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Report of the Review of Higher Education Programmes in the Horticulture and Landscape Subject Group

Held at SRUC Oatridge Campus on 15th and 16th February 2017

Incorporating revalidation of:

- **BSc (Hons) Horticulture**
- **BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship**
- **BSc (Hons) Garden and Greenspace Design**

1 Review and Revalidation Panel

Dr Kyrsten Black	Assistant Principal Higher Education, SRUC [Convenor]
Mr Neil Cummings	Regional Business Manager (Scotland, Northern Ireland & Ireland) The Horticultural Trades Association
Mrs Caroline Daniel	Programme Leader Agriculture, SRUC Aberdeen Campus
Ms Gemma Jones	SRUC Students' Association Vice President
Mr Mick Lavelle	Senior Lecturer in Landscape Management, Writtle University College
Dr Matthew Williamson	Director of Learning & Teaching Centre, University of Glasgow
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2 Introduction

2.1 The following programmes were under review:

- HNC/HND/BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture
- HND/BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship
- BSc/BSc (Hons) Garden and Greenspace Design
- HND Garden Design
- HNC Landscape Management

The BSc/BSc (Hons) programmes are validated by the University of Glasgow. The Higher National (HNC/HND) awards are validated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The undergraduate degrees were last validated in 2010-11 (except Garden and Greenspace Design which was first validated in 2012) and the HN provision in 2014-15.

SQA's current approach is to maintain the currency of awards though incremental change rather than major revalidation after a set number of years. It was reported in the documentation that a number of minor revisions have been implemented since revalidation in October 2014. Taking into account the status of the HN provision as years 1 and 2 of the associated degrees, the programme team are proposing further minor changes. Although these have yet to be implemented they have been accepted by all Colleges delivering HNC level provision in Scotland who are members of the SQA Consortium for Horticulture which includes a SQA representative. It was noted that this will not require a validation event by SQA.

The programmes under review are offered at four of SRUC's campuses – Ayr, Edinburgh, Elmwood and Oatridge. During the time covered by the review Ayr has delivered Horticulture to HND level; Elmwood and Oatridge delivered Horticulture to HNC level; and Edinburgh[1] has delivered HNC/D Horticulture, HND Garden Design, HND Horticulture with Plantsmanship, BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture and BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship. The degree programme in Garden and Greenspace Design was introduced in 2013-14 and is also delivered at the Edinburgh campus.

2.2 The Department also offers the following further education (FE) provision at SCQF Levels 4, 5 and 6:

- NC Introduction to Horticulture (Elmwood)
- NC Horticulture (Elmwood and Oatridge)
- NC Horticulture with Landscape Construction (Oatridge)
- SVQ3 Parks, Gardens and Green Spaces (Elmwood and Oatridge)
- SVQ3 Landscaping (Oatridge)
- SVQ2 Horticulture (Elmwood and Oatridge)
- SVQ2 Production Horticulture (Elmwood)
- SVQ2 Landscaping (Oatridge)
- Introduction to Rural Skills (Elmwood and Oatridge)

2.3 The Self Evaluation Document (SED) and the revalidation documentation (one document to cover all three programmes) were written by the Ayr and Edinburgh campus Programme Leader, Douglas Coltart. There had been little involvement of other Programme Leaders in the planning and preparation for review and revalidation. Current students had not been directly involved in the production of the SED, although a survey of past students was undertaken to ascertain general views on their satisfaction with the course and the content. It was indicated by the team that a survey of current students had taken place - however, this was not evident in the documentation. The documents referred to in the SED which should have been available to the panel electronically were not fully provided.

2.4 The review and revalidation process extended over two days. Essentially the first day was used to consider the review of the existing programmes and the second day to consider the proposals for revalidation of the awards, although there was inevitably overlap between the discussions. During the course of the event the panel had five meetings with staff (the team) and one meeting with students – details are provided in Appendix 1. (It should be noted that the majority of the students were from the Edinburgh campus whereas a representative group from all campuses was requested.) Inevitably, many topics were discussed at more than one meeting and the

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[1] HND/BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship is delivered at the Edinburgh campus in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE).

report is therefore structured by topic rather than as an account of each meeting separately.

2.5 The numbers of students (as FTEs) on each year of the HE programmes for the last five academic years, up to and including 2016-17, is provided in Appendix 2.

