	Entry, progression and exit routes	Adopted from section 4 of AA form, incorporating any AC recommendations
3	Purpose of the programme	Adopted from section 5 of AA form, incorporating any AC recommendations
4	Programme learning outcomes	Adopted from section 6 of AA form, incorporating any AC recommendations
5	Aptitudes and proficiencies	Adopted from section 7 of AA form, incorporating any AC recommendations
6	Outline structure of programme	Adopted from section 8 of AA form, incorporating any AC recommendations
7	Marks and Standards and programme-specific regulations	<p>Specify that the programme adheres to DCU Marks and Standards. A web link to Marks and Standards as below should be provided:</p> <p><a href="https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Policies-and-Regulations.shtml">https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Policies-and-Regulations.shtml</a></p> <p>In certain cases, the possibility of requesting a derogation from Marks and Standards may need to be factored into discussions. As outlined in Marks and Standards (page 2): '<i>only derogations required by professional bodies will be considered for approval</i>'. Such derogations, where approved by the Faculty, should be outlined here but flagged as provisional pending approval by the University Standards Committee (which must consider all requests for derogations) and ultimate approval by Academic Council.</p> <p>In all cases the following statement must be included:</p>

<sup>5</sup> Resources at the following link may be of assistance to programme proposers:

<http://www.dcu.ie/teu/index.shtml>.

		<p>'The derogation(s) is/are being requested within the parameters permitted by DCU Marks and Standards.'</p> <p>The proposed programme-specific regulations (using the approved template, available at <a href="https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/ovpaa/programme_regulations_template_2019-2020.docx">https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/ovpaa/programme_regulations_template_2019-2020.docx</a>)</p> <p>The following statement must be included here also:</p> <p><i>'These programme-specific regulations are in addition, and complementary, to DCU Marks and Standards. They are proposed for the initial years of implementation and will be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing fitness for purpose.'</i></p>
8	Alignment matrix	<p>The alignment matrix should provide a clear demonstration that each programme learning outcome can be achieved and assessed by the discrete modules that make up the programme. It should indicate the extent and strength of the contribution of each module to each of the programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>This section should be copied and pasted from the section in Akari called 'PO Delivery' which indicates how each module on the programme contributes to the programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>Further examples of alignment matrices can be found on Akari.</p>
9	Quality assurance and programme evaluation	<p>Reference must be made here to:</p> <p>use of external examiners in accordance with University procedures (with links to relevant parts of University website, especially:  <a href="https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/ovpaa/regulations_and_guidelines_for_external_examiners_app_ac_12_october_2016.pdf">https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/ovpaa/regulations_and_guidelines_for_external_examiners_app_ac_12_october_2016.pdf</a>)</p> <p>use of programme review procedures</p> <p>use of student feedback procedures (with references to national and University procedures; the advice of the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning/Education should be sought about this)</p> <p>periodic review by external professional bodies, where relevant</p> <p>any other quality assurance mechanism that may apply.</p>

		In all cases, it should be stipulated that standard procedures will be adhered to. Where additional detail is necessary, e.g. with regard to reviews by external professional bodies, this should be provided.
10	Module descriptors	As in Akari. Please note the table of contents should include a list of all the modules and a list of all the members of the programme team, for whom <i>curricula vitae</i> are provided.
11	<i>Curricula vitae</i> of the members of the programme team	These should be made available in alphabetical order by surname using the template below. The CVs should normally be omitted from any additional copies of the documentation which are made available to the programme team
12	Any necessary appendices (but these should be kept to a minimum)	

### 3.3 Accreditation Board members

3.3.1 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. The process is activated by the inclusion in the relevant section of the validation document of CVs for all those nominated, using the standard form (see appendix 3 or download from <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Z-of-Forms.shtml>)

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 for consideration.

3.3.2 In the selection of nominees to the Accreditation Board, account must be taken of the following:

- The principal programme proposer 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 and Guidelines at [http://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/president/pdfs/conflict\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/president/pdfs/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.

