G2.1: Programme Development teams (PDTs)

This document is intended to supplement the procedural requirements set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook (Programme Approval chapter) by giving additional guidance on the role and conduct of PDTs. It covers:

1. Purpose
2. Membership
3. Staying on schedule
4. Preparing the documentation
5. Engaging with the approval panel
6. After the approval event
7. Useful links

Please also refer to the Criteria for Programme Approval and guidance on the Conduct of Approval Panels in guidance note G2.3

If you are a PDT Chair for an apprenticeship programme, please also read guidance note G7.2 available from the Quality & Standards Handbook ([Apprenticeships chapter](#)).

1   Purpose of PDTs

The primary purpose of establishing PDTs is to emphasise the importance of good programme design in the approval (or re-validation) process. Programme approval is the mechanism through which the University defines and sets the academic standards of programmes of study leading to its awards in order to meet sector expectations; and the development process must also focus on designing a learning experience of the highest possible quality for Brookes students.   The PDT provides a forum for the programme delivery team to undertake effective internal and external consultation, including input from current students, to ensure that these issues are fully taken into account in the design (or re-design) of the curriculum.

The PDT must work with relevant colleagues in the Faculty and Directorates to ensure that the programme is designed so as to:

- take cognisance of key **external reference points**, including relevant subject benchmark statements, professional body standards, [OfS sector-recognised standards](#), the [UK Quality Code for HE](#), and any other relevant discipline or industry standards;
- take into account **internal reference points**, including key University frameworks relating to inclusion and good practice in teaching, learning and assessment. In particular, you must consult your OCAED link developer to agree on an appropriate programme of engagement by the PDT with the [IDEAS model](#).
- comply with the relevant **University Regulations**, and, where necessary, an application for variation from the regulations or for the addition of a new award type must be made well in advance of the programme approval event.

- provide high quality **teaching and learning support**, including learning resources and any specialist teaching facilities, for students on the proposed programme;
- take into account the **views of stakeholders**, as appropriate to the programme under development. This may include current and former students, employers, service users, etc; but it must, as a minimum, involve consultation with at least one independent External Adviser* (see Membership below).

For **collaborative provision**, the PDT's primary focus will be the development of the programme delivery and management arrangements (working with the Institutional Liaison Manager, where the proposal relates to a cross-Faculty partnership – contact Rashmi Dravid: rdravid@brookes.ac.uk), to ensure that all aspects of the delivery and quality management of the programme have been fully considered and agreed by all parties, in advance of the approval panel meeting. The PDT may also wish to discuss aspects of the business plan for the partnership, but they should take into account the confidentiality of any financial or commercially sensitive information considered by LPAG, and consider the extent to which this information should be circulated.

A vital element of the work of the PDT is to carry out appropriate consultation on the proposal, to ensure that the programme is designed to offer the best possible educational experience. The PDT itself is made up of colleagues from within Brookes who will provide the team with advice on meeting the University's requirements, but the consultation phase also provides an opportunity to gain feedback from external academics, professionals, students, alumni, service users, and employers, and to use this feedback in an iterative design process.

2   Membership

PDTs are usually established after the business case and market analysis has been considered and approved by the Faculty Executive Group and the RAG sub-group through the new programme approval process (see https://sites.google.com/brookes.ac.uk/portfoliodevelopment/home) For collaborative provision, the PDT should have been established by the time approval of the business case is sought from the Learning Partnerships Advisory Group. The composition of the PDT is specified so as to provide an appropriate range of expertise to enable the team to develop a programme that will meet the criteria for approval; and to avoid the potential for over-reliance on individual programme leaders. The normal requirements for membership are given in the table below, but PDT Chairs are free to invite additional members to attend, as appropriate to the proposal under development.

When considering the membership of the group, PDT Chairs should bear in mind that PDTs need to be large enough to be an effective working group and able to address the full range of issues that apply to the provision under development, but not so large that decisions are difficult to make or that it is wasteful of staff/student/stakeholders' time. It may not be necessary for all members to attend every meeting: effective planning of the schedule of work for the PDT at the start of the process (see section 3 below) will ensure that members are aware of when their attendance is required so they can plan their workload around this. However, all members should be provided with agendas, draft documentation and action points for every meeting (whether or not they are required to attend), so that they are kept up to date with developments at all stages of the design and approval process.