3 Review of Provision

3.1 Liaison with Industry

The panel explored the extent to which the team engaged with the relevant sections of the horticulture industry and the impact that this had on curriculum content, the student learning experience and continuing professional development of staff. The panel were content that there was a range of industry liaison activities taking place across all campuses and involving all levels of provision. For example staff engagement with committees/groups, industry representatives providing input to teaching delivery through a series of short talks, and career advice from employers both on campus and as part of the annual Grow Careers event. However, the extent of these activities had not been evident in the SED and there should have been wider engagement with the industry e.g. retail, growing, landscaping and heritage/conservation gardening. The students were generally positive about engagement with industry within the programme.

The team reported that these activities, together with the survey of graduates who were now employed in the industry, provided an indication that the needs of industry were being met through the curriculum. The panel felt that this had not been sufficiently evidenced and that industry requirements/expectations must be considered when fulfilling the **condition** of revalidation that the team must review the general and programme-specific aims of the degree provision (see also 4.1).

The panel **strongly recommended** as part of revalidation that the team reflect on the needs of landscape businesses where there is a strong demand for employees and consider the development of higher level qualifications such as Graduate Apprenticeships.

3.2 Assessment and feedback to students

Learning outcomes were clearly described in the unit specifications and module descriptors, and were articulated to students through teaching plans at the start of a unit/module. This provided information on the assessment process in terms of the nature and variety of assessments however the response from the students regarding their perceptions of assessment style did not convey this breadth of practice. This was further discussed with the team during revalidation as indicated in 4.6.

Students and staff indicated some concerns about the, almost inevitable, clustering of assessments at the end of a block/term/semester and the impact that this has on workload. Students also raised concerns about assessment dates being changed at short notice with apparently little consideration of other assessments or personal commitments. It was noted that although students were provided with a teaching plan for individual units/modules not all cohorts, particularly at the Edinburgh campus, were then issued with a summative assessment schedule by the Year Tutor. The team indicated that for some cohorts an assessment diary to be completed by the student or a recommendation to use the calendar in Moodle to track assessment requirements were alternative options. However, the panel felt that there needed to be a consistent approach in line with SRUC expectations and therefore **recommended** that further consideration should be given to managing the volume and scheduling of student work

across an academic year and that all student groups are provided with an assessment schedule for the block/term/semester by their Year Tutor.

Students also indicated that there was some localised significant variation in the quality and timing of feedback on assessments. Students at Ayr, Elmwood and Oatridge were generally happy with the feedback they received which was helpful and prompt whereas students at the Edinburgh campus expressed concerns about the variability in approach. Alongside examples of good practice in providing feedback including encouraging student engagement with their feedback there were issues around significant delays in providing timely feedback particularly in year 3, and some concerns from the student groups that they did not always see assessment scripts for SQA units. The panel **recommended** that the team should therefore take measures to clarify and to better manage student expectations on the timing of feedback and that this should be clearly articulated in programme handbooks, annually at induction and at appropriate stages in unit/module delivery. It was also **recommended** that the team consider the nature of feedback provided to the students and encourage active engagement with feedback on assessment performance.

3.3 Learning and teaching

There was limited opportunity to explore the range of learning and teaching approaches employed within the delivery of these programmes as part of the review event. It was noted that the survey of former students conducted as part of the review indicated satisfaction with learning and teaching. The students who met the panel indicated the good links with industry which resulted for example in visiting speakers and student visits but there was a perception, particularly at degree years 3 and 4, that the variety of learning and teaching approaches was limited.

There was further discussion on learning and teaching approaches during the revalidation event in relation to the module descriptors for years 3 and 4. There did appear to be a preponderance of lectures although discussion with the team did indicate that this was not actually the style of delivery used. The panel noted that it was important to amend the descriptors to provide accurate information on the learning and teaching approach (see 4.6).

The deliberations of the panel highlighted some key activities that would promote and enhance learning and teaching practice and therefore **recommended** that the team should consider the opportunities to share and disseminate good and innovative learning, teaching and assessment practices. The panel also **recommended** that involvement of teaching staff in relevant areas of pedagogic research and staff development should be further promoted together with engagement in sector activities such as those provided by the College Development Network, the Higher Education Academy and by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland through the Enhancement Themes.

