

2. Development and Review

- [2.1 Introduction to Development and Review](#)

Introduction

1. Section 2 of the Handbook describes the University's processes for the design, development and approval of new programmes of study, and its annual and periodic exercises to monitor and review existing provision at scheme and subject level.

Curriculum development

2. New schemes and modules should be developed within academic departments, drawing on good practice in curriculum design, and taking account of QAA level descriptors and subject benchmark statements. Consultation with students, and external consultation with external examiners, subject specialists, PSRB bodies or other advisory boards should take place at an early stage of scheme development, and documentary evidence of this process will be considered by a standing scheme approval panel. Departments should consider the staffing implications of any new developments to safeguard the resilience of the portfolio, and also take account of the two-year planning cycle to ensure that the scheme approval process can be completed in good time to ensure effective marketing.

3. In designing a new study scheme or module, departments will need to take account of the criteria as detailed in the **Scheme Development Forms (SDF)** and **Module Approval Forms**. These will be scrutinised as part of the approval processes which are outlined within Section 2 of the AQH.

Consumer Law and changes to existing provision

4. In March 2015, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published advice for higher education providers to help them comply with their consumer law obligations. This advice sets out the CMA's views on compliance in a number of areas, including the provision of information for undergraduate students. QAA have prepared a practical guide that aims to help providers present good quality information to prospective students, including entry requirements, course structure and delivery, module information, assessment and feedback, and course costs. This is available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20180319121228/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/provinfo/>

5. In light of CMA advice, faculties will need to plan carefully before making any changes to existing schemes and their constituent modules. Where changes are proposed as part of annual monitoring or periodic review exercises, or in response to student or external feedback mechanisms, departments will need to consult with current students (including those who have accepted an offer but who have not yet commenced their studies) before the changes are considered for approval. The exact nature of this consultation will depend on the extent of the proposed changes but could consist of one of the following. Departments should consult the Academic Registry QA team for further guidance: gaestaff@aber.ac.uk:

(i) Consultation through the Staff-Student Consultative Committee

(ii) Consultation with individual students by email, with responses to be sent to Student Academic Representatives for a collective discussion at SSCC

(iii) Consultation with individual students by email, requiring agreement by all students.

6. In cases where option modules may not be offered due to insufficient interest or staff unavailability, this must be made clear to students in published information, and students must be advised of any changes to available modules as soon as possible so that they can choose an alternative. This will be made

clear to students in departmental handbooks, which included a common statement at university level.

Programme Specifications

7. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education requires degree awarding bodies to provide definitive information about their awards. This is provided in the programme specification, which provides details of the knowledge, understanding, skills and other attributes that students will have developed on successful completion and the teaching and assessment activities that support their learning.

8. Academic Registry is responsible for maintaining programme specifications online, and departments will review their accuracy as part of the Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes. The programme specifications will also be subject to external scrutiny as part of the Periodic Review of Schemes.

9. A template is provided for their initial development and approval as part of scheme approval or Periodic Scheme Review. For schemes with an integrated year in industry or year studying abroad, a separate template is provided which includes generic learning outcomes. These are published in Section 2.14 of the AQH. Guidelines for writing programme specifications have been prepared by QAA: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards> (Chapter A2 supersedes the Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications which are now replaced by Expectation A2.2) and by HEA (https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/new_writing_programme_specification.pdf).

Marketing of new schemes

10. The University has adopted the following policy for the marketing and publication of information on new schemes.

11. New schemes will not be advertised on the University's course search pages or made available to applicants through UCAS until final approval. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

12. All new schemes may be advertised in the printed University prospectus 'subject to approval' after initial proposals have been considered by the Portfolio Planning Committee.

13. In exceptional cases, PPC may allow other means of marketing 'subject to approval'. This would allow departments to produce printed brochures or display information through departmental webpages or social media. **This would not however extend to UCAS or the University's course pages.** To seek PPC approval for wider marketing 'subject to approval', departments will need to complete an application as part of the Scheme Development form (SDF). PPC will make its decision based on the following criteria:

For schemes taught at Aberystwyth:

- (i) At least 75% of the new scheme is already being taught through existing modules
- (ii) All resources are in place for the delivery of the new scheme
- (iii) The scheme title has been established and will not be subject to further amendments.

Marketing 'subject to approval' will not be approved if it is considered that the scheme title may be subject to further discussion and amendments at the panel stage of the scheme approval process.

For schemes to be delivered through a collaborative partnership:

- (i) The partnership arrangement is already approved

(ii) The scheme is based on established provision at Aberystwyth and will not involve any adaptation of content or change of title.

Published information

14. Departments are responsible for maintaining accurate and current information on their courses. Guidance on how to publish information on courses is available through the Web Team pages: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/it-services/web/courses/>. Information on courses is published at <https://courses.aber.ac.uk> with detailed scheme structures by academic year at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/study-schemes/>. Details on individual modules are indexed by academic year and by Department at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/modules/>.

- [2.2 Module Approval](#)

1. The University's Module Approval Process is overseen by the Academic Board. Faculties are responsible for approving new and restructured modules, minor changes to modules and the suspension and withdrawal of modules. Proposals for new and restructured modules should be made online using the APEX Module Management system and submitted to the relevant Faculty for consideration. Proposals should be scrutinised by an independent academic member of staff; the reviewer will be nominated as part of the module approval workflow and they should complete the review section before the module is considered by the appropriate faculty committee. Following approval by the Faculty, the Student Administration Office will be notified of the changes which will be recorded in the module database. Proposals for Distance Learning modules based on existing campus-based modules, and Welsh-Medium modules which are direct replicas of an approved module, or vice-versa, should be made using the APEX system.

2. All new and restructured modules should be approved by Faculties and information updated on the module and scheme database for the following academic session by the end of the spring term or no later than 31 March where the spring term ends after this date.

3. Minor changes should be done using the APEX Module Management system but will not require an internal reviewer, for example a change of title, small changes in content, changes in assessment weighting where this does not affect learning outcomes, and changes to semester. The full approval process must be completed if there are significant changes to module content, learning outcomes or assessment.

4. Proposals to withdraw and/or suspend modules should be submitted to the Faculty for approval. Enquiries regarding withdrawal or suspension of modules should be directed to the Faculty in the first instance. The module should be updated in APEX to request the withdrawal/suspension, which will then be considered by the Faculty.

5. As part of the approval process, the Faculty responsible for the teaching should ensure that it has the necessary resources available to deliver the module.

6. The AQH does not intend to provide a prescriptive form of words for module approval, but aims to clarify some of the frequently asked questions. Changes to a module requiring Faculty approval include:

(i) Substantial revision of module content

(ii) Any change in the designated level

(iii) Any change in the credit weighting

(iv) Any change in the learning outcomes and/or methods of assessment.

7. The need for a new or restructured module is recognised at departmental or subject level, and a Module Co-ordinator is identified to lead on drafting the proposal.

8. Using the APEX Module Management system and the guidance provided in section 2.2 of the Academic Quality Handbook, a draft proposal is prepared.

9. The proposal should be submitted to a module reviewer (to be nominated by the Associate Dean/Faculty). The review process is separate to any departmental scrutiny of a module proposal. Faculties should ensure that module proposals are scrutinised by an independent academic member of staff who has not been involved in writing the module or any prior departmental scrutiny or approval process.

10. The assessor should consider the module, provide constructive feedback within APEX and recommend one of the following actions:

(i) Approval of the proposal

(ii) Referral to the Faculty for further or a broader discussion, or approval subject to specified amendments having been made

(iii) Referral back to the module co-ordinator for further development.

11. The completed module proposal/restructure, including comments from the independent reviewer, should be approved by the appropriate Faculty committee.

12. Once a module has been fully approved the module/changes will be added to the module database. Information Services, the Timetable Office and the Student Support and Careers Service will automatically be notified via the workflow in APEX.

13. No module will appear on the database until the formal approval process has been completed at faculty level.

14. In cases where a minimum threshold may be applied to an option module, the academic department must inform students that the module cannot be guaranteed to run with low numbers of registered students, and that students may be asked to choose again. Equally, students should be informed where the number of registrations on a module may be capped, with a clear explanation provided.

Guidance on Completing Module Approvals in APEX

15. The information in the Module Management system is used as the basis for all relevant module documentation, including that on the AU module database and in degree scheme handbooks. Careful consideration should be given to the level of detail which will appear on the web in the context of Competition & Markets Authority guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers-and-students>). Published information should be sufficiently detailed to enable current and prospective students to make informed choices, but not so full that minor changes – not affecting learning outcomes or assessments – would trigger the need for the submission of a full module approval.

16. The final deadline for new Part Two module proposals is in time for provisional registration in the session prior to the one in which it is intended to introduce the module. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as those arising from staff changes, should faculties consider module proposals submitted after that date.