- 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.
- 3.3.3 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.
- 3.3.4 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 3.3.1 above in respect of the relevant procedure.)
- 3.3.5 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 Secretary of Education Committee at the earliest opportunity, but not later than 5.00 p.m. on the day before the meeting is to take place. The Secretary of Education Committee 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.
- 3.3.6 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.)

### 3.4 Arrangements for Board meetings

- 3.4.1 To arrange a date for the meeting, the principal programme proposer must first contact the Academic Secretariat<sup>6</sup>. In no circumstances should dates be arranged with the external experts, even tentatively, without prior consultation with the Academic Secretariat. 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,
  - the 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.

- 3.4.2 The Academic Secretariat agrees with the principal programme proposer a list of possible dates within the general time period identified. Each date includes a morning or an afternoon slot, or both, and only one of these slots is used for accreditation.
- 3.4.3 The principal programme proposer negotiates with all relevant parties about these slots and will advise the Academic Secretariat, as soon as possible, which one is most suitable. This slot will then be entered into the accreditation diary and all others will be erased.
- 3.4.4 External members of the Accreditation Board should make their own travel and accommodation arrangements and will be reimbursed reasonable expenses.
- 3.4.5 The principal programme proposer advises the Academic Secretariat Administrator how many people will be in attendance for the discussion of individual modules (i.e. session 3 – see point 3.6.2).
- 3.4.6 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.
- 3.4.7 The Administrator will arrange catering for the meeting.
- 3.4.8 The Academic Secretariat – 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.

---

<sup>6</sup> Ms Margaret Irwin-Bannon (Margaret.irwinbannon@dcu.ie) or Ms Rachel Keegan (Rachel.keegan@dcu.ie)

## 3.5 Accreditation proposal submission

- 3.5.1 The final accreditation proposal must be submitted to the Academic Secretariat 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 Secretary of the Accreditation Board<sup>7</sup>, one for each external expert and one spare.
- 3.5.2 Programme proposers are welcome to submit an electronic draft of the accreditation proposal to the Academic Secretariat 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.
- 3.5.3 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:<sup>8</sup>
- 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>9</sup>
  - where appropriate,<sup>10</sup> the validation recommendations approved by Academic Council (extracted from the validation report)
  - a campus map
  - a travel expenses claim form
  - a bank transfer form.
- 3.5.4 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
  - where appropriate,<sup>11</sup> the validation recommendations approved by Academic Council (extracted from the validation report).

## 3.6 The meeting

---

<sup>7</sup> A member of the Academic Secretariat will act as Secretary/Rapporteur for the Accreditation Board.

<sup>8</sup> The Chair of the Accreditation Board, as a member of DCU staff, does not get the campus map, travel expenses claim form or bank transfer form.

<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.

<sup>10</sup> Sometimes there are no validation recommendations, or no validation recommendations that are of relevance for accreditation purposes.

<sup>11</sup> Sometimes there are no validation recommendations, or no validation recommendations that are of relevance for accreditation purposes.



- 3.6.1 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 Academic Secretariat should not be copied on correspondence relating to any of the above activities.
- 3.6.2 The indicative timetable for both a morning and afternoon accreditation board meeting is as follows:

Session No	Indicative Timetable (Morning Accreditation)	Indicative Timetable (Afternoon Accreditation)	
	n/a	12:20 p.m.	Lunch for the members of the Accreditation Board
	9.30 a.m.	n/a	The members of the Accreditation Board assemble in the foyer of the Albert College Building (or elsewhere as directed, if the meeting is being held elsewhere)
<b>Session 1</b>	9.30 a.m.	13.30 p.m.	Private meeting of the Accreditation Board
<b>Session 2</b>	10:15 a.m.	14.15 p.m.	Meeting with the Dean, principal programme proposer and others closely associated with the proposal <sup>12</sup>
	11:00 a.m.	15.00 p.m.	Coffee (for the Board members and all those associated with the programme)
<b>Session 3</b>	11:15 a.m.	15.15 p.m.	Meeting with module co-ordinators for detailed discussion of the academic content and other programme-related matters
<b>Session 4</b>	12:45 p.m.	16.45 p.m.	Private meeting of the Accreditation Board to review the outcome of discussions and formulate the recommendations
<b>Session 5</b>	13:15 p.m.	17.15 p.m.	Final meeting with the Dean, principal programme proposer and others closely associated with the proposal <sup>13</sup>
	13:30 p.m.	17.30 p.m.	Close of proceedings

<sup>12</sup> This is, typically, the group of people outlined at 2.5.2

<sup>13</sup> This is, typically, the group of people outlined at 2.5.2.