3.4 Feedback from students

The ways in which students were encouraged to provide feedback on their experience of studying at SRUC, both formal and informal, were discussed with both staff and students. The team provided several examples, from all campuses, of actions they had taken in response to student feedback and indicated that these were fed back to the student cohorts - as "you said, we did". However, there was a lack of programme management minutes provided to the panel that should have given the evidence of the feedback loop. The team also indicated that some issues/challenges were out with their control and required action by teams in other departments e.g. delayed feedback on assessments within the *Research Skills and Data Analysis* module.

The students who met with the panel commented favourably on the effectiveness of opportunities to provide informal feedback on their student experience but again indicated that there was variation across campuses in providing a "you said, we did" response to formal feedback mechanisms. Some students at the Edinburgh campus expressed concerns that their feedback was not always considered and then addressed where appropriate, particularly around collaboration between SRUC and Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE) staff.

The panel noted that feedback from the National Students Survey and from internal 'new student' and 'end of year' surveys had not been adequately addressed in the SED. There was also limited evidence of the use of unit/module evaluations. Whilst SRUC is currently developing a new online unit/module evaluation via the VLE, Moodle, paper-based evaluations are available and their use should be encouraged.

3.5 Student achievement, progression and articulation

The team explained the range of activities undertaken at Elmwood and Oatridge to promote and encourage progression to HNC from NC/SVQ provision at these campuses and also to HND or Degree level study at the Edinburgh campus. There was also the potential for articulation, generally to the Edinburgh campus, from other colleges delivering NC and HNC Horticulture programmes.

The panel were interested to explore the development of skills and attributes during the Higher National years of the programmes to assist and nurture transition to degree level study, and also the support provided on entering year three where a student may be articulating from another college. Both staff and students recognised that this is a step up in terms of learning and study skills and in assessment expectations. The students expressed the view that they should all be treated as degree students from enrolment on year one regardless of whether they were HNC/D or degree registered and therefore supported with that aspiration in mind. However, they again indicated an inconsistent approach across the three degree programmes with variability in e.g. raising awareness of plagiarism, use of referencing at SQA level, the use of formative assessments at all levels of provision, and the opportunities for extended writing in the early years of the programmes.

In light of these discussions the panel **recommended** that the team further encourage and support progression within the programmes, including from Ayr, Elmwood and Oatridge to HND or degree level study at the Edinburgh campus. Specifically in relation to SQA assessments, the panel **recommended** that staff should be encouraged to grade all appropriate assignments (currently only the Graded Units are given a grade) and therefore provide enhanced feedback and help prepare students for degree level study.

At the Oatridge campus, the normal practice is to only deliver the 12 SQA Credits that comprise the HNC Horticulture with the additional three SQA Units (three Credits) available to students who indicate early in the academic year that they would wish to progress to HND and potentially degree level study. Students who indicate later in the year that they wish to progress may not be able to achieve the additional three credits and will therefore require to complete 18 credits during year two (students have to complete 30 SQA Credits to achieve an HND). To help facilitate and encourage progression from HNC Horticulture at Oatridge the panel **strongly recommended** as part of the revalidation that consideration is given to developing the SQA units which would assist progression from HNC Horticulture at Oatridge potentially utilising an online/distance learning format.

3.6 Student support

The panel explored the provision of both academic and pastoral support and the role of the Year Tutor with staff and students. From the student perspective there was again some perceived inconsistency for Edinburgh students, particularly for those enrolled on the Horticulture with Plantsmanship programme who felt that there was a different approach to academic and pastoral support from RBGE staff in comparison to some SRUC staff. This view was not recognised by the team (and it should also be noted that some students said that the support they received was exceptional); however there was a lack of critical appraisal of the year tutor system in the SED. Generally the feeling from the students at the Edinburgh campus was also that the programme was presented as single academic years with an exit point at the end of each year, rather than a degree programme with 'natural' progression from year to year (this links to the discussion under 3.5). Therefore the panel **recommended** that the team take measures to ensure a consistent and structured approach to student support provided by Year Tutors, including the emphasis on personal development planning through the four years.

3.7 Core skills and graduate attributes

The panel briefly explored the development of graduate attributes with the team. It was noted that a specific aim of the Horticulture and Horticulture with Plantsmanship degrees was *to prepare students for employment through developing effective leadership and organisational skills, and an ability to work independently and as part of a* team - all of which is included within SRUC Graduate Attributes. The panel felt that the evidence was not sufficiently provided and that it should be a **condition** of revalidation that the team provide a matrix showing the development of graduate attributes for each programme (cross reference to 4.3).