Online Form Sections

17. The preliminary section of the online form provides the background information for the module. Questions are generally administrative and self-explanatory and important for the module database and monitoring quality checks on the module portfolio.

Background Information

- Module Co-ordinator: Where it is proposed that co-ordination of the module and/or a significant part of its teaching is to be undertaken by someone who is not a member of AU, a brief C.V. for the person(s) concerned should be submitted with the module approval form to the appropriate faculty committee.

- Does the proposal have implications for the structure of any study schemes? Please be aware of modules used by partner organisations and that significant changes to the core of a scheme or a change in level of a module may result in an imbalance in semesters.
- Care should be taken with regard to overlap in other departments. A search for identical/similar titles and/or content may be undertaken using the module database. Where this section is used to identify complementary components, please indicate similarities and differences in level of content as well as subject of content. Does the proposed module develop topics introduced in another module, provide a core knowledge for others or dove-tail at the same level?

Module Rationale and Content

18. This should be as objective as possible. The proposer may have a very clear sense of a module's intended value and outcomes but this may be less apparent to an observer from outside the discipline.

- Academic rationale: This should provide background information, e.g. the intention to fill a gap in the portfolio of modules and/or skills; a goal to improve the employability of students, or to enhance their ability to handle complex issues with a range of academic/technical skills. Some specific objectives may be included e.g. relating to the expectation that the proposed programme will meet professional accreditation requirements or the module will help meet revised requirements; that students will have more up-to-date ICT skills or that they will have wider ICT skills that can be updated regularly in employment or through further study. This information will not appear in the module database.
- Brief Description: This should be a brief summary, aimed at the student audience, of the content of the module (no more than 150 words). This information will appear in the module database.
- Content: This information will appear in the module database. The information needs to be reasonably detailed and should include the

topics to be covered and provide an indication of the proportion of time and the type of delivery to be expected such as lectures, seminars and or other forms of delivery. If colleagues are overly prescriptive when setting out the course content, it may restrict their ability to make amendments to individual lectures or seminars in response to developments in the field or module evaluations. The detailed week-by-week plan setting out lectures, seminars etc. can be published on Blackboard, in module handbooks or equivalent as aspects of the delivery may change from year to year without change to actual content which would require approval via the APEX Module Management system.

Learning Outcomes and Assessments

19. The proposed level (0, 1, 2, 3, M, etc.) should be determined in relation to the agreed AU level descriptors; see AQH 3.1.21.

- Learning Outcomes: The standard format is 'On completion of this module, students should be able to' followed by a numerical list of learning outcomes. The list need not necessarily be in order of importance; outcomes are numbered to facilitate a response to the question on how they are linked to methods of assessment. Normally 3-8 learning outcomes might be specified for a 10 credit module.

Teaching and Assessment

- Assessment: This information will appear in the module database and links directly to timetable and exams scheduling software. Please give length of examinations, details of course work and percentage weighting of each and explain how each learning outcome is linked to the methods of assessment. Assessment refers to all means by which students' progress through and performance in a module are measured. Both formative and summative assessments are relevant.

- Assessment: The types of assessment should be specified, i.e. unseen examination, (essay, short answer, multiple choice, etc.) and coursework (oral, portfolio, performance, essay, etc.), with the length/scale. All components of summative assessment should be included as a proportion of the total assessment. This is vital in monitoring the assessment/credit weighting relationship and student workload. If the learning outcomes describe a student centred learning approach with a group based approach but the assessment is predominantly unseen exams, an incompatibility will be detected.
- Resit Assessment: This refers to re-sit opportunities, please ensure you make it clear both when the re-sit will be available and what sort of assessment it will be. The format of the resit should be the same as the semester assessment except where it cannot be replicated, e.g. in group or practical work. Any elements which have been passed should normally be carried forward.

Skills

20. The development of one or more of the skills listed in this section may be explicit within the module programme. If it is, the nature of the skills to be developed should be indicated. If, in addition, the skills are to be formally assessed, this should be indicated as yes/no. Please see approved list of skills at the end of this chapter.

Other General Information

21. Bibliography and Reading List: If an indication of the essential and further reading would assist the module approval process, this should be added as Indicative Bibliography. If an exhaustive bibliography is to be provided, the Subject librarian should be consulted to discuss further. Guidance on Aspire Reading Lists is published at: <https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/802>.

22. Resources: Library and IT requirements should include some indication of the frequency of use of IT, e.g. is a computer laboratory needed every week, intermittently etc.? What software is needed, what printing facilities? Further advice on whether a module would benefit from embedded information skills teaching is available from the Subject Librarian. For more information please refer to the Information Literacy Statement. The Subject Librarian should also be consulted when considering a new subscription to support the study of the module, e.g. a journal or database.

Evidence of Independent Scrutiny

23. Module proposals should be scrutinised by a reviewer who is an independent academic member of staff who has not been involved in writing the module; you should nominate a reviewer in consultation with your Department and/or Faculty. The reviewer should complete this section of the form and liaise with the proposer, who should make any necessary changes to the form and/or give a response in the comments. Where a module is a direct translation of an already approved module it is not necessary for this section to be completed.

Approval

24. Modules are subject to approval by the appropriate committee at Faculty level. On completion of the internal approval process within a Faculty Academic Registry will transfer the data from APEX to the module database.

Level Descriptors

25. In determining the nature of the demand that the module makes on students reference should be made to the level descriptors agreed for use in Aberystwyth University: see AQH 3.1.21.

Learning Outcomes

26. Module Learning Outcomes should follow the following guidelines:

- An outcome should be expressed in terms of what students should be able to do on completion of the module.
- The list of outcomes may distinguish between 'specific', directly assessed, outcomes and 'general' outcomes which are broader in nature and not assessable directly by the methods of assessment in any one module.
- An outcome should be expressed in wording such that it is possible to envisage a student being able to achieve it on a scale from 'fully' through 'partially' to 'not at all'.
- The demands on students, as indicated by the intended learning outcomes, should be appropriate to the level of the module (see institutional level descriptors for what is understood by 'level 1', etc.).
- The outcomes should be assessable across the range of the student cohort for which the module is designed.
- A set of outcomes for a module would normally include a range of types of student attainment (knowledge, understanding, skills).
- It is not expected that there would be more than about 8 outcomes identified for a particular module.

Outcome vocabulary

27. There is no set vocabulary with regard to learning outcomes. However, it is advisable to keep the following in mind.

- Verbs used to describe outcomes should be active and indicative, if the outcome is to be assessed, of the capacity to measure each outcome through formative or summative assessment. For example, if students are expected to, 'understand' a concept, it might be preferable to state that students should be able to, 'identify' qualities of the concept, 'describe' its value in explaining a phenomenon, 'illustrate' application of

the concept and, 'evaluate' its significance. These outcomes could be seen as measurable manifestations of the understanding that we would expect students to gain.

- Understanding includes the very specific instances, in this example, of identification, description and illustration. However, there is a variety of intermediate levels of definition. This sort of vocabulary might include, 'critically identify', 'demonstrate an ability', 'be able to apply/discuss' and 'use a range'. These might equally meet the requirements for measurement. Clearly this will vary greatly between and within disciplines.

28. The table below includes some more of the less measurable verbs and alternative terms that could be linked to assessment methods more closely. Clearly, they are context specific and some are interchangeable. This is not a definitive list.

General verb	Measurable verb
Understand	Demonstrate an understanding of
Be aware of	Describe, Illustrate, Discuss
Comprehend	Analyse, Evaluate
Assimilate	Explain, Synthesise
Establish	Demonstrate, Identify, List, State, Justify
Appreciate	Analyse, Evaluate, Compare
Make known	Communicate, Explain

Carry out	Perform
Know	Define, Discriminate, Distinguish, Evaluate

Skills for personal and professional development

Creative problem solving	Opportunities that challenge, make the student think for themselves and/or involve finding different ways of working creatively. Involves decision making, enterprising ways of thinking, alternative approaches, innovation, initiative.
Critical and analytical thinking	Ability to gather required data quickly and comprehensively analyse and evaluate situations and information to inform decisions/thinking. Includes information literacy, ability to plan research, collate appropriate data, consider alternative perspectives and viewpoints, reach conclusions, be logical, quantitative reasoning and analysis, recognising bias and misinformation.
Adaptability and resilience	Ability to deal with changing circumstances and environments. Adapting to working with other people with different preferences and priorities. Adapting to communicating to different audiences. Includes recognition that abilities grow over time; learning through mistakes; accepting feedback positively; constructive criticism.
Digital capability	Broad based concept covering media and information literacy, digital research and problem-solving,

