SECTION G: SUBJECT REVIEW AND RE VALIDATION

1 The Function of Subject Review and Revalidation

The main focus of subject review and revalidation is the holistic consideration of the curriculum, revalidation of the suite of taught courses which comprise that subject area and research activities. The two elements of subject review and revalidation are separated into two activities with the first element (subject review) informing the second element (revalidation).

The purpose of a subject review is to:

i) discuss issues relevant to and generated by the subject area team under review
ii) consider curriculum development plans and broad proposals, which subsequently feed into the standard validation process as necessary
iii) promote the discussion of quality enhancement and innovation in course delivery within the subject area
iv) evaluate the operation of the subject area against the University regulations and quality procedures
v) consider research development plans and promote discussion of the quality of research degree provision

The review is intended to be a helpful, consultative and supportive mechanism and includes internal, student and external academic (and where appropriate) industrial input.

Where there are no planned changes to taught courses the revalidation will be confirmed as part of the subject review event. Where there are planned changes to the taught courses the subject review discussions will inform the detailed development of course changes, which will be considered by the School Accreditation and Validation Panel. Where necessary further comments would be sought from the external panel members involved in the subject review event.

Each subject area (notionally based on QAA’s JACS subject classifications and recognising School boundaries) will be reviewed at least once every five years in accordance with a programme determined by Schools and the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee on behalf of the Senate. The University’s Research Committee will be notified of the review schedule once confirmed by the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee.

2 The Format of Subject Review and Revalidation

2.1 The format of these events should normally:

i) have been preceded by an exercise arranged by Registry to evaluate the alignment of the subject area’s activities with the University’s regulations and quality procedures and following the format as detailed in Appendix D,
ii) be no longer than a day long and timed to ensure that teams are in a position to review their curriculum at a time that is sensible for course development and can be revalidated before the end of the academic year concerned,
iii) have external involvement: a panel member from outside the School, one academic representative from outside the University (to be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)/(Research and Enterprise) or nominee on behalf of the relevant Committee) who has had no close involvement with the
University in the previous three years, a student representative and, at the discretion of the review panel chair, one external representative from industry, iv) include meetings with staff and students from across the range of provision.

3 Documentation Required for Revalidation and Subject Reviews

3.1 The documentation should be submitted to Registry for distribution to the panel three-weeks before the date of the review and should comprise a self-evaluation document which should provide:

i) an overview of curriculum developments and improvements and their drivers
ii) an identification of the key issues the team wants to explore as part of the review
iii) an overview of research activities and their drivers

Evidence should be drawn from Student Panels, module evaluation, external examiner reports, peer observation of teaching and annual evaluation.

3.2 The self-evaluation document should be supported by:

i) a copy of the report of the compliance exercise together with the team’s response to that report,
ii) full set of Programme and Module Specification Documentation for the current courses delivered in the subject area under review, including copies of the current reading lists
iii) staff CVs for the subject area leader, course leaders, module leaders, all permanent teaching staff, professoriate and where relevant and possible all part-time hourly paid teaching staff
iv) the most recent annual evaluation reports (taught and research), including associated external examiner reports for taught provision and feedback forms for courses in the subject area
v) results of the most recent course evaluation exercises - plus the latest NSS and PRES results
vi) a summary of the most recent PSRB reports/engagements where relevant
vii) a sample course (taught and research provision) and module handbook

4 Reports of Revalidation and Subject Reviews

4.1 Following the review, Registry will produce a draft report for approval by the review panel. The report will normally be passed to the School within 4 weeks of the date of the event.

4.2 The subject area team will draw up a formal response (with clear actions) to the report and arrange for both to be considered by the next available Course Committee and School Board. The report and School’s response should then be submitted to the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee/University’s Research Committee.

4.3 Course teams should include specific proposals for the extent and timing of subsequent course or module changes as part of the formal response so that decisions regarding the nature of the revalidation event(s) can be determined.

4.4 Feedback on the review and action plan should be reported as part of the next annual evaluation process.