In order to ensure they fulfil their remit (as set out in 1 above) effectively, PDT membership should include:

Chair (Nominated by the Head of School/Department - usually the Programme Lead/Subject Coordinator, or Liaison Manager)	The PDT chair should have appropriate experience of curriculum development and knowledge of the programmes approval process. They are responsible for: coordinating the work of the PDT, ensuring agreed deadlines are met, liaising with external advisers and other stakeholders, and proposing external members for the programme approval panel. For collaborative provision, the chair should be an appropriately senior member of staff (from the managing Department or School for single-Faculty partnerships), with experience of managing and/or delivering collaborative programmes.
Secretary (usually Faculty Quality Officer, Programme Administrator, or PPM, depending on who will subsequently act as panel secretary)	Responsible for keeping a record of action points arising from PDT meetings, for proposing internal approval panel members, and for coordinating the circulation of submission documents to the approval panel.
Academic staff who will be involved in the delivery of the programme	As a minimum, the leaders of all compulsory modules should be involved in the PDT. For collaborative provision, relevant personnel from the partner organisation, in particular the member of staff responsible for managing the programme, should be included For institutional partnerships, key staff from all the relevant programme teams at Brookes, who will be responsible for preparing programme documentation should be included in the main PDT – they may, however, wish to form subject-specific 'sub-PDTs' in order to explore those matters with their counterparts at the partner organisation.
External Adviser/s	At least one independent external adviser, with experience of delivering similar provision in another UK higher education institution, knowledge of current practice in teaching and learning, and, if necessary, with relevant professional expertise, or experience of managing collaborative provision. For the re-validation of existing programmes, the external examiner may be willing to fulfil this role. Usually involved by correspondence, the EA should be provided with the report proforma T2.3
Students and other **stakeholders** (e.g. alumni, employers, service users)	…should be invited to join the PDT, as appropriate

Academic Liaison Librarian	Responsible for providing advice on learning resources, and for assisting with requests for additional texts, journals, etc to support the new programme. For collaborative arrangements, the appropriate colleagues in Learning Resources should be consulted for advice on the adequacy of the partner's learning resources, and on potential access to Brookes online resources.
APQO link **Quality Assurance Officer**	Responsible for providing advice on the requirements of the programme approval process, including documentation and milestones, and for approving the membership of the programme approval panel. In particular for collaborative provision, they should be invited to all meetings – for multi-Faculty partnerships, all relevant link QAOs should be invited to attend all meetings.
OCAED link **Educational Development Consultant**	Responsible for providing advice on good practice in approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, and for arranging CDIs as necessary.
Registry link **Curriculum & Student Information Manager**	Responsible for providing advice on the programme rules and regulations and transition arrangements, in order to ensure the new provision can be set up quickly and accurately on the University records system.
Registry **Timetabling** Team	…should be consulted for advice on timetabling options for the new programme.
Faculty **Planning Partner**	… will guide you through the new business case process
Faculty **Marketing Manager**	…should be consulted on the effective marketing and promotion of the programme.
Faculty **Head of Finance & Planning** (for collaborative programmes)	Responsible for assisting with the preparation of the business case for submission to LPAG, and any subsequent negotiation and development of the financial schedule for inclusion in the contract.
Legal Services representative (for collaborative programmes)	The member of the Legal Services team who will be responsible for drawing up the contract governing the arrangements should be invited to all meetings.
UK Partnerships and **Brookes Global** teams (for collaborative programmes)	…should be consulted, as appropriate, and may wish to be represented on the PDT.
Student Investigations & Resolution Team (for collaborative programmes)	…may be consulted for advice on the procedures in place to deal with student conduct and complaints at the partner organisation
Faculty Head of QA & Validations and **Associate Dean (Education & Student Experience)**	…may wish to attend meetings, but, as a minimum, should be included in PDT circulation of documents, agendas and action points.