	<p>creativity with digital tools as well as routine management of communication and social media tools. Includes willingness to try new technologies, adapt to digital methods of working, understanding of digital footprint and its impact.</p>
Reflection	<p>Through discussion and tasks, opportunities to understand own experiences, qualities and aspirations. Student led learning. Provide opportunities to identify and address strengths and weaknesses. Related to AberGrad Skills Checklists and Planning Grids, MEQ, recognising skills development and personal progress, career planning, assessing interests and values, feedback and assessment.</p>
Professional communication	<p>Places written, oral, visual, numerical and digital communication within the workplace context. Includes the ability to empathise by placing self in the shoes of others, to understand their feelings, and to help solve their problems, to recognise appropriate methods of communication related to different audiences, to use language and communications methods appropriately, to utilise quantitative data in appropriate ways to enhance understanding, to consider the content of communication and the tone utilised.</p>
Real world sense	<p>Learning based on investigating real world issues (PBL/CBL) Contributions from alumni, practitioners & entrepreneurs.</p>

	<p>Experiential – practice based learning that is work or community based</p> <p>Developing skills in: initiative, independence, team working, coping with pressure, communicating effectively, managing time, taking decisions, being responsible, recognising bias and misinformation, adapting, planning, coordinating and organising, recognising the transferability of skills, translating skills labels in academia to those used in the workplace – related to AberGrad Skills Checklists. Sometimes referred to as commercial awareness.</p>
<p>Co-ordinating with others</p>	<p>Collaborative working as a group, with a shared outcome and assessed as a whole, negotiating, influencing.</p> <p>Cooperative, as a group, with a shared outcome but assessed individually.</p> <p>Develop leadership via opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ motivate and direct others ○ take responsibility for the direction and actions of a team ○ use initiative, take responsibility and ownership of problems.

- [2.3 Summary of the Scheme Approval Process](#)

1. This section provides a summary of the scheme approval process, which is described in detail in sections 2.4 – 2.7. Staff may also find it useful to refer to the scheme development flow charts.

2. The approval process is split into ‘Executive’ and ‘Non-Executive’ approval pathways. Please consult with your Academic Registry QA link to determine the most appropriate approval pathway.

3. The 'Executive' approval pathway is for proposals which are considered as major changes or restructures, development in an area of new provision, and where there are resource or university-level implications which require sign off by the University Executive; the business case (PAF1/PAF2) should be submitted by the department to the University Executive for consideration, and the SDF 1.1 to PPC. The PPC and University Executive Group will consider proposals in the context of strategy, business viability including costs, risks (including reputational risks), student numbers and practical considerations and will determine whether they should go forward for academic consideration by the standing Scheme Approval Panel.

4. The 'Non-Executive' approval pathway is for proposals which are considered to be a development within an existing area, where there are no resource implications and therefore sign off is not required by the University Executive; these can be approved at Faculty level thereby not requiring further scrutiny by the standing scheme approval panel.

5. Where a free-standing Certificate or Diploma is offered, it must be approved as a new study scheme with a programme specification and scheme structure.

6. Change to degree scheme titles, scheme suspensions and scheme withdrawals will also be considered by PPC.

7. For provision that does not fit in to the above, departments should contact the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team (gaestaff@aber.ac.uk) to discuss appropriate internal scrutiny prior to consideration by any external panel.

8. Schemes should not be advertised online, or appear on UCAS, until they have fully completed the approval process, but may be marketed as 'subject to approval' in the printed University prospectus. Schemes could be marketed as 'subject to approval' at open days, or on departmental websites, subject to a satisfactory case being made to the PPC or approval panel where appropriate,

and providing that all advertising copy and presentations at events made it clear that such courses are still subject to formal approval.

9. To ensure adequate time for an effective marketing campaign and successful launch, proposals should ideally be developed following a 2-year planning cycle. This enables proposals to be considered at departmental level, allows departments time to undertake external consultation, current student and alumni consultation, discussions with Global Marketing and Student Recruitment, as well as time for proposals to complete the appropriate approval route.

Welsh Language Standards

10. Since 1 April 2018, Aberystwyth University has complied with Welsh Language Standards which have replaced the Welsh Language Scheme. Academic departments are responsible for demonstrating compliance with Welsh Language Standards, particularly Standard 104, when submitting proposals to introduce, restructure, suspend or withdraw study schemes. Further details are provided on the Centre for Welsh Language Services webpages: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/cgg/bilingual-policy/>.

Welsh Medium Provision

11. During curriculum development, academic departments will refer to the University's strategic aims, particularly the Welsh Language and Culture Sub-Strategy 2019-2023. Please refer to Welsh Language Policies and Strategies for further details, including the guiding principles and success indicators in relation to academic provision: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/cgg/policies/>.

- [2.4 Executive Approval Pathway](#)

1. This section describes the process for the approval of taught degree schemes and other schemes of study leading to awards at Aberystwyth University and applies to new scheme proposals. Schemes will be approved for

a five year period, after which they will need to undergo a process of Departmental Periodic Review (Section 2.10).

2. Scheme provision at the University is overseen by the Portfolio Planning Committee (PPC), a sub-committee of Academic Board. PPC is responsible for maintaining an overview of proposals for new schemes, suspensions and withdrawals. Proposals for new schemes will be considered by a standing Scheme Approval Panel, which reports to PPC.

3. The approval process is designed to address the guiding principles, and meet the core and common practices as outlined in the UK Quality Code. This is to assure the University that, in developing new study schemes, academic departments have given proper consideration to the following:

(i) External reference points, including any relevant subject benchmark statements and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

(ii) The advice of external subject specialists (for example a current external examiner or members of an external advisory body) and, where appropriate, the requirements of PSRBs and employers

(iii) The compatibility of scheme proposals with existing provision and with institutional goals and mission

(iv) Resource requirements including staff, library, IT and any subject specific resources (e.g. laboratory facilities)

(v) The likely level of demand.

The approval timetable and process

4. Academic departments planning to introduce a new study scheme, or significantly modify an existing one, should allow for sufficient time for recruitment and advertising. Staff who are developing proposals must liaise

with the relevant Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor(s), Planning Office, Global Marketing and Student Recruitment and Information Services in the early stages of development.

5. The timescale for marketing and approval (two year planning cycle) are published online and updated on an annual basis: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/dev-review/>. Proposals should be submitted to PPC and the deadlines for the submission of papers are available online: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/agro-coms/>. In cases where proposals for new schemes are not in line with a two year cycle, PPC will determine the feasibility of an earlier introduction.

6. The executive approval pathway is for proposals which are considered as major changes or restructures, development in an area of new provision, and where there are resource or university-level implications which require sign off by PPC and the University Executive Group. The process is split into two stages:

Stage 1

SDF1.1, PAF1/PAF2 – Consideration of business case and impact on overall academic portfolio by PPC and University Executive Group.

7. Departments should submit the following documents supporting the initial proposal to the PPC and the University Executive Group. Deadlines for submission of paperwork can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/agro-coms/>. Departments should consult with the Faculty PVC, Planning Department, Global Marketing and Student Recruitment, and the Academic Registry QA link before submitting a proposal.

(i) Committee coversheet

(ii) Scheme Development Form 1: Proposal for a New or Restructured Scheme: SDF1.1 only is required for consideration by the PPC, and additional guidance is provided within the form

(iii) Preliminary Finance form (PAF1 / PAF2): Faculties/Departments should liaise with the Planning Department in good time prior to submission of the proposal. Following this detailed discussion, the Planning Department will provide the template for these forms for consideration by the University Executive Group; they are only available on request from the Planning Department (<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/pag/>).

8. The PPC and University Executive Group will consider proposals in the context of strategy, business viability including costs, risks (including reputational risks), student numbers and practical considerations and will determine whether they should go forward for academic consideration by the standing Scheme Approval Panel, referred back to the Department for further discussion or rejected. The Department should consult with the Faculty Executive as appropriate, including the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) and the Associate Dean (Welsh-medium Academic Provision). If the proposal is likely to affect provision in other subject areas, the Department should also consult with the other departments.

9. Departments will be notified of the decision of PPC and the University Executive Group.

Marketing of scheme

10. The scheme may be advertised as 'subject to approval' in the next formal University prospectus following approval from the PPC and University Executive Group. Schemes cannot be advertised on UCAS or online until they have fully completed the approval process, unless the department has made a successful case for advertising the scheme as 'subject to approval' in printed and online materials in addition to the formal University prospectus. The

Academic Registry QA team will communicate the decision to the proposing department(s) and to relevant service departments.

Stage 2

SDF1.2 and remaining proposal paperwork - Consideration of academic rationale and overview by the standing Scheme Approval Panel.

11. Once approval to proceed to the next stage of the approval process has been received from PPC and the University Executive Group, **detailed consideration of** the academic content, curriculum design and delivery, the student experience, learning resources, support and administration arrangements, and formal sign-off of the proposal, will be considered by the Scheme Approval Panel (see dates here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/dev-review/>). The Scheme Approval Panel may not reject a proposal unless it is on QA grounds.