	13:30 p.m.	n/a	Lunch for the members of the Accreditation Board
--	------------	-----	--

3.6.3 During the first private meeting of the Accreditation Board (session 1) the members agree on the issues to be raised with the principal programme proposer and others closely associated with the proposal.<sup>14</sup> These are normally generic issues relating to the programme rather than module-specific issues.

3.6.4 The coffee is available in the room in which the meeting is held and is for everyone, including the module co-ordinators.

3.6.5 Session 3 is 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.

3.6.6 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.

3.6.7 During the second private meeting of the Accreditation Board (session 4) 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.

3.6.8 During the final meeting with the Dean, principal programme proposer and others closely associated with the proposal<sup>15</sup> (session 5.) 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).

3.6.9 In no instance should anyone due to join the meeting outside of their allotted time. They should instead assemble in the foyer of the Albert College<sup>16</sup> and wait there until the Secretary<sup>17</sup> of the Accreditation Board Meeting leaves the meeting to invite them in.

<sup>14</sup> This is, typically, the group of people outlined at 2.5.2.

<sup>15</sup> This is, typically, the group of people outlined at 2.5.2.

<sup>16</sup> Or elsewhere, as directed, if the meeting is not held in A204.

<sup>17</sup> A member of the Academic Secretariat will act as Secretary/ Rapporteur for the Accreditation Board Meeting

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.

Occasionally, the Chair, in consultation with the other members of the Board, may decide to lengthen or shorten a session. Those due to join the meeting at the coffee break should be aware of this and prepared to wait as necessary. In no instance will the overall Board meeting go beyond the scheduled finishing time.

### 3.7 Following the meeting

- 3.7.1 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, are to be paid. The Administrator will submit the documentation to the Finance Office, which will arrange for the appropriate bank transfer to be made. The gross honorarium is €250 (or €125 in the case of an individual who submitted written comments but did not attend the meeting in person).<sup>18</sup>
- 3.7.2 In the event of a positive recommendation, the Secretary of the Accreditation Board Meeting will draft an accreditation report to be approved by the Accreditation 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 Board have approved the report, the Secretary 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.
- 3.7.3 In the event of a negative recommendation, the Secretary drafts a report to be approved by the members of the Accreditation 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 Secretary 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.
- 3.7.4 Board members are typically asked 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.

### 3.8 Academic Council approval

- 3.8.1 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

---

<sup>18</sup> Deductions will be made as required by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

is a request for a discussion, the Administrator will notify the principal programme proposer of this.

- 3.8.2 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.
- 3.8.3 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 Council will be communicated to stakeholders by the Secretary of Education Committee.

### 3.9 Finalisation of accreditation documentation

In the event of a positive recommendation, the Secretary of the Accreditation Board Meeting requests the principal programme proposer to ensure that finalised documentation is lodged with the Academic Secretariat 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>19</sup>
- (b) the above document with all changes untracked
- (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).

### 3.10 Advertising a programme

A programme should not be advertised before the EC has approved the validation proposal. 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'.

---

<sup>19</sup> The module descriptors will have been submitted in PDF format, as noted at 2.4.1. Procedures for indicating changes to module descriptors should be discussed with the Assistant Registrar, as these may vary according to circumstances.