3.8 Work experience and practical skills

The panel explored the extent to which practical skills were developed within the programmes. The team provided a wide range of examples on development of practical skills, both within the curriculum and through student engagement with volunteering activities and work experience. The extent of these activities had not been strongly evident in the SED. However, the panel was content that practical skills were developed although some of the feedback from the student group contradicted the team response.

The student group did indicate that they undertook volunteering work to gain additional practical experience although they felt that the opportunities could be expanded and more widely available, particularly in degree years 3 and 4, through a more formal and supported structure. The panel therefore **recommended** that the team further encourage students at all campuses to engage with volunteering activities and to undertake work experience to develop practical skills. This could include discussion with the SRUC Students' Association who could formalise and fund activities through a skills club/society.

3.9 Staff development

There was very little opportunity to discuss this with the team apart from a brief discussion on professional development through the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education. The panel **recommended** that staff should be encouraged and supported to undertake teaching qualifications as appropriate.

4   Revalidation proposals

Introduction

The team outlined the proposed changes to the programmes which were detailed in the revalidation document and supplemented by additional information provided to the panel.

Year 1 - all programmes

There was no proposed change to the Year 1 structure. This consists of 14 SQA Units providing 15 SQA Credits (120 SCQF credits). There are eight core units, one of which is a two credit unit, which are common to all three degree programmes. Horticulture and Horticulture with Plantsmanship students then study the same six SQA Units to complete the HN Year 1. Students wishing to progress to HND Garden Design study a different six SQA units.

HND/BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture

- No proposed change to Year 2. This consists of 10 SQA units as core and five elective units. All are single credit units.

- Years 3 and 4 to be amended to simplify the structure by removing the three streams which currently exist (Production Horticulture; Gardens and Greenspace; General Horticulture) and by reducing the extensive choice of elective modules in the current framework to only those elective modules that are commonly selected by the students.

HND/BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship

- In Year 2 it was proposed to remove the unit *Business Management: an Introduction* and replace it with *Data Collection and Handling Methods*.

- There was no change proposed for Year 3.

- The structure of Year 4 would also be simplified to reduce the extensive list of elective modules. It was proposed to change *Plant Biotic Interactions* from elective to core and *Topical Issues* from core to elective. The module *Heritage Garden Conservation* would be retitled as *Conservation of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.*

HND Garden Design leading to BSc/BSc (Hons) Garden and Greenspace Design

- There was no change proposed for Year 2.

- The only change proposed in Year 3 is a change in title for the module *Environmental Science for Garden and Greenspace Design* which would now be *Environmental Aspects for Garden and Greenspace Design*.

- There was no change proposed for Year 4.

HNC Landscape Management

- There was no change proposed for this provision.

4.1   Overall aims, and programme-specific aims and objectives

The panel were concerned that the three degree programmes were not sustainable in terms of both financial and educational viability.

The panel was therefore interested to explore the general (overall) aims of the programmes and how these aims were met. Also the distinction between the three

degree programmes and how they could be differentiated through their programme-specific aims. It was noted that currently the programme-specific aims for BSc (Hons) Horticulture are identical to those for BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship. Discussion with the team gave a clear indication to the panel that the programmes were distinct and provided graduates with a different set of skills and attributes to fill the needs of industry in these three areas of horticulture. There had been challenges with students transferring between the Horticulture with Plantsmanship and the Horticulture programmes and the team had taken various steps to address this as part of the recruitment and admissions process. However, the panel agreed with the team that this flexibility to transfer between the programmes should still be available to all students in year one supported by advice from the Year Tutor.

There did, however, still appear to be a lack of clarity for the students particularly in the early years of the programmes and therefore the panel felt that it was essential to provide students with the Unique Selling Points for each programme and the job opportunities that they provide. This will be further addressed in section 4.3.

The panel made it a **condition** of revalidation that the team reviews the general and programme-specific aims to ensure that they clearly reflect the differentiation between the programmes. The SED did not clearly indicate that these general and programme-specific aims had been considered fully against external reference points such as the QAA Subject Benchmark statements and considering feedback from industry. This must be carried out as part of this **condition** of revalidation.

