

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

Like all universities in Scotland, GCU is expected to adhere to the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education¹. 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 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.
- ❖ 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 convened by the Department of Academic Quality and Development, which is responsible for coordinating and organising Approval and Review events across the University. Panels are usually comprised of:

Chair	GCU senior academic
Internal panel members (x2)	GCU academic staff members
External panel members (x2)	One academic representative, one from industry/practice
Student panel member	Appointed student representative or Full Time Officer
Panel secretary	Representative from Academic Quality and Development

2 Why have I been asked to meet the Programme Review panel?

Programme Review events usually last for one day and consist of a series of meetings with key stakeholder groups. This includes senior academic staff within the School, the programme team, current students and graduates and, where appropriate, employers and other relevant external stakeholders. You have been invited to meet the Programme Review panel because you are either a current student or recent graduate from the programme being reviewed.

¹<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

3 What can I expect from the panel meeting?

The purpose of the meeting is to allow the panel to hear the views of students and graduates from all levels and modes of the programme being reviewed. You will meet the panel with a small group of fellow students and/or graduates and, as a group you will be asked questions about your experiences of being a student on the programme. The exact questions or topics that the panel raise will vary from event to event, but typically they might be interested in:

- Learning and teaching on the programme
- Assessment and feedback
- Guidance and support services available to students
- Access to learning resources, e.g. library or computer labs
- Student progression and achievement through the programme

The emphasis of the meeting is very much on open and honest discussion between panel members and students/graduates. The panel is not there to ask difficult or 'trick' questions, but rather to support and enable genuine, reflective discussion about the programme being reviewed. We place great emphasis on the partnership aspect of events; panel members are encouraged to conduct the event in the best spirit of collegiality and peer group discussion. Likewise, we encourage students to provide both positive and constructive feedback (if appropriate) and to do so in a collegiate, non-judgemental way. Some general tips are:

- ❖ Try and maintain a positive atmosphere to encourage open dialogue and discussion
- ❖ Avoid being purposefully challenging or critical; provide balanced, constructive feedback that considers what works well as well as what could be improved
- ❖ Offer solutions where possible – what could programme teams do differently to improve the learning experience for future cohorts of students?
- ❖ You might want to provide examples to explain your views – but try to keep them general and don't single out members of staff
- ❖ Focus on key issues and try not to be side-tracked; Programme Approval and Review panels are there to consider the overall student experience of undertaking the programme, they can't consider or resolve individual issues for participants
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality at all times

4 What if I have any other questions?

If you have any questions or queries about the event that you are participating in, please contact your Programme Leader who will be able to help.

We hope that you find being a student participant in Programme Review to be a rewarding and worthwhile experience and would like to thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to quality enhancement and assurance processes at GCU.