12. Departments should complete the SDF1.2 and remaining proposal documentation and submit it with SDF1.1 to the Scheme Approval Panel;

- (i) Committee coversheet
- (ii) Programme specification(s), including scheme/module learning outcomes mapped against assessment (SDF9)
- (iii) Evidence of external consultation
- (iv) Evidence of consultation with current students/ alumni
- (v) New/restructured module approval forms, where appropriate, or links to existing modules
- (vi) Nomination of an External Assessor Form (SDF7).

13. Academic Registry will liaise with the External Assessor who will be required to complete a written report prior to the event for consideration at the approval panel: **SDF8 External Assessor's Report**. This will be requested by Academic Registry once the External Assessor has accepted the invitation. External Assessors are not invited to attend the Panel unless issues arise from the report which require further discussion, then they may be consulted by video conference.

Outcome of approval panel

14. Following the meeting of the panel, minutes of the meeting are produced by the Secretary to the Panel (normally a member of the Academic Registry QA Team) in consultation with the Chair.

15. **A committee coversheet** should be completed by the proposing Department in response to the minutes, providing details of amendments made to the original proposal as a result of the feedback from the Scheme Approval Panel. No further changes should be made to SDF1.1 and SDF1.2 unless it is a recommendation of the Panel. The committee coversheet and the minutes of the approval panel will be submitted to FAAC and PPC. PPC minutes are submitted to Academic Board.

Scheme approval panels

16. The standing Scheme Approval Panel will have membership of 12-16 academic members of staff with each faculty nominating members to normally sit for a period of up to 4 years. These will include the Associate Dean (L&T) but there will be a quorum of 4-5, to include an Academic Registry and student representative, and not all nominated faculty members would have to attend each time. Normally an Associate Dean will chair the Panel.

17. The standing Panel will normally sit 5-6 times between October and April. Proposals for scheme approval will be considered at these meetings and

departments will need to plan accordingly, but additional meetings may be scheduled if necessary.

18. External Assessors are not required to attend meetings but must submit a written report. The panel may ask for further comments where appropriate or the External Assessor may be invited to attend via video conference if issues are identified in their written report that require further detailed discussion.

19. The Secretary to the Panel (usually a member of the Academic Registry QA Team) is responsible for taking minutes, identifying decisions and any recommendations. These minutes will go to the proposing department for any further action, and will also be submitted to PPC as a record of the decisions taken.

20. The membership of the Scheme Approval Panel will be as follows:

a. The Chair, to be drawn from outside the proposing academic department, and usually an Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching). The Chair should have suitable independence and critical distance from the proposed scheme, and will be selected by Academic Registry

b. A minimum of one member of academic staff, with suitable independence and critical distance from the proposal

c. A student representative, to be drawn from a pool nominated by the Students' Union, normally a Student Reviewer

d. A member of staff from the Academic Registry QA Team, who will also draft the panel report.

21. Academic Registry will be mindful of Welsh-medium representation on panels.

22. Academic departments will be invited to nominate a representative to present the proposal at the panel meeting. In the case of cross-academic

department schemes, a representative from each academic department involved will be nominated by their respective department.

The role of the Scheme Approval Panel

23. The Scheme Approval Panel is constituted as a standing panel reporting to the PPC. The Panel is responsible for making final decisions on the approval of scheme proposals, but may refer decisions back to PPC or on to Academic Board if there are significant areas of concern or issues of wider consideration for the University. PPC will retain oversight for the operation of the Scheme Approval Panel and will monitor the effectiveness of the QA processes.

24. The Panel will ensure that there is evidence of sufficient external consultation during the development of the scheme, for example with current external examiners, departmental external advisors, and representatives of professional or accrediting bodies. The Panel will take full account of the views of the external assessor, who will be required to complete a written report (**SDF8**) prior to the event for consideration by the panel.

25. Meetings of approval panel will be ordered as follows:

(i) Welcome by the Chair

(ii) Summary of the proposal by the proposing academic department(s)

(iii) General discussion, which will consider the following questions and take account of the needs of all students:

- Is there evidence of demand for the scheme and are the entry requirements at an appropriate level?
- Are the aims and learning outcomes of the scheme appropriate particularly in relation to relevant subject benchmarks, the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales?

- Is the curriculum content and design appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes of the scheme?
- Is the curriculum organised such that the demands made of the learner in terms of intellectual challenge, skills, knowledge, conceptualisation and learning autonomy increase progressively?
- Is the assessment regime suitable to measure achievement of the intended outcomes?
- Are there adequate resources, i.e. staff, library, IT and any specialist requirements, to deliver the scheme effectively?
- Are there any special features of the scheme that have implications for its viability, management or delivery, or for the regulations of the University?

(iv) Deliberation by the panel, for which the representative of the proposing department(s) will not be present

(v) Decision.

Decisions of Scheme Approval Panel

26. The Approval Panel will have the choice of one of the following decisions:

a. **Unconditional approval**

b. **Approval with minor modifications** (to be approved by the Chair of the Panel)

c. **Conditional approval:** this will require the proposing department to submit a response to the Chair of the Panel, which will also be ratified by the external assessor

d. **Referral back to the academic department(s)**. In such cases it is anticipated that considerable revision would be required before re-presenting the proposal

e. **Rejection (on QA grounds only)**.

27. The Approval Panel will define actions as recommendations or conditions:

a. Recommendations: should be areas for consideration by the proposing department, or minor corrections, but will not delay the approval of the proposal.

b. Conditions: which should be stated clearly where approval is subject to specified conditions being met within a given time scale. Approval will not be granted until these conditions have been met.

28. The Secretary to the Approval Panel will produce minutes of the meeting, noting its decision, which the Chair will sign. The proposing academic department will be invited to complete a committee coversheet, to be reviewed by the Chair of the Panel, and External Assessor if required. If the Chair is satisfied that there are no issues of concern then the decision of the panel shall be considered final and reported to the PPC. Where there are any issues of concern the final decision shall be referred to PPC or Academic Board depending on the level of the issues raised.

Marketing and Introduction

29. The subject to approval flag will be lifted, and the scheme advertised online and on course search, once it has fully completed the approval process. The Academic Registry QA team will communicate the decision to the proposing department(s) and to relevant service departments.

- [2.5 Non-Executive Approval Pathway](#)

1. The 'Non-Executive' approval pathway is for proposals where there are no resource implications and therefore sign off is not required by the University Executive Group. Proposals considered via the non-executive approval pathway should include:

(i) New provision in an existing area (drawn from existing module provision)

(ii) New Major/Minor combinations and Joint Honours schemes.

2. Proposals following the non-executive pathway will be considered by the Portfolio Planning Committee (PPC) and can be approved by a relevant Faculty Approval Panel (a sub-group of FAAC) which will be scheduled as necessary.

3. Departments should consult with the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor, Planning and Global Marketing and Student Recruitment before submitting a proposal for a new scheme. Academic departments should also consult the Academic Registry QA Team to ascertain which approval pathway should be followed.

Portfolio Planning Committee

4. All proposals following the non-executive pathway will be considered by the PPC which will determine whether the proposal should go forward for academic consideration by a Faculty Approval Panel, be referred back to the Department for further discussion or rejected.

Marketing of scheme

5. Schemes may be advertised as 'subject to approval' in the next formal University prospectus following approval from PPC. Schemes cannot be advertised on UCAS or online until they have fully completed the approval process, unless the department has made a successful case for advertising the scheme as 'subject to approval' in printed and online materials in addition to the formal University prospectus. The Academic Registry QA team will

communicate the decision to the proposing department(s) and to relevant service departments.

Consideration of proposal by Faculty Approval Panel

6. Once approval to proceed to the next stage of the approval process has been received from PPC, detailed consideration of the academic content, curriculum design and delivery, and formal sign-off of the proposal, will be considered by the Faculty Approval Panel, which will be scheduled as necessary. The Faculty Approval Panel may not reject a proposal unless it is on QA grounds.

7. The Panel will have membership of at least two faculty academic representatives who have not been involved in the development or pre-Faculty Panel approval of the proposal, nominated by the Faculty; normally an Associate Dean will be a member of the Panel. The Panel must also include a representative from the Students' Union and the Academic Registry QA link who will be responsible for taking notes of the meeting. Additional members may be invited if deemed appropriate. Academic Registry will be mindful of Welsh-medium representation on panels.

8. Approval by the Faculty Approval Panel will constitute the final stage of the approval process. The notes from the Panel will be submitted to FAAC with the proposal documentation for information only, and to PPC as a record of the decisions taken.

New Provision in an existing area

9. Departments should follow this route if they are proposing the development of new schemes within an existing area or provision, for example, drawing upon existing modules, and where there are no resource implications. The Department should complete the following for consideration by the PPC and

Faculty Approval Panel. Further detailed guidance can be found on the SDF form.