4.2 Structure of programme frameworks

The panel was generally content with the three programme frameworks as outlined in the Introduction above and in relation to the discussion regarding the distinct nature of each programme. It is standard practice for degree programmes to include a free choice elective in years 3 and 4, subject to availability and timetabling. The panel made it a **condition** of revalidation for all three degree programmes that this is clearly indicated in the frameworks.

There were two curriculum areas that the panel explored in more depth - business and geographic information systems (GIS).

The team proposed to remove the unit *Business Management: an Introduction* from year two of the Horticulture with Plantsmanship programme. Discussion with the team indicated that this was mainly due to the unit being delivered by another department to a number of programmes at the Edinburgh campus resulting in negative feedback from the Horticulture with Plantsmanship students. The panel advised that although business may be an unpopular topic removing it from the programme is doing the students a dis-service for the future. The team were in favour of finding a solution to retaining this second year unit and in contextualising the delivery of the year one business unit. The panel **strongly recommended** as part of the revalidation that within the proposal for minor changes to the HN provision further consideration is given to the delivery and contextualisation of the two SQA Units, *Preparing to Start a Business* and *Business Management: an Introduction.*

Further to the discussion on the importance of business as a theme within the Horticulture with Plantsmanship degree programme it was **recommended** that the team consider being more explicit in demonstrating where business is embedded in non-business unit/modules within this programme (see also 4.3).

The panel also **recommended** that the team consider the inclusion of *Advanced Case Studies* as an elective in year 3 of BSc Horticulture.

The development of understanding of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was also discussed with the team. The module *GIS and Remote Sensing* is only an option in year 4 for Horticulture with Plantsmanship students and not included in the frameworks for Horticulture and for Garden and Greenspace Design. Both the team and panel agreed that this is an important skill for all horticulture students and would be better placed in year 3 of all programmes. The reason for its unavailability to Horticulture students in year 3 was discussed and it was felt that the team should have made a strong case for its delivery in the third year through both the SED and the revalidation document. Therefore the panel **recommended** that the team further examine the delivery of the module *GIS and Remote Sensing* within the suite of horticulture degrees.

4.3 Development of themes within the programmes

Within the revalidation documentation, and also as an additional submission during the discussions, the team had provided a matrix indicating academic progression within the curriculum based on programme themes. It was not clearly apparent how these themes were developed as the matrix included both core and elective units/modules. It was noted that when preparing the revalidation documentation there is an expectation that teams review and clarify the academic purpose of the programme, including the general and specific aims and objectives (as noted in 4.1). This then allows the definition of the characteristic competences which include the key knowledge, skills and graduate attributes which the students are expected to develop over the four years. The panel therefore made it a **condition** of revalidation that for each programme and spanning all four years of delivery the team provide a matrix that clearly shows the development of subject themes (as listed in the updated submission to the panel) within the core units/modules.

Furthermore, the panel made it a **condition** of revalidation that the team conduct a similar exercise for graduate attributes and provide, for each programme and spanning all four years of delivery, a matrix which clearly shows the development of graduate attributes within the core units/modules. (Cross reference to 3.7.)

As well as providing evidence that the general and specific aims of the programmes have been met and that the characteristic competences of the students should be developed, these matrices should assist the team in identifying Unique Selling Points for each programme. They should also help when advising students who are considering which of the programmes will best meet their aspirations for curriculum content and career opportunities.

4.4 RBGE Diploma in Plantsmanship

The team indicated that the RBGE Diploma in Plantsmanship helps students to focus on their studies and develops their identity. The Diploma is studied over two years, with year one providing the RBGE Certificate in Plantsmanship. Note that students who transfer from the Horticulture or Garden Design programmes to Horticulture with Plantsmanship at the end of year one can still achieve the Certificate during their second (HND) year. Feedback from students indicated that they clearly enjoy the demands of the RBGE Diploma but that staff should recognise the sheer volume of work and the totality of student effort that this demands alongside the HND qualification. The panel felt that there did not appear to be complete clarity for the students that this was an additional qualification and they could study HND Horticulture with Plantsmanship without undertaking either the RBGE Diploma or Certificate.

The panel made it a **condition** of revalidation that the team give consideration to the additional workload created by offering the RBGE Diploma and Certificate alongside

the HND Horticulture with Plantsmanship. It must be clear to the students that the RBGE courses are additional and not an essential element of the SQA HND qualification.

