

Programme Accreditation Review Panel

● Terms of reference

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The responsibilities of the Programme Accreditation Review Panel shall be to assess and make recommendations to Council on all applications for programme accreditation. It shall also review changes to accredited programmes and make recommendations for any alterations to the process or criteria of accreditation.

Membership

The Programme Accreditation Review Panel will normally have a minimum of four and maximum of six expert members (it may be extended beyond six if there is an expectation of a large number of applications from departments in any application round).

Panel membership is for a period of three years, with the opportunity to renew for an additional three-year term. Terms of appointment are staggered to ensure continuity. The Panel may also draw upon the expertise of the Society's Research and Higher Education Committee.

One member of the Panel will be appointed as Chair, to oversee the panel's work and to mediate decisions in the event of disagreement about an application's outcome.

All Panel members will have experience of approvals and quality assurance and be expected to be up to date with current practice in higher education. This is likely to include such experience as:

- Academic lead for geography programmes
- External examiner for geography programmes
- Significant experience developing, delivering, reviewing and/or approving geography programmes (undergraduate and/or postgraduate)
- Committee member/chair at school or higher level relating to learning and teaching and/or student experience
- Membership of school or institutional course/business case approval committees
- Leading programme reviews/revalidations
- Engagement with external bodies (industry, professional bodies, etc) on matters of teaching and learning, and/or graduate outcomes
- Employer or industry liaison with HE institutions on course design, work placements and/or graduate outcomes

Frequency of meetings

The Panel meets bi-annually, in May and November. An additional meeting may be added if the volume of applications requires it. Meetings will usually take place four to six weeks after an

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application deadline, and not less than four weeks before the next meeting of the Society's Council. These meetings may be held in-person at the Society, or virtually via teleconferencing.

Quorum

The Programme Accreditation Review Panel shall be able to make a recommendation to Council on an application when at least two panelists have made and explained a consistent recommendation – either verbally at the meeting or in writing in advance. If a panelist must pull out from reviewing an application for any reason, an alternative panelist must be appointed to review the application and make a recommendation to ensure that this threshold is met.

Duties

The duties of the Panel shall be to

- Review and make recommendations to Council on programmes submitted for accreditation
- To review changes to accredited programmes
- To make recommendations to Council for any alterations to the process or criteria of accreditation.

Conflicts of interest

Members of the Panel may not have worked for, acted as an external examiner for, or have had any other personal connection to, the institution/department being assessed in the last five years. Members of the Panel will be given the opportunity to, and must declare, prior to the start of any accreditation assessment cycle, any potential conflicts of interest with the applications under consideration.

Conduct

In order that institutions and departments, the geography community and the wider public may have confidence in the accreditation scheme's impartiality and effectiveness, members of the Panel must:

- Inform the Society of any conflicts of interest as soon as practically possible
- Respect the confidentiality of the information they come into contact with in the course of acting as a Panel member
- Not use their position on the panel to advance or promote their personal, professional or business interests
- Attend all meetings at which their presence is required
- Prepare for meetings by reading all papers requested beforehand
- Be fair, open-minded, unbiased and non-prejudicial on the grounds of gender, race, disability, lifestyle, culture, beliefs, sexuality, age and not use any language that could be deemed offensive or discriminatory
- Not request or accept any inducement, gift, commission, discount or any other profit from the institution/department being assessment or from any other interested person.

Abiding by these terms is the minimum expectation of all members of the Panel. Members of the Panel who are Fellows of the Society are also expected to abide by the Society's Code of Conduct for Fellows.



Terms of this authority

This paper is approved by the Council for a period of three years after which it will automatically lapse unless renewed by the Council.

In any event, the Council may, by ordinary resolution, revoke or amend this authority as it deems fit.