(i) Committee coversheet

(ii) Scheme Development Form 2 (SDF2)

(iii) Programme specification(s), including scheme/module learning outcomes mapped against assessment

(iv) New/restructured module approval forms, where appropriate, or links to existing modules.

Creation of new Major/Minor combinations and Joint Honours schemes

10. Departments should follow this route if they are proposing the creation of a new Major/Minor or Joint Honours scheme. Please note that this route should only be followed to join two pre-existing approved major, minor or joint elements. Departments should follow the New Provision in an Existing Area or the Executive approval route to create new major, minor or joint elements. The Department should complete the following for consideration by the PPC and Faculty Approval Panel. Further detailed guidance can be found on the SDF form.

(i) Committee coversheet

(ii) Scheme Development Form 4 (SDF4).

- [2.6 Minor change or restructure](#)

1. Departments should follow this route if they are proposing a minor change or restructure of an existing scheme. The Department should complete the following for consideration by the Faculty Academic Affairs Committee. Further detailed guidance can be found in the SDF form.

(i) committee coversheet

(ii) Scheme Development Form 3 (SDF3)

(iii) new/restructured module approval forms, where appropriate, or links to existing modules.

2. Academic departments should carefully consider the implications of any minor modifications to existing schemes, which may arise as a result of annual monitoring exercises or external feedback, and consult with students as outlined in Section 2.1 of the AQH. Academic departments should also consult the Academic Registry QA Team to ascertain which approval pathway should be followed. If FAAC is not satisfied with the level of detail provided, or is not assured that the proposed changes constitute a minor modification, the committee may require the department(s) concerned to submit a proposal for a scheme restructure by an SDF1 or SDF2 for consideration by PPC.

3. In order to ensure that existing schemes do not change as a consequence of cumulative annual revisions, to the extent that they are no longer valid in relation to their original specifications, all minor modifications to existing schemes must be monitored by faculties and be reported to Academic Board through the Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes. All schemes are also subject to periodic revalidation of provision, as part of the Departmental Periodic Review, every five years.

4. Minor modifications to schemes may also be approved during the course of periodic revalidation of provision, as outlined in Section 2.10 of the AQH.

5. To help academic departments to assess the level of changes being proposed and the appropriate approval process, guidance should be sought from the Academic Registry QA Team. Minor modification will typically involve the following:

(i) No substantive change to the aims of the existing scheme

(ii) No substantive change to the credit number of core modules and restriction of student choice

(iii) No substantive change to the scheme learning outcomes, content and assessment methods

(iv) No changes affecting more than 60 credits at any level in Part Two of an undergraduate scheme

(v) No changes affecting more than 60 credits of a taught postgraduate scheme.

6. Academic Registry may determine that external consultation is required if the scheme differs significantly to existing provision at that level.

- [2.7 Suspension and Withdrawal of Study Schemes and Changes to Scheme Titles](#)

Suspend a study scheme

1. Proposals submitted by departments to suspend schemes will only be considered after full consultation within the relevant faculty, or across faculties where necessary. Departments should also ensure that Welsh-medium provision at scheme and module level is considered during this process. The normal expectation is that schemes will be suspended for one year only, after which point they will automatically be made available again for applications and visible on course search pages. Proposals to suspend schemes will be considered by the Portfolio Planning Committee, and departments should submit a committee coversheet and a Scheme Development Form 5 (SDF5) for consideration by PPC. No further scrutiny will be necessary and the decision will be recorded in the PPC minutes.

Withdraw a study scheme

2. Proposals submitted by departments to withdraw schemes will only be considered after full consultation within the relevant faculty, or across faculties where necessary. Departments should also ensure that Welsh-medium provision at scheme and module level is considered during this process. The normal expectation is that schemes will be phased out over a period to allow the University to meet commitments to registered students. Exceptionally, where urgent restructuring is necessary, the University will make every effort to secure places elsewhere for students already in the University who wish to complete the scheme of study they were admitted to. Where an undergraduate scheme is withdrawn part way through an admissions cycle the normal UCAS conventions will operate for those who have applied for entry to the scheme. Proposals to withdraw study schemes will be considered by the Portfolio Planning Committee, and departments should submit a committee coversheet and a Scheme Development Form 5 (SDF5) for consideration by PPC. No further scrutiny will be necessary and the decision will be recorded in the PPC minutes.

3. Section 2 is **not only** for Welsh Medium schemes as withdrawal of schemes may also have an impact on module-level Welsh-medium provision; it should be completed for **all** schemes. Departments should complete Section 2 in consultation with the Faculty Associate Dean (Welsh-Medium Academic Provision), who will be responsible for consulting with the Welsh Medium Development Group before the proposal is submitted to PPC.

4. Departments should bear in mind that PPC will scrutinise proposals to withdraw or suspend schemes and the implications of these decisions in light of CMA guidance on Consumer Law.

5. The Portfolio Planning Committee may propose the suspension or withdrawal of schemes on an annual basis based on recruitment trend data and market intelligence. PPC will invite departments to take action on the basis of this report to withdraw or suspend schemes as appropriate. Faculties will be invited to provide a robust rationale to PPC for retaining any schemes identified in the report. Faculties should consider compliance with the Welsh Language

Standards, in consultation with the Faculty Associate Dean (Welsh-Medium Academic Provision) who will be responsible for consulting with the Welsh Medium Studies Committee, and confirm any impact on provision. PPC will have the authority to make final decisions taking account of this feedback. No further approval documentation would be required and the decision will be recorded in the PPC minutes.

Changes to scheme titles

6. Changes to scheme titles will be considered by PPC. The Department should complete the following for consideration by the PPC:

(i) Committee coversheet

(ii) Scheme Development Form 6 (SDF6).

No further scrutiny will be necessary and the decision will be recorded in the PPC minutes.

- [2.8 Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes \(AMTS\)](#)

1. The University is committed to the annual monitoring of all its taught schemes within the context set by the UK Quality Code This process is overseen by the Academic Board.

2. The aim of the Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes (AMTS) exercise is to provide a secure mechanism whereby the University is assured that schemes are meeting their aims, and to identify areas of good practice and disseminate this information in order to enhance the provision.

3. Responsibility for annual monitoring of each undergraduate and taught postgraduate scheme lies primarily with the academic department, reporting to the appropriate faculty. It is important to identify concerns which are specific to a particular scheme or common to a number of them, reflect and report upon them and take appropriate action. This applies equally whether those concerns

relate to a department's own modules or those of another department or partner provider which are integral to the scheme in question.

4. The AMTS1 form should be completed by a scheme co-ordinator or equivalent, depending on how schemes are grouped. All taught schemes are subject to annual monitoring this includes undergraduate schemes, postgraduate taught and franchise schemes), and a separate form should be completed for UG, PGT and Franchise schemes. To assist with this process AM data packs will be provided for schemes where numbers are statistically significant.

5. As part of its consideration of AMTS2 reports, faculties may seek further clarification from departments on issues raised or require detail of action to be undertaken. Matters for consideration at university level will be referred to the Academic Board. In addition, the Collaborative Provision Board may seek further clarification from faculties on issues relating to collaborative partnerships and franchise agreements.

6. Scheme co-ordinators are requested to submit their AMTS1 reports to the faculty as formal evidence. AMTS1 forms for previous academic years will be available for Periodic Scheme Review and any future revalidation event for an individual scheme. The AMTS2 report is a consolidated report at faculty level. Reporting is by exception and comments should be made on matters that are of particular significance. These should include successes, good practice and innovation, risks to quality and challenges and should pick out matters for university attention.

7. Additional notes of guidance are provided in the AMTS templates which can be found at the end of this chapter.

- [2.9 Annual Review of Programme Specifications](#)

Departments should undertake an annual review of its programme specifications to ensure their currency and validity; this exercise can be undertaken at any stage through the current session, but Departments are asked to forward any change to the Quality Assurance Team (gaestaff@aber.ac.uk) by the end of Semester Two of each academic session. Any substantive changes may require consideration and approval by the Faculty Academic Affairs Committee (dates and deadlines for papers can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/aqro-coms/>). PDFs of programme specifications will be published at the start of each academic session for that current session.

- [2.10 Departmental Review, including periodic revalidation of provision](#)
 1. Periodic Review provides an opportunity for the department, faculty and University to evaluate the effectiveness of a department's management, learning, teaching and enhancement and quality assurance procedures and monitoring of performance against relevant KPIs and for the University to assure itself and be able to demonstrate to external bodies that management of quality and standards are being delivered successfully.
 2. The Review Team, reporting to Academic Board will, on behalf of the University, audit departments on a 5-6 year rolling basis, to examine that all relevant processes and mechanisms for quality and standards are in place, operating effectively and efficiently, and that recommended enhancements to teaching and learning are being implemented. Collaborative provision will normally be included as part of a departmental review.
 3. Student representatives from the department should be encouraged to participate fully in the department's preparations for the audit; Student representatives may submit their own submission as an appendix to the department submission.