4.5 Recruitment and Marketing

The panel were content that the team were very active and innovative in recruitment and marketing of the horticulture programmes, including wide use of social media. The team had worked hard to promote career opportunities in the horticultural industries to women and the student enrolments on the programmes were currently showing a good male/female balance. The team were heavily promoting the horticulture programmes to schools including within the delivery of Introduction to Rural Skills at both Elmwood and Oatridge campuses. The panel **commended** the team on the time devoted to, and the effectiveness of, promoting the programmes - including the involvement of students in preparing promotional material and acting as ambassadors for a career in the industry.

Further discussion with the panel indicated that there could be the potential to expand the provision of a formal qualification in rural skills to schools and it was **recommended** that the team consider the delivery of Introduction to Rural Skills from the Edinburgh campus.

The panel also further discussed the demographics of the student groups with the team and it was recognised that the team had worked positively on addressing the gender imbalance and were also taking steps to attract more school leavers to the programmes. It was **recommended** that the team consider how they can further attract a more diverse student population to horticulture programmes and development of a basic marketing strategy would help with this. Greater involvement with all areas of the horticulture industry could enhance the promotion of the programmes.

4.6 Module Descriptors

The panel approved the two proposed changes in module title i.e. *Conservation of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* and *Environmental Aspects for Garden and Greenspace Design*.

The issues around assessment types was discussed mainly during the review meetings (3.2) but was considered again by the panel during revalidation deliberations. The module descriptors indicated clearly that students were exposed to different types of assessment. The panel therefore **recommended** that the team document the range of assessments employed during years 3 and 4 of each programme. This would be beneficial to the team in ensuring that there was a similar balance of assessment type for each programme and could be useful in discussions with students about their perceptions of assessment style.

The panel noted that many of the descriptors were well written and the inclusion of information on graduate attributes was commended. However, there was some variability and the panel therefore made it a **condition** of revalidation that modules under the control of these programmes should be reviewed to ensure that all were updated in accordance with the degree module descriptor template. This will provide:

- information on the development, and where appropriate the assessment, of core skills and graduate attributes;

- details of appropriate reading in refereed journals and review articles;

- details on the approaches to learning and teaching which will be employed;

- clear guidelines on the assessment structure (the word 'typically' should not be used), including word limits where appropriate.

5   Summary of review and recommendations

The panel considered the standard of the documentation provided by the team. This was a weak document which did not fully reflect the requirements of SRUC institution-led review and therefore did not provide sufficient information across the department as a whole. In addition the supplementary information provided in electronic format to the panel was incomplete.

The documentation therefore significantly undersold the work within the HE programmes in the department. Although discussions with the team generated additional supportive information that should have been provided in the Self Evaluation Document, the student group who met with the panel indicated significant variability in their responses regarding the quality of their learning and teaching experience particularly at the Edinburgh campus.

There were also various topics that the panel had wished to explore further with the team in relation to the review e.g. staff development, learning and teaching approaches and graduate attributes, but prolonged discussions around some areas limited the time available.

The panel therefore made it a **requirement** of the review that the team prepare and submit a revised Self Evaluation Document **by Friday 29th September 2017**. This document should be prepared through a team approach and must address the full expectations of review, with the exception of sections that will be addressed in meeting the conditions of revalidation.

The panel also made the following advisory **recommendations** which should be implemented prior to further review - additional details and the context for these can be found in the sections referenced:

a) that further consideration should be given to managing the volume and scheduling of student work across an academic year and that all student groups are provided with an assessment schedule for the block/term/semester by their Year Tutor. [3.2]

b) that the team should take measures to clarify and to better manage student expectations on the timing of feedback. This should be clearly articulated in programme handbooks, annually at induction and at appropriate stages in unit/module delivery. [3.2]

c) that the team consider the nature of feedback provided to the students and encourage active engagement with feedback on assessment performance. [3.2] This includes encouraging the grading of appropriate HN assessments, in addition to the Graded Units, across all campuses to therefore provide enhanced feedback and support for progression to degree level study. [3.5]

d) that the team should consider the opportunities to share and disseminate good and innovative learning, teaching and assessment practices. [3.3]

e) that involvement of teaching staff in relevant areas of pedagogic research and staff development should be further promoted. Engagement with sector activities should be further encouraged e.g. QAA Enhancement Themes, College Development Network and the Higher Education Academy. [3.3]

f) that the team further encourage and support progression within the programmes, including from Ayr, Elmwood and Oatridge to HND or degree level study at the Edinburgh campus. [3.5]

g) that the team take measures to ensure a consistent and structured approach to student support provided by Year Tutors, including the emphasis on personal development planning through the four years. [3.6]

h) that the team further encourage students at all campuses to engage with volunteering activities and to undertake work experience to develop practical skills. [3.8]

i) that staff should be encouraged and supported to undertake teaching qualifications as appropriate. [3.9]