3   Staying on schedule

The PDT Chair is responsible for coordinating the activities of the PDT to ensure that the consultation and curriculum design process is completed, and the programme documentation prepared, within the agreed timescale leading up to the approval event. Support for ensuring actions are tracked and deadlines are met during the development phase is available from the Faculty Quality Officer and the Faculty Head of QA & Validations, and - particularly in the case of collaborative provision – the APQO link Quality Assurance Officer. PDT Chairs are accountable to the Associate Dean (Education & Student Experience) for the quality of the work of the PDT, and they may be asked to report on progress from time to time.

It is suggested that an initial meeting between the PDT Chair, link QAO, ADESE, HoQA&V and the Faculty Quality Officer should be held before (or at around the time) the PDT starts work, in order to plan a schedule of activities, agree deadlines for submission and checking of documentation, and clarify expectations at the various milestones towards approval. This is also an opportunity for the PDT Chair to ensure they have a good understanding of the approval process, including the University's criteria for approval, and to clarify any procedural or regulatory points they are uncertain about.

4   Preparing the programme documentation

A primary responsibility of the PDT is to produce the programme documentation for submission to the programme approval panel – templates are available on the [APQO website](#). The PDT Chair should establish – through discussion with the Faculty Academic Administration Manager - who will provide administrative support for the PDT. The PDT secretary should ensure that PDT members are kept informed of developments and action points, and assist in the preparation and circulation of documentation. The Faculty Quality Officer is likely to be responsible for co-ordinating the approval event, and is likely to be the Panel Officer (except, for collaborative provision the APQO link QAO will take this role, with administrative support from the Faculty), but they may not be the person supporting individual PDTs. In any case, it is the PDT Chair's responsibility to ensure that the documentation is produced to the required standard for submission to the approval panel.

It is a very important PDT task to ensure that programme specifications, programme handbooks and module descriptions are consistent with one another; and that they fully and accurately reflect the learning experience that will be provided for students on the programme, bearing in mind that they form a significant part of the 'learning contract' between the University and the student. For collaborative provision, the Operations Manual is an additional key document in respect of governing the quality of delivery.

The key documents which may be required by an approval panel are:

Submission document (use template T2.6)
The submission document helps an approval panel to understand a proposal and its context, giving a concise, evaluative account of how and why the programme has been designed in the way it has (based around the University's criteria for approval set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook); and enabling them to make an informed judgement on the merits of the proposal.

The submission document is intended to be a brief cover document to introduce the proposal, and, while references may be made to relevant sections of the Programme Specification or the Programme Handbook, they should not be reproduced in full. The submission document is produced only for the approval event, and has no life beyond this, so no references should be made to the submission document in any of the programme documentation.

Operations Manual – for collaborative provision (use template T5.5 a or b, as appropriate)
An Operations Manual is required for each collaborative programme - or one per set of cognate programmes delivered by a single partner.

It forms part of the legal agreement governing the partnership and sets out the parameters for delivery of the approved programme/s. The main functions of the Operations Manual are:
    i.   to provide a reference point for approval panels to assess the suitability of the proposed arrangements and the partner's capacity to fulfill its obligations;
    ii.   to assist in the day to day management of the collaboration by setting out the responsibilities of academic and administrative staff at the University and the partner/s involved in the collaborative arrangement;
    iii.   to enable the University to demonstrate consistency with the expectations of the UK Quality Code, in respect of assuring the quality of the academic experience and protecting the standards of the awards made through the partnership.

The PDT is collectively responsible for ensuring that the Operations Manual accurately and comprehensively describes how the proposed collaborative arrangements will operate in practice; and that it is consistent with the programme handbook and other definitive programme information. The Operations Manual is essentially a handbook for staff (at Brookes and the partner) - it must be tailored to the context, and written clearly, so that all parties are clear as to the scope of their responsibilities and the standards they are expected to work to (remembering that it will be a key reference point in the event of any issues with the quality of the provision, and will inform any associated improvement action planning).

Programme Specification (use template T2.7, in conjunction with guidance G2.2)
The PS is essentially a summary description of the programme, which serves as the approved 'contract' between the University, as awarding body, and the delivering Department/School; and also provides concise information about a programme of study to potential applicants, students, employers, and other stakeholders. PSs are published on the APQO website, and are an important part of the University's key information set about the programmes of study it offers.