Details of the process

4. The following areas will be considered in a review: undergraduate and postgraduate schemes and modules; postgraduate research provision; collaborative provision; feedback systems; compliance with quality assurance processes; staff development and training.

5. A review will typically last up to two days and involve:

- Inspection of a self-evaluation document, relevant committee minutes and other documentation concerned with teaching and learning in a department
- Meeting(s) with Head of Department and staff with responsibility for different aspects of teaching and learning (e.g. examinations, student support, admissions)
- Meeting(s) with student representatives, undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduates
- Meeting(s) with other staff involved in quality assurance and/or teaching and learning (e.g. new staff members / administrators)
- Revalidation of provision.

NOTE: normally a member of staff would only contribute to one of the groups unless they fulfil significantly different roles within the department.

Panel Membership

6. Reviews will normally be chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC Learning and Teaching or FPVC). Panel members will be given appropriate training and guidance. Membership will be discussed with the Chair of Academic Board, normally it should include:

- Chair (normally the PVC (Learning and Teaching) or a Faculty PVC)
- Associate Dean
- Head of Department

- External Academic Assessor (Academic Subject expert and if appropriate an industry expert)
- Academic Registrar or their representative
- Student representative
- A member of the Academic Registry will act as Secretary

7. Departments will be invited to nominate up to three professional colleagues from the UK who could act as an External Assessor for which a fee and expenses are paid. An External Assessor should not be a current External Examiner and should preferably have knowledge of quality assurance processes and procedures. The choice of external assessor will be made by the Chair and the Secretary in consultation with the department.

Indicative Schedule

8. The following is an indicative schedule. The Chair and Secretary may meet with students ahead of the main meeting, and submit a written summary of the discussion for consideration by the Review Panel:

Time	Event
DAY 1	
12.30pm	Working LUNCH <i>Private Meeting of Panel</i>
1.30pm	Meeting with the Head of Department
2.30pm	<i>Private meeting of Panel</i>
3.00pm	Meeting with senior academic staff with key roles in the department
4.00pm	<i>Private meeting of Panel</i>

4.15pm	Meeting with students (if feedback not already gathered via a different route)
5.15pm	<i>Private meeting of Panel</i>
5.30pm	Close
TBC	Evening meal – External Assessor(s) with Head of Department and Panel Chair
DAY 2	
9.00am	<i>Private meeting of Panel</i>
9.30am	Meetings with scheme leaders (focus on revalidation of provision)
10.30am	<i>Private meeting of Panel</i>
11.00am	Meeting with other staff including administrative and part time staff involved with quality assurance and/or teaching and learning
12.00pm	<i>Private meeting of Panel – determine provisional commendations/recommendations</i>
12.30pm	Feedback to Head of Department
1.00pm	Close

9. A Departmental Review will consider:

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Schemes and Modules

(i) the standards of teaching and learning in modules.

(ii) Methods of assessment in their relationship to:

- learning outcomes
- course content
- learning strategies
- transferable skills

(iii) Student Progression and Achievement

(iv) Student Support and Guidelines

(v) Student representation

(vi) Teaching and Learning Resources

(vii) Progression between different levels of undergraduate courses (Level 0 through to level M in the case of Integrated Masters schemes), and the relationship between undergraduate and postgraduate modules

(viii) Holistic nature of the course (including Joint Honours)

(ix) Teaching and learning innovations e.g. VLE

(x) Student Handbooks and other information provided to students

(xi) Any Franchising, collaborative or Distance Learning schemes

(xii) Welsh Medium teaching (if applicable)

(xiii) Placements or work experience (if applicable)

(xiv) Exchange and Erasmus

(xv) Support, training, supervision and monitoring of research students.

Feedback Systems:

- (i) External Examiners' Reports
- (ii) Feedback from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (if applicable)
- (iii) Student Module and Scheme Evaluations, reports on MEQs, Tell us Now
- (iv) Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes
- (v) KPIs including National Student Survey Results

Compliance:

The Review will also ensure that departments are complying with the University's Regulations and the Academic Quality Handbook, and engaging with and implementing University policy, including, for example, the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Postgraduate Research provision and support

Staff Development and Training:

- (i) University and Departmental induction and training, and the development of staff
- (ii) Peer Observation process.

10. The Academic Registry may invite the department to ask one or more currently serving external examiners to submit a written Report, in addition to their normal external examiner report ahead of the panel meeting.

11. The panel will be required to consider the following areas, in accordance with the Advice and Guidance in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education:

- (i) Ensure the currency and validity of the schemes under review, in light of developing knowledge in the discipline area and any cumulative changes during the period since initial approval / previous review
- (ii) Evaluate the attainment of scheme learning outcomes by students, referring as appropriate to previous AMTS reports and data sets, and reports of external examiners
- (iii) Evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and the assessment regime in relation to scheme learning outcomes
- (iv) Identify any areas of weakness, and make recommendations for appropriate actions.

Documentation

12. Departments are expected to evaluate themselves against a set of statements in relation to quality and standards of teaching and learning, using a self evaluation template. The statements cover the following areas: academic schemes, teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, research students, student participation and experience, academic staff development, collaborative provision and external examiners.

13. The comments section should be used to reference supporting evidence and identify action points for quality enhancement and indicate the steps the department has identified that it needs to take to enhance quality and/or improve performance.

14. The central QA Team will work with the department to gather supporting documentation, and publish this information on the Academic Registry SharePoint site ahead of the Review meeting. Along with the SED the following supporting evidence will be uploaded; unless stated otherwise, this will be uploaded by the QA Team:

To be provided by the department:

- Departmental Structure Roles and Responsibilities: details of the composition and responsibilities of committees involved in T&R, and a list of key staff roles and responsibilities.
- The most recent minutes of the department (or other executive) committee, LTC and/or committees dealing with collaborative provision or other distributed learning.
- Departmental strategy documents where appropriate: e.g., Teaching & Learning Strategy, Employability Strategy, TELG Action Plan

To be provided by the Planning Office

- Data pack including statistics, KPI Dashboard

The most recent copies of the following will be uploaded by the QA Team

- AMTS and External Examiner reports
- PSRB report (where relevant)
- NSS Action Plan
- SSCC minutes
- Results of student evaluation of modules
- Department handbook(s)
- Programme specifications for all schemes to be revalidated
- Module and Scheme student count reports

The Review Panel may request additional information if specific issues need to be explored further.

Outcome of a Departmental Periodic Review visit

15. Following the visit, a report will be prepared by the Panel Secretary which will highlight areas of good practice and identify recommendations for the department, for the faculty and for the University. The Pro Vice Chancellor may

also invite the External Assessor to submit a written report. The Head of Department will be given an opportunity to comment on factual accuracy of a draft report, but is not expected to respond in full at this stage.

16. The panel will arrive at one of the following recommendations for each scheme or groups of schemes being revalidated:

(i) Unconditional revalidation;

(ii) Conditional revalidation, subject to minor modifications being fulfilled within a given time limit;

(iii) Major revisions, which may be required to be submitted to the relevant Faculty Academic Affairs Committee (FAAC);

(iv) Withdrawal or suspension.

In the case of a decision of withdrawal or suspension, the department will be asked to complete the relevant documentation and seek approval via the FAAC, making appropriate arrangements to ensure that all candidates who have already embarked on a scheme may complete their studies.

17. Departments will be expected to respond to issues identified in relation to revalidation of schemes within a set time period, to be reviewed by the Chair. If the Chair is satisfied that there are no significant issues of concern then the decision of the panel in respect of the schemes being revalidated shall be considered final and reported to the faculty. Where there are any issues of concern the final decisions shall be referred to the faculty and/or Academic Board.

18. In the case of a decision of withdrawal or suspension, the department will be asked to complete the relevant documentation and seek approval via the FAAC, making appropriate arrangements to ensure that all candidates who have already embarked on a scheme may complete their studies.

19. The department will be asked to submit an Action Plan within three months of the publication of the report, indicating how it intends to implement the recommendations of the Review Panel and provide progress reports to the Faculty on recommendations identified in the Action Plan.

20. The Report and Action Plan will be presented to Academic Board. If Academic Board is not satisfied with the progress or implementation of the action points, it can request the following:

- (i) A visit to the department to discuss the action points in more detail
- (ii) That a follow up internal audit be conducted within an agreed time frame.

March 2023

- [2.11 Accreditation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies](#)
 1. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) set standards for, and regulate standards of entry into particular professions. The University engages with a number of PSRBs through formal accreditation of taught study schemes at undergraduate and postgraduate level. As part of its responsibility for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Academic Board retains overall responsibility for managing all external review, validation and accreditation exercises relating to teaching activities within the University.
 2. Departments retain responsibility for liaising with PSRBs for initial accreditation and for the management of accredited schemes within their subject areas. PSRB reports provide valuable external feedback on the quality and standards of schemes and departments are expected to take them fully into account as part of the **Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes** (see section 6 of the AMTS1 form).
 3. Departments are required to confirm whether it is intended to seek accreditation for new schemes as part of the **Scheme Approval Process**.