6   Revalidation conclusions, conditions and recommendations

6.1   Subject to the team fully addressing the conditions set out in section 6.2 below, the panel agreed to recommend to the SRUC Academic Board and the Academic Standards Committee of the University of Glasgow that the BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture, BSc/BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship and BSc/BSc (Hons) Garden and Greenspace Design should be revalidated as awards of the University of Glasgow for six years from session 2017-18.

The panel set six conditions and made nine recommendations which are listed below in paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 (further details and context for these can be found in the earlier sections which are referenced in square brackets).

6.2   The revalidation panel had concerns about some aspects of the proposals and set the following **conditions**:

a) The general aims and programme-specific aims should be reviewed by the team to provide clarity between each programme. This review must consider the relevant external reference points, industry requirements/ expectations and the curriculum being offered. [3.1;4.1]

b) All three degrees should include the option, in years 3 and 4, for students to select one elective module as a free choice from those on offer at their campus, subject to availability and timetabling. [4.2]

c) For each programme and spanning all four years of delivery, a matrix should be provided that clearly shows the development of subject themes within the core units/modules. [4.3]

d) For each programme and spanning all four years of delivery, a matrix should be provided that clearly shows the development of graduate attributes within the core units/modules. [3.7;4.3]

e) Consideration must be given to the additional workload created by offering the RBGE Diploma and Certificate alongside the HND Horticulture with Plantsmanship. It must be clear to students that the RBGE courses are additional and not an essential element of the SQA HND qualification. [4.4]

f) Descriptors for all modules under the control of these programmes should be reviewed in accordance with the degree module descriptor template to ensure they include:
- information on the development, and where appropriate the assessment, of core skills and graduate attributes;
- details of appropriate reading in refereed journals and review articles;
- details on the approaches to learning and teaching which will be employed;
- clear guidelines on the assessment structure, including word limits where appropriate. [4.6]

These conditions must be fully resolved to the satisfaction of the convenor of the panel before the final panel report can be sent to the University of Glasgow to seek approval for the revalidation. Evidence that the conditions have been fully considered and satisfactorily addressed, along with a finalised programme specification, should be provided to the convenor of the panel **by Friday 14th April**.

6.3 In addition the panel made the following **advisory recommendations**:

a) Consider including *Advanced Case Studies* as an elective module in year 3 of BSc Horticulture. [4.2]

b) Further examine the delivery of the module *GIS and Remote Sensing* within the suite of horticulture degrees. [4.2]

c) In addition to creating a matrix indicating the development of the business theme across all years of all programmes (see condition (c)) consider being more explicit in demonstrating where business is embedded in non-business units/modules within the Horticulture with Plantsmanship programme. [4.2]

d) Consider extending the delivery of Introduction to Rural Skills to the Edinburgh campus. [4.5]

e) Develop a basic marketing strategy for the department to help attract a more diverse student population. [4.5]

f) For all three programmes document the range of assessments employed during years 3 and 4. [4.6]

g) The panel **strongly recommended** that consideration be given to the needs of landscape businesses and the future development of higher level qualifications such as Graduate Apprenticeships. [3.1]

h) The panel **strongly recommended** that consideration is given to developing the SQA Units which would assist progression from HNC Horticulture at Oatridge potentially utilising an online/distance learning format. [3.5]

i) The panel **strongly recommended** that within the proposal for minor changes to the HN provision further consideration is given to the delivery and

contextualisation of the two SQA Units, *Preparing to Start a Business* and *Business Management: an Introduction.* [4.2]