Programme handbook (use template T2.9 if not provided with a Faculty template by the HoQA&V)

The programme handbook contains full details of the programme delivery and assessment arrangements (augmenting the outline contained in the PS), and may be considered as a key element of the contract between the University and students on the programme. It should be addressed to students, in a clear and informative style, to give them an accurate picture of the demands of the programme, and their learning support entitlements while studying at Brookes.

Module descriptors (use template T2.8)

The template for module descriptors should be downloaded from the APQO website to ensure that you are always using the most up to date template. This is particularly important in the context of changing sector requirements (e.g. CMA) for information provided to students and applicants.

Request for Change form (use template T2.13)

This should be included if any changes to existing modules are being proposed as a consequence of the introduction of the new provision. Closure forms for any programmes being replaced by the new provision should also be provided with the submission.

Online teaching materials

For programmes which are to be delivered, in whole or substantial part, by distance or e-learning, a selection of teaching materials must be provided, and a demonstration of the VLE included in the programme for the approval meeting. A minimum of two modules should be fully worked up so that the panel is able to make a judgement on the learning experience that will be provided through the proposed mode of study

Professional bodies

For professionally accredited programmes, the PSRB may require additional documentation which should also be included in the submission.

NOTE: PDT records should take the form of notes and action points to help the team to carry out its work, but their use is limited to the PDT itself, and minutes should *not* be submitted to the panel with the programme documentation.

All documentation must be carefully scrutinised by the PDT and signed off as complete by the ADESE and/or HoQA&V, with advice from the link QAO, before submission to the panel. The documentation – which may be provided in hard copy or electronically, as agreed with the Panel Chair and Officer - should be received by the panel at least 2 weeks in advance of the event.

5   Engaging with the panel at the approval event

As well as ensuring that the programme documentation accurately reflects the student learning experience, the PDT Chair is also responsible for ensuring that the team is prepared for presenting the proposal to the approval panel. Refer to guidance note G2.3 on the *Conduct of approval panels*, available on the APQO web pages, to help with this. This guidance note states that "*panels and programme teams must recognise that they have a shared responsibility for identifying and solving any problems with new proposals, and discussions must therefore be conducted in a collegial and inclusive way*".

Members of the PDT should therefore come along to the meeting ready to contribute to a constructive dialogue with the panel about the proposal, and should not feel defensive. The

approval panel will be provided with contextual documentation, such as the relevant subject benchmark statements or professional standards, but, other than the external/s, the panel members will not be subject specialists in the area – remember that members of the PDT are the subject experts and therefore have a responsibility to help the panel to understand, for example, why the curriculum content and structure, or approach to teaching and assessment, is appropriate in the context of the discipline and reflects current University enhancement agendas.

6   After the approval event

The PDT itself is effectively disbanded at the point of the approval event; however, the PDT Chair is responsible for ensuring that any conditions set by the panel are addressed satisfactorily - working with the Faculty Quality Officer, Faculty HoQA&V, and link QAO to ensure the response is ready for submission to the Panel Chair for sign off. Once this has been done, the programme can be set up on the University records system and recruitment can commence. Once the programme has been fully approved (which will be confirmed by the link QAO), the PDT is replaced by the normal programme delivery structures within the Department/School or partner organisation.

7 Useful links

External reference points:
- **Office for Students conditions of registration (see B conditions, including TEF)**
https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/registration-with-the-ofs-a-guide/conditions-of-registration/

- **OfS Sector recognised standards**
https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/53821cbf-5779-4380-bf2a-aa8f5c53ecd4/sector-recognised-standards.pdf

- **The UK Quality Code for HE**
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code

- **Professional body standards**, as relevant

Internal reference points:
- **IDEAS model**
https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/student-support/ideas-model

- **University Regulations (and policies such as Assessment & Feedback Policy)**
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/

- **Brookes Attributes**
Please see table in appendix below for descriptors of Brookes Attributes by qualification level.