Initial accreditation of new schemes should normally take place as soon as possible after final approval, and Academic Board should be informed of the outcome of the accreditation exercise.

4. Faculties should ensure that copies of the following are submitted to the Academic Registry for consideration by Academic Board: all correspondence and documents submitted to PSRBs for accreditation exercises; correspondence and reports arising from accreditation exercises, and departmental responses or action plans. These should be sent to gaestaff@aber.ac.uk

5. All reports arising from PSRB reviews will be considered by Academic Board. This is to ensure that any weaknesses identified in university procedures can be addressed, that departments have responded to any issues identified by PSRBs, and that any good practice is disseminated more widely within the University. Academic Board will follow up and monitor action arising from PSRB reports, and may require departments to prepare internal action plans in response to PSRB reports.

6. Academic Board will maintain a register of all schemes which are accredited by PSRBs. Faculty Associate Deans will be invited to review and confirm the accuracy of the register on an annual basis. Faculties are also expected to inform Academic Board of any changes to the status of scheme accreditations.

7. Departments are responsible for publishing full details of scheme accreditations to students, and must always keep applicants and current students informed of the status of the study scheme with regards to PSRB accreditation.

If changes occur to the mode of study, or if a new collaborative arrangement for a study scheme is put in place, the relevant departments should liaise with the PSRB to check whether the amended provision falls under current accreditation arrangements. Students must be informed of the status of the new or amended provision.

- [2.12 Departmental Quality Audit Questionnaire](#)

1. Quality assurance processes are subject to periodic audit by Academic Board which invites academic departments to complete a Departmental Quality Audit (DQA) questionnaire, usually on an annual basis. This questionnaire serves as a checklist to remind departments about current policies, guidelines and procedures which are good practice. It is especially useful as a point of reference for staff within academic departments who may take on new roles and also as a means of highlighting changes to policies as they are refined and updated. It covers key areas of the AQH including assessment and feedback, monitoring of schemes and modules, personal tutoring arrangements, and student representation. The DQA asks departments to confirm that University policy and guidelines are being implemented, and issues arising out of the responses to the questionnaire are considered at a meeting of Faculty. The DQA questionnaire serves as an important supplement to the Departmental Periodic Review process at which departments are required to submit fully documentary evidence of their QA processes.

- [2.13 Scheme Approval Panel: dates and deadlines for papers](#)

A Scheme Approval Panel will be convened to consider a proposal once it has been approved by Portfolio Planning Committee to proceed to the next stage of the approval process. The deadline for papers for consideration by a Panel will be two weeks in advance of the Panel. Please contact the Quality Assurance Team for further guidance on the timing of approval panels.

- [2.14 Guidance on calculating Welsh medium percentages](#)

2.14.1 Guidance on calculating Welsh medium percentages for degree schemes

1. We advertise a Welsh medium percentage for every one of our degree schemes where it is possible to study at least on module through the medium of Welsh. This information appears on our website and in our bilingual prospectus, so it is important that it is correct so as to conform with advertising regulations. A Welsh medium percentage should be recorded on AStRA for every degree

scheme. AStRA feeds the information to our website. Academic Registry will update AStRA on the basis of data provided by academic departments.

2. Calculating Welsh medium percentages for degree schemes.

(i) Schemes taught 100% through the medium of Welsh

Q1) Are some of contact hours on at least one core module on the degree scheme taught through the medium of English? (E.g. seminars are available in Welsh but the lectures are in English).

A1) If so, the degree scheme is considered to be a degree scheme partly taught through the medium of Welsh and its Welsh medium percentage will be **less** than 100%.

Q2) Does a student have to choose a least one optional modules taught completely in English or at least one optional module that includes some English medium contact hours on the degree scheme? (That is, there are not enough modules taught completely through the medium of Welsh for a students to study 120 credits in each year of study, so to reach 120 credits, they must choose a module or modules taught partly or completely through the medium of English).

A2) If so, the degree scheme is considered to be a degree scheme taught partly through the medium of Welsh and its Welsh medium percentage will be **less** than 100%.

Q3) How are percentages for degree schemes taught partly through the medium of Welsh calculated?

- Every module has a Welsh medium percentage. This enables us to calculate the number of Welsh medium credits on each module. For example, if a module is a 20 credit module and its Welsh medium percentage 90%, there are 18 Welsh medium credits available on the

module. The Welsh medium percentages for modules are recorded on AStRA.

- Choose the pathway with the highest number of Welsh medium credits. The Welsh medium credits on each module on that pathway are added and the total is divided by 360 for 3 year degrees, 480 for 4 year degrees or 240 for 2 year degrees (e.g. a foundation degree).
- **Do not** include only the core modules.
- **Do not** include every optional Welsh medium module if it is not possible to follow them all (i.e. a student must choose between them).
- If it possible to choose between modules with different Welsh medium percentages, chose the module with the highest Welsh medium percentage.
- In part 2, avoid including options from other subjects in order to increase the Welsh medium percentage of the degree scheme unless they are in the same field. The Welsh medium pathway in part 2 should be a pathway in the subject of the degree. Including an open choice of up to 20 credits a year would be acceptable. Traditionally, some departments expect part 1 students to study up to 60 credits outside their subject. If it is possible to study these credits through the medium of Welsh, they should be included in the Welsh medium percentage of the degree scheme.
- Do not include a sandwich year, year abroad or year in industry, even if the year carries credits and it is possible to follow it through the medium of Welsh.

3. Examples

(i) Example 1: L255 Gwleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol (2018/19) [Designated Welsh medium degree scheme]

Year

1	2	3			
Core modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules	Core modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules	Core modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules
GW12420 Cyflwyniad i Wleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol 1: Cysyniadau Canolog a Sgiliau	18	GW20120 Cysylltiadau Rhyngwladol: Safbwyntiau a Thrafodaethau	18.6	GW30040 Dulliau Ymchwil + Traethawd Estynedig	30
GW12620 Y Tu ôl i'r Penawdau	18				
GW12520 Cyflwyniad i Wleidyddiaeth Ryngwladol 2: Heriau byd-eang	17.6				
Total number of core credits required	60	Total number of core credits required	20	Total number of core credits required	40

Optional modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules	Optional modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules	Optional modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules
GW12820 Llunio'r Byd Modern: Rhyfel, Heddwch a Chwyldro ers 1789	18.4	GQ20920 Y Meddwl Cymreig mewn Syniadaeth Ryngwladol	20	GQ30920 Y Meddwl Cymreig Mewn Syniadaeth Ryngwladol	20
GW10320 Rhyfel Strategaeth a Chuddwybodaeth	17.2	GQ23720 Amlddiwyllianedd mewn Polisi ac Ymarfer	20	GQ33720 Amlddiwyllianedd mewn Polisi ac Ymarfer	20
GW12920 Gwleidyddiaeth yn yr Unfed Ganrif ar Hugain	17.6	GQ23420 Rhyfel Diarbed, Heddwch Diarbed	20	GQ33420 Rhyfel Diarbed, Heddwch Diarbed	20
Total number of optional credits required	60	Total number of optional credits required	100	Total number of optional credits required	80

Total Welsh medium credits for year 1	8	Total Welsh medium credits for year 2	6	Total Welsh medium credits for year 3	90
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Total over 3 years: 275.4 Welsh medium credits = 76.5%

(ii) Example 2: D4N1 Agriculture with Studies (2018/19) [Designated English medium degree scheme]

Year

1	2	3			
Core modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules	Core modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules	Core modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules
BG11400/10 Cyflwyniad i Systemau Cynhyrchu Da Byw	10	BG20400/20 Systemau Cynhyrchu Da Byw	20	BG34010 Taith Astudio Amaethyddol a'r Amgylchedd Gwaith	2.5

BG12410 Sgiliau Astudio a Chyfathrebu	10	BG25620 Dulliau Ymchwil	10	BG32300/30 Traethawd Estynedig	30
BG11110 Y Diwydiant Amaethyddol - Sgiliau Cynllun- Benodol	7.5				
Total number of core credits required	70	Total number of core credits required	80	Total number of core credits required	60
Optional modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules	Optional modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules	Optional modules available in Welsh	Welsh medium credits on modules
MR10500/20 Cyflwyniad i Reolaeth	20	MR30720 Rheolaeth Marchnata	13.4	BG30800/20 Gwyddor Cynhyrchu Da Byw	20
MR10600/20 Cyflwyniad i'r Amgylchedd Busnes	20	MR33120 - Ymddygiad Sefydliadol	13.4	MR34020 Strategaeth Busnes	13.4
MR10120	13.4	BG21920	20		

Egwyddorion Marchnata		Bwyd, Ffermio a'r Amgylchedd			
BG10810 Datblygu a Rheoli Cynefinoedd ym Mhrydain	10				
Total number of optional credits required	50	Total number of optional credits required	40	Total number of optional credits required	60
Total Welsh medium credits for year 1 (pathway with highest WM percentage)	○ 5	Total Welsh medium credits for year 2 (pathway with highest WM percentage)	○ 4	Total Welsh medium credits for year 3	○ 9

**Total over 3
years: 206.8
Welsh
medium
credits =
57.4%**

2.14.2 Guidance on calculating Welsh medium percentages for Welsh medium modules

1. In order for departments to reach their targets for increasing the number of students who are studying through the medium of Welsh, it is necessary to ensure:

- That there is a Welsh medium module identifier for any module with an element of Welsh medium provision
- That the department notes a Welsh medium percentage for every module with a Welsh medium module identifier in the appropriate field in the module's record on AStRA
- Attending classes through the medium of Welsh (Welsh medium contact hours).