## 4. Remote accreditation: management


- 4.1 In certain exceptional 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.
- 4.2 Procedures for identifying the members of the Board are as at 3.3 above except that, normally, (re)validation will be deemed not to be necessary so there will be no validation document. Procedures as at 3.2.5 are not relevant.
- 4.3 With regard to 3.3.3, 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 must approve the CVs of the nominated Board members; to facilitate this, the summary list of nominees and CV template should be copied from Appendix 3 or downloaded from: <https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Z-of-Forms.shtml>, completed in respect of all nominees and sent to the Administrator, who will forward them to the EC for consideration.
- 4.4 The principal programme proposer should discuss with the Academic Secretariat 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 necessary. The principal programme proposer should confirm the availability of the members to undertake the work within this time period.
- 4.5 The principal programme proposer, the Administrator and the Academic Secretariat agree a number of key dates:
- the date on which the accreditation proposal is to be submitted to the Academic Secretariat (in electronic format only)<sup>20</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 about three weeks from the date on which they get the proposal, though this can be extended to four if required)<sup>21</sup>
  - the date by which the Secretary the Accreditation Board 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).
- 4.6 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>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</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>21</sup> Board members are welcome to use the 'reply all' facility when commenting to facilitate the discussion.

<sup>22</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.

- 
- 4.7 Once the accreditation report has been agreed by the members of the Board, the Secretary of Education Committee 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.
- 4.8 The Administrator arranges for an honorarium of €125 (gross)<sup>23</sup> to be sent to each of the external experts.
- 4.9 Procedures as at 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 apply.

---

<sup>23</sup> Deductions will be made as required by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

## Appendix 1: Titles for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes

The following is the list of agreed titles for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes:

### **Undergraduate programmes**

BA: Bachelor of Arts

BSc: Bachelor of Science

BBS: Bachelor of Business Studies

BEng: Bachelor of Engineering

BCL: Bachelor of Civil Law

BEd: Bachelor of Education

Certificate in...

Diploma in....

### **Taught Postgraduate Programmes:**

LLM: Master of Laws

MA: Master of Arts

MBA: Master of Business Administration

MEd: Master of Education

MEng: Master of Engineering

MSc: Master of Science

PME: Professional Master of Education

Graduate Certificate in..

Graduate Diploma in..

Professional Diploma (e.g. Professional Diploma in Accounting)

Professional Certificate in..

Should the proposed title need to deviate from those listed above please provide a rationale for the selection of the proposed title.

## Appendix 2: Sign-off by the Executive Dean of Faculty (form)

Confirmation by the Executive Dean of Faculty that all validation recommendations, and any recommendations from Academic Council in the context of consideration of the validation recommendations, have been carried out

I the undersigned confirm that, following the validation process, all the validation recommendations in respect of the proposed programme named below have been implemented and/or any recommendations that are not for immediate implementation but are aspirational or future-oriented have been fully considered and discussed by the relevant Faculty committees with a view to action as appropriate.<sup>24</sup>

Title of proposed programme: .....

Role	Name	Signature <sup>25</sup>	Date
Executive Dean of Faculty			

<sup>24</sup> Where more than one Faculty is involved, please copy and paste the table.

<sup>25</sup> Please provide a digital signature here.



## Appendix 3: Outline curriculum vitae for proposed members of the Accreditation Board

(To be completed by the principal programme proposer in respect of each nominee to the Accreditation Board)

<b>Title</b>	
<b>First name</b>	
<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Current position in home institution</b>	
<b>Contact details</b>	
<b>Home institution</b>	
<b>Contact address</b>	<i>Please provide complete postal address for correspondence purposes.</i>
<b>Telephone number(s)</b>	
<b>E-mail address</b>	
<b>Web page</b>	
<b>Academic and/or professional qualifications</b>	
<b>Principal research and/or professional interests</b>	
<b>Five publications of particular relevance to the proposed programme</b> <i>(full citation required) If nominee is a practitioner as distinct from an academic and does not have publications, please indicate as such.</i>	
<b>1.</b>	
<b>2.</b>	
<b>3.</b>	
<b>4.</b>	
<b>5.</b>	

<b>Case for nomination to the Accreditation Board</b> (250 words max.) (to be completed by the principal programme proposer, note this is not part of the CV)

## Appendix 4: Curriculum Vitae of the Members of the Programme Team (template)

Dublin City University

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

School (or other group) \_\_\_\_\_

### ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Institution	From	To	Award
-------------	------	----	-------

### PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

### EMPLOYMENT RECORD

Organisation	From	To
--------------	------	----

### PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS PRESENTED

(Please include details of last 3 refereed publications and an indication of numbers of publications by category)

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

**TEACHING INTERESTS**

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**