Appendix 1: Details of Review/Revalidation Meetings

Thursday 16th February - Review

10.00-11.00	Private meeting of panel
11.00-12.30	Meeting with Head of Department, Programme Leaders, Department Quality Enhancement Coordinator and teams
12.30-12.45	Private meeting of panel
13.10-14.35	Meeting with students
14.35-15.00	Private meeting of panel
15.00-16.15	Meeting with Head of Department, Programme Leaders, Department Quality Enhancement Coordinator and teams
16.15-16.45	Private meeting of panel
16.45-17.15	Feedback to Head of Department, Programme Leaders and Department Quality Enhancement Coordinator

Friday 17th February – Revalidation of Programmes

09.15-10.15	Private meeting of panel
10.15-13.00	Meeting with Head of Department, Programme Leaders and teams
13.15-13.45	Private meeting of panel
13.45-14.15	Meeting with Head of Department, Programme Leaders and Department Quality Enhancement Coordinator to report back on outcomes

Staff Meeting the Panel
(All from SRUC Horticulture & Landscape Department, apart from Greg Kenicer)

David Hume	Head of Department (Acting)
Ann Burns	Programme Leader, Oatridge Campus
Douglas Coltart	Programme Leader, Edinburgh Campus
Phil Watkin	Programme Leader, Elmwood Campus
Angelo Gallone	Lecturer, Edinburgh Campus
George Gilchrist	Lecturer and Department Quality Enhancement Coordinator Oatridge Campus
Matt Jessop	Lecturer, Edinburgh Campus
Jeremy Needham	Lecturer, Ayr Campus
Gerard O'Brien	Lecturer, Edinburgh Campus
Greg Kenicer	Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh

Students Meeting the Panel

Student	Programme	Year of Study	Campus
Kevin Keith	HNC Horticulture		Elmwood
Ewan Crighton	HNC Landscape Management		Oatridge
Annie Cavanagh	HND Horticulture	1	Edinburgh
Alex Reynolds	HND Horticulture	2	Ayr
Silvia Divine	BSc Horticulture	3	Edinburgh
Bronwyn Jones	BSc Horticulture	4	Edinburgh
Georgina Bennett	BSc Garden and Greenspace Design	2	Edinburgh
Ben Proudley	BSc Garden and Greenspace Design	3	Edinburgh
Kellie MacAndrew	BSc Garden and Greenspace Design	4	Edinburgh
Jodie Brotherton	HND Horticulture with Plantsmanship	1	Edinburgh
Stephen Willis	HND Horticulture with Plantsmanship	1	Edinburgh
Maxine Ross	BSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship	3	Edinburgh
Galena Woodhouse	BSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship	4	Edinburgh

Appendix 2: Student numbers

Campus	Course	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Ayr	HNC Hort	9	8.5	11.5	13.5	18
Ayr	HND Hort	11	6	9	8	12
Ayr	**Cohort total**	**20**	**14.5**	**20.5**	**21.5**	**30**
Ed	HND GD (Year 1)	11	16	14	13	13
Ed	HND GD (Year 2)	7	3	13.5	12	10
Ed	BSc GGD (Year 3)	-	7.5	5	8	8
Ed	BSc GGD (Year 4)	-	-	5	5	8
Ed	**Cohort total**	**18**	**26.5**	**37.5**	**38**	**39**
Ed	HND Hort (Year 1)	9	11.5	13	7	18
Ed	HND Hort (Year 2)	9.5	10	6.5	9	8
Ed	BSc Hort (Year 3)	7	4.5	6.5	3.5	8
Ed	BSc Hort (Year 4)	2	7	2	3.5	5
Ed	**Cohort total**	**28.5**	**33**	**28**	**23**	**39**
Ed	HND HwP (Year 1)	15.5	18	20	23	12
Ed	HND HwP (Year 2)	19.5	18	18	19	23
Ed	BSc HwP (Year 3)	8	12.5	11	8.5	13
Ed	BSc HwP (Year 4)	5	6	7	11.5	4
Ed	**Cohort total**	**48**	**54.5**	**56**	**62**	**52**
El	HNC Hort	-	15	20	20	6
El	**Cohort total**	**-**	**15**	**20**	**20**	**6**
Oat	HNC Hort	8.5	12	7.5	5.5	8
Oat	**Cohort total**	**8.5**	**12**	**7.5**	**5.5**	**8**
Oat	HNC LM	6	7	9	7.5	13.5
Oat	**Cohort total**	**6**	**7**	**9**	**7.5**	**13.5**