2. If a module does not have a Welsh medium module identifier and a Welsh medium percentage the computer system cannot identify the students on the module as students who are studying through the medium of Welsh and they will appear as English medium in the data HEFCW uses to measure our attainment of targets for increasing the number of Welsh medium students. This will jeopardize our ability to attract further funding in the area. **Academic Registry will update AStRA on the basis of data provided by academic departments.**

3. Calculating Welsh medium percentages

(i) Modules taught 100% through the medium of Welsh

Q1) Is Welsh the medium of all the contact hours; that is, all lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, laboratory sessions, etc., take place through the medium of Welsh?

A1) If so, the module is considered a 100% Welsh medium module. N.B. This is true even if the students are expected to read texts in English or another language as part of the module.

Q2) Is it a Welsh language module that introduces students to Welsh for beginners?

A2) The module should be recorded as 100% Welsh medium.

(ii) Modules taught partly through the medium of Welsh

Q1) Are some of the contact hours on the module, e.g. seminars, in Welsh, and some of the contact hours, e.g. lectures, in English?

A1) If so, the module is considered to be a module partly taught through the medium of Welsh and its percentage will be **less** than 100%.

In this case, it is necessary to look at the total number of hours spent on the module.

Welsh medium percentage of the module = Number of hours studying through the medium of Welsh

Total hours of study

Q2) What is the total number of hours of study?

A2) 1 credit is equivalent to 10 hours of study. E.g. the total hours of study on a 10 credit module is 100 hours.

Q3) How many hours of study through the medium of Welsh does a module have?

A3) You should include any hours spent:

- Undertaking other self-directed Welsh medium activities (e.g. homework for a seminar)
- Doing assessed course work (e.g. writing an essay, writing a report, doing worksheets, etc.); [N.B. On modules with a Welsh medium module identifier, it is expected that students can submit their work in Welsh and receive feedback in Welsh. Work **should not** be translated for marking on Welsh medium modules]
- Doing any Welsh medium exercises that do not count toward to module's final mark
- Revising for an exam or exams
- Rehearsing for a Welsh medium performance (e.g. play, musical).

4. If you are not sure how many hours students are supposed to spend on the different activities on a module, a breakdown is available on the module's original validation form. For modules that were validated some years ago, a copy of this form will be available in the minutes of the meeting of the deans/institute in which the module was approved. They are available from the Registry.

5. Examples

(i) 10 credit module:

Hours of activity	English	Welsh
Lectures + reading	10 + 10	0
Seminars + preparation	0	10 + 20
Self-directed learning package	0	20
Exam and essay	5	25

Total	23 (25%)	75 (75%)
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Welsh medium percentage suggested by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol:
75%

Note that only 50% of the contact hours are in Welsh. However, a Welsh medium percentage of 50% is considered too conservative because of the number of other Welsh medium activities that are part of the module outside of the Welsh medium contact hours.

Note that only 10% of the module's notional hours are denoted English medium hours, namely the ten hours of English medium lectures. (It is a 10 credit module and therefore involves 100 notional hours of study). However, a Welsh medium percentage of 90% is considered too generous as half of the contact hours are in English and therefore it is reasonable to presume that there are some notional English medium hours associated with the English medium contact hours.

The Coleg recommends that recording a percentage of between 70% and 80% would be reasonable, depending on the exact context of the module and the subject, and the range of learning and preparation activities for the seminars (Circular 16/03).

(ii) 10 credit module:

Hours of activity	English	Welsh
Lectures + reading	10 + 10	0
Seminars + preparation	5 + 10	0
Individual tutorials + preparation	0	5 + 10

Exam and essay	5	20
Total	40 (53%)	35 (47%)

Welsh medium percentage suggested by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol:
47%

(iii) 10 credit model (where the student submits assessments in English):

Hours of activity	English	Welsh
Lectures + reading	10 + 10	0
Seminars + preparation	5 + 10	0
Individual tutorials + preparation	0	5 + 10
Exam and essay	20	5
Total	55 (73%)	20 (27%)

Welsh medium percentage suggested by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol:
20%

Note that 25% of the contact hours are in Welsh. However, a Welsh medium percentage of 25% is considered too generous because the other activities, which are part of the module outside of the contact hours, are English medium ones.

6. Modules including work experience placement

Q1) Is the module taught mainly through the medium of Welsh, but with an element of work placement where the Welsh language contact can vary depending on the employer, even, in some cases, from day to day?

A1) We can make a reasonable decision about the average Welsh medium percentage of this element of the module, and give one percentage for all the students on the module (although some students have, in fact, studied a slightly higher percentage than the average and others have studied a slightly lower percentage).

7. English medium module that introduces an element of Welsh medium material in lectures

Q1) Does the module introduces an element of Welsh medium material in lectures, even though the lectures, seminars and any other classes that are part of the module are in English? An example of this would be a module that prepares students to introduce the Welsh language as part of the primary curriculum in Wales.

A1) If so, the Coleg suggests that no more than 10% of the module can be reasonably recorded as being Welsh medium.

8. Example

10 credit module

Hours of Activity	English	Welsh
Lectures + reading	15 + 20	5* + 5
Seminars + preparation	10 + 20	0
Exam and essay	25	0

Total	90 (90%)	10 (10%)
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*The module includes five English medium lectures that introduce an element of Welsh medium material.

Welsh medium percentage suggested by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol:
10%

9. The Coleg is willing to provide guidance on particular modules. Contact the Branch Officer to make a request for guidance.

Chapter 2 reviewed: September 2023

- [2.15 Template Forms](#)

Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes

- [Flow chart for AMTS and EE Reports 2023](#)
- [AMTS Data Support](#)
- [AMTS1 2023](#)
- [AMTS1 2023 Appendix Franchise Provision](#)
- [AMTS2 2023](#)

Module Approval

- Proposals for new and restructured modules should be made online using the APEX Module Management system which is available through myadmin.aber.ac.uk.

Scheme Approval

Schedule of Key Deadlines and Flow Charts

- [Summary of Procedure - flow chart](#)
- [Timeline for Suspension / Withdrawal of a scheme](#)
- [Timeline for suspension/withdrawal of a scheme proposed by PPC following annual review of recruitment trend data and market intelligence.](#)
- [Proposals - Two Year Planning Cycle](#)
- [Scheme Approval and Review Flowchart](#)

Executive Approval Pathway

- [Executive Approval Pathway flowchart](#)
- [SDF1.1 Executive Approval Pathway - Strategic Approval \(Portfolio Planning Committee and University Executive\)](#)
- [SDF1.2 Executive Approval Pathway - Academic Overview](#)

Non-Executive Approval Pathways

- [Non-Executive Approval Pathway - flow chart](#)
- [SDF2 Non-Executive Approval pathway - new provision in an existing area](#)
- [SDF4 Non-Executive Approval pathway - new JH or MM](#)

Minor Change or Restructure

- [SDF3 Minor change or restructure to existing provision](#)

Withdrawals, Suspensions and Change to Degree Scheme Titles

- [SDF5 Withdrawal - Suspension](#)
- [SDF6 Change to degree scheme name](#)

External

- [SDF7 Nomination of an External Assessor](#)
- [SDF8 External Assessor's Report - template](#)

Programme Specifications

- [SDF9.1 Programme Specification incl. mapping of learning outcomes](#)
- [SDF9.2 Programme Specification - with integrated year studying abroad](#)
- [SDF9.3 Programme Specification - with integrated year in industry](#)

Committee coversheet

- [Coversheet Template](#)

Departmental Periodic Review

- Please contact: gaestaff@aber.ac.uk

Faculty/Departmental Quality Audit

- **This is currently being updated.**