- **Student support and wellbeing**
https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/support

- **Quality & Standards Handbook**
https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook

APPENDIX – BROOKES ATTRIBUTES BY QUALIFICATION LEVEL

Graduate Attributes

Every undergraduate programme will include the development of the following five core graduate attributes:

a) Academic literacy	Disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills, understanding the epistemology and 'landscape' of the discipline, and what it means to think and behave as a member of that disciplinary and/or professional community of practice.
b) Research literacy	Ability to be a critical consumer of research, and also, where possible, to design and undertake at least a small-scale research project in the discipline, using appropriate methodology.
c) Critical self-awareness and personal literacy	Understanding how one learns, the ability to assess the work of oneself and others, and to identify one's strengths and weaknesses. The ability to organise oneself and perform as an autonomous, effective and independent learner. The ability to relate to other people and function collaboratively in diverse groups, including the development of appropriate interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and adaptive expertise.
d) Digital and information literacy	The functional access, skills and practices necessary to become a confident, agile adopter of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. To be able to use appropriate technology to search for high-quality information; critically to evaluate and engage with the information obtained; reflect on and record learning, and professional and personal development; and engage productively in relevant online communities.
e) Active citizenship	Students prepared to proactively engage with both local and global communities. Knowledge of the local and global perspectives of one's discipline. Critical awareness of the complexity of diverse perspectives, cultures and values and the ability to question one's own perspective and those of others. Ability to use knowledge and skills to improve society through actively engaging with issues of equity, sustainability and social justice.

Foundation Degree Attributes

Every Foundation degree programme will include the development of the following five core attributes:

a) Academic literacy	Disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills, understanding how to apply this in the work context, and what is means to think and behave as a member of that disciplinary and/or professional community of practice.
b) Research literacy	Ability to be a critical consumer of research, and also, where possible, to design and undertake a small-scale research project in the discipline, using appropriate methodology. Collects and synthesizes information to inform problem solving in familiar contexts.
c) Critical self-awareness and personal literacy	Understanding how one learns, the ability to assess the work of oneself and others, and to identify one's strengths and weaknesses. The ability to take responsibility for personal and professional learning, identifying opportunities for lifelong learning and developing oneself as a versatile, adaptable and confident practitioner. The ability to relate to other people and function collaboratively in diverse groups and situations.
d) Digital and information literacy	The functional access, skills and practices necessary to become a confident, agile, adopter of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. To be able to use appropriate technology to search for high-quality information; critically evaluate and engage with the information obtained; reflect on and record learning, and professional and personal development; and engage productively in relevant online communities.
e) Active citizenship	Students prepared to actively engage with both local and global communities. The ability to understand the local and global context of one's work. Awareness of diverse perspectives, cultures and values and the confidence to question one's own perspective and those of others. Informed about issues of equity, sustainability and social justice.

Postgraduate Attributes

Every postgraduate programme, or element of, should include the development of a range of the following five core postgraduate graduate attributes as appropriate to the discipline:

a) Academic literacy	Advanced disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills moving beyond the emerging professional to becoming an expert member of the relevant community. This should include the ability to engage in current critical debates within the discipline and the ability to communicate complex ideas to both expert and non-expert audiences, even in the absence of a complete set of data.
b) Research literacy	The ability to design and undertake a research project in the discipline, use appropriate methodology and solve complex problems in novel situations. Awareness of current research within the discipline, and the ability to critically evaluate it.
c) Critical self-awareness and personal literacy	Demonstrate commitment to continuous self-improvement. To include the ability to lead and organise self and others; take personal responsibility in unpredictable and complex situations; make sound and appropriate decisions; to inspire and interact with others in diverse environments.
d) Digital and information literacy	The functional access, skills and practices necessary to become a confident, agile adopter of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. To be able to use appropriate technology to search for high-quality information; critically to evaluate and engage with the information obtained; reflect on and record learning, and professional and personal development; and engage productively in relevant online communities.
e) Active citizenship	Students prepared to lead both local and global communities. Knowledge of the local and global perspectives of one's discipline. Critical awareness of the complexity of diverse perspectives, cultures and values and the ability to question one's own perspective and those of others. Ability to use knowledge and skills to improve society through actively engage with issues of equity, sustainability and social justice.