

Validation Panels

Your role as Curriculum Consultant

What's a Curriculum Consultant?

Curriculum Consultants are students who are invited to sit on validation panels in order to represent their interests and provide insight into the student experience.

Your role is to provide:

- A student perspective on the course to be delivered and the academic and pastoral support that the course provides
- Input from a student perspective on issues raised during the meeting
- Input on the quality of the course information to be provided to applicants and students

What's a Validation panel?

Degree courses across all universities across the country are overseen by an organisation called the *Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)*. This organisation sets out expectations for certain *standards* that degree courses have to meet to make sure that a 'Bachelor's degree' means the same thing in all universities - so when you say you have a certain type of degree e.g. a BA, it can be assumed that you've demonstrated a certain set of skills and abilities in order to achieve that award. It also sets out expectations for *quality* that make sure that the course is well-designed so that it provides a high-quality academic experience for students. The criteria for these two expectations are outlined in a series of documents called the *Quality Code*.

When Royal Holloway wants to introduce a new degree course, there is a certain process that the designers of the course have to follow. This is to ensure that the course meets the expectations of the QAA as well as the University's own internal policies on academic quality. *Validation panels* are the final stage of this process - they are meetings that decide whether a course can be offered to new students or whether the course designers need to make changes.

Every few years, every course offered by the University has to go through the validation process again - this is called *re-validation*. This is to ensure that academic quality is maintained across the University and to update courses if necessary.

Why are Curriculum Consultants important?

Students' involvement in the design and re-validation of courses means that Royal Holloway can be sure that the courses they offer take students' needs into account and are what students really want.

Maybe this is the first time you've heard of academic quality and standards, or maybe you think you haven't got enough experience to sit on such an important panel.

However, you have crucial expertise that other members of the panel don't have – you are an expert on being a student. You're representing the students of Royal Holloway, which means you'll be able to give valuable insights and contributions that are relevant and up-to-date.

What happens on the day?

You'll be sent the panel agenda well in advance so you'll have a good idea of what will happen and at what time.

The people who will be there are:

- (Deputy) Chair of School Education Committee as Chair of the panel
- Two internal panel members, normally one from the School in which the new/revalidated course will be delivered and one from another School
- An external advisor who provides written feedback for the event. They are external to the College and have the necessary discipline-specific expertise to comment on the content, teaching, learning and assessment being proposed
- A student representative as a full member of the panel (that's you)

You'll be told exactly who they are in advance of the meeting.

What do I have to do?

The SU will invite you to a briefing meeting where we'll tell you about your role as Curriculum Consultant. There are a lot of complicated documents involved in the validation panel, so we'll summarise the most important points and give you a checklist of issues you might want to raise during the meeting.

Before the day of the panel, have a read through the checklist and Curriculum Consultants guide you'll receive at the briefing to make sure you're informed. It also might be a good idea to have a look at the panel documents – feel free to email the SU if you have any questions about them.

Remember that you're an equal member of the panel, so on the day don't be afraid to speak up if you have a comment or question. You're there for a reason and the other members of the panel will be glad to hear what you've got to say!

After the meeting, don't forget to send the SU an email telling us how it went. We want to make sure that you've had a good experience and we really value your feedback.

Good luck!