Department of Academic Quality and Development
Programme Approval and Review: Information for Student Panel Members

Like all universities in Scotland, GCU is expected to adhere to the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education[1]. The Quality Code articulates what is required of higher education providers and sets out defined Expectations that all universities must meet. This includes regularly reviewing our provision to ensure that we offer high quality academic programmes and that we continuously enhance and improve the learning experience for students.

1   Student engagement and partnership working

At GCU we are committed to student engagement and partnership working. This is reflected in our student partnership agreement – *GCU Community: Working Together in Partnership* – which was produced by students and staff and is fully supported by the University and Students' Association.

We believe that all levels of student engagement are valuable and contribute to the individual and collective student voice being heard. There are a wide range of opportunities for students to help shape the learning experience at GCU. The option to participate in Programme Approval and Review events as a student panel member is offered to academic lead reps (School Officers, PGT Student Representatives, and Research Student Leads), Representation Officers, Liberation Officers and Class Rep Associate Trainers as an additional (paid) opportunity within your role.

2   What are Programme Approval and Review events?

Programme Approval and Review events play a crucial role in academic quality assurance and enhancement at GCU. They contribute to a range of robust quality processes which all universities in Scotland are expected to have in place.

> ❖ **Programme Approval events take place when a new academic programme is proposed for delivery. A panel is convened to consider the proposal and decide if the programme will be approved to run.**
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> ❖ **Programme Review takes place periodically for all current programmes, usually every five years. A Programme Review Panel assesses the ongoing viability of a currently running programme, considers the outcomes of annual programme monitoring, and scrutinises any changes the programme team would like to make.**

All panels are organised by the Department of Academic Quality and Development. They are chaired by a senior academic from GCU and are generally comprised of two GCU academic staff members, two external panel members (one academic and one from industry/practice) and a student representative. A representative from Academic Quality and Development undertakes the role of Panel Secretary for each event, and will be your main point of contact and support.

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[1] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

3   What is the role of student panel members?

Programme Approval and Review events normally last for one full day and consist of a series of meetings with key stakeholders. This includes senior academic staff within the School, the programme team, current students and graduates and, where appropriate, employers and other relevant stakeholders. The role of the panel **as a whole** is to consider the validity and academic strength of the programme, including how it adheres to University strategy, policy, and external reference points. This might sound daunting, but your role is to bring the student perspective to the review process. You are welcome to raise questions and contribute to all aspects of the discussion but will be supported by the collective experience of the whole review team.

> ❖ **Before the event, panel members are provided with a set of documentation to read and consider (called the Programme Submission Documentation). This is usually quite a large document and you should expect to set aside at least a day for reading and preparation.**
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> ❖ **During the event, the panel meets with groups of key stakeholders before concluding if the programme will be approved or re-approved, and whether this approval is subject to any requirements or recommendations. They also highlight any areas of good practice (commendations).**
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> ❖ **After the event, the Panel Secretary prepares a report outlining the conclusions of the event. Panel members are required to read this and confirm if they are happy that it accurately reflects the discussion undertaken at the event.**

4   Payment and support for student panel members

Being a student panel member is a paid role and, as such, once you have been allocated to a panel you will be asked to provide confirmation of your right to work in the UK, complete a Casual Worker Profile Form and provide your bank details. Due to current UKVI regulations it is mandatory that you provide this information. You will be paid £250 following the event that you have participated in. **Please note that we can only issue payment if you attend and participate in the full event, including attending training and commenting on the final report.**

Student panel members make an important contribution to reviews within in the University and you will be supported to undertake your role successfully and confidently. You will be asked to attend a briefing session to learn more about the process and your role. We will then arrange for you to meet with the Panel Secretary before the event so that you can ask any questions about the Programme Submission Documentation and pick out key areas that you would like to raise or discuss on the day.

If you have questions about being a student panel member or would like to discuss the role further, please contact us in the Department of Academic Quality and Development:

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