1. **Degree Programmes Reviewed**

   The following degree programmes from the College of Estate Management were reviewed:

   - BSc Building Surveying
   - BSc Construction Management
   - BSc Estate Management
   - BSc Property Management
   - BSc Quantity Surveying
   - MBA Construction and Real Estate
   - MSc Conservation of the Historic Environment
   - MSc Facilities Management
   - MSc Property Investment
   - MSc Real Estate
   - MSc Surveying

2. The Periodic Review took place on 5 and 6 May 2005.

3. **Objectives of the Periodic Review and Revalidation**

   The objectives of the Periodic Review and Revalidation were:

   - To provide the University with a system by which the standards of taught Undergraduate and Postgraduate awards and the quality of such provision may be monitored
   - To enable relevant University Schools and partner institutions to evaluate their taught programme provision and in particular to evaluate student achievement of the appropriate academic standards, and the learning opportunities offered to students to support their achievements
   - To enable an independent Panel to review this self-evaluation through consideration of documentation and discussions with staff and students
   - To provide a means by which relevant University Schools and partner institutions reflect on the success, development and possible improvement of the taught programmes that they offer
   - To ask fundamental questions about the rationale, structure and resourcing of the programmes under review
   - To consider the educational aims and objectives of the programmes, and success in meeting these
   - To review teaching, learning and methods of assessment in their contexts
   - To consider the congruence of the programmes under review and the collaborative partnership with the strategic interests and aims of the University
   - To consider, and if thought fit recommend, revalidation of the programmes to run for a further period of six years (or as appropriate)

4. **Conduct of the Periodic Review**
The Periodic Review was conducted by a Panel chaired by the Director of Teaching and Learning of the Faculties of Science and Life Sciences, and also comprising two other internal members of academic staff (neither from the School of Construction Management, the link School with regard to programmes delivered in collaboration with the College of Estate Management), one external academic member, one external representative of industry, and one representative of the College of Estate Management (not connected with the disciplines under review).

The Panel received a range of documentation in advance of the Review, including a Self-Evaluation Document prepared by the College and also relevant programme specifications. During the Review Visit, the Panel considered other documentation and met with relevant staff from the College and the School of Construction Management. Members of the Panel also met with current students studying on the degree programmes under review and recent graduates.

5. Evidence Base

In addition to the meetings held with academic staff and current students, the Panel considered a wide range of evidence, including examples of student work with staff feedback, copies of programme handbooks and publicity material, minutes of relevant committees and statistical data. The Panel was able to see External Examiners reports for the three previous years, as well as responses written by the College.

6. External peer contributors to process

The external members of the Review Panel were present for the duration of the Periodic Review. The Joint Faculty Board for Teaching and Learning for Science and Life Sciences appointed the external members, after considering nominations from the College of Estate Management. The role of these external members was to provide subject expertise and judgement of the validity and appropriateness of the programmes under review.

7. Overview of the main characteristics of the programmes covered by the review

The College of Estate Management provides distance learning education and training to the property professions and the construction industry. The University of Reading validates five of the undergraduate and six of the postgraduate taught programmes that are delivered by the College. Where appropriate, accreditation has been awarded by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, the Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers and other professional and statutory bodies. The Panel concluded that the programmes under review were well managed and that the College is proactive in its implementation of its virtual learning environment to deliver the material and skills to its students. The programmes are current and match well with national benchmarks, and offer breadth and flexibility. The students whom the panel met clearly enjoy and value the degree programmes offered, and the associated learning opportunities and materials.

8. Conclusions on innovation and good practice

The Review Panel commended:

- The College’s proactive and successful policy with regard to the development of a Virtual Learning Environment, and in particular the online discussion groups on the Graduate Development Programme which have effectively established a virtual community of scholars;

- The College’s approach to training those external tutors engaged in supporting online learning activities;
• The Gateway to Learning initiative, an online resource of links to relevant research materials, managed by the College’s Research Department;

• The College atmosphere that has enabled a good blend of formal and informal student feedback to work effectively.

9. **Conclusions on quality and standards**

The Panel concluded that:

• The intended learning outcomes of the programmes under review were clear and appropriate and were being obtained by students;

• Students were achieving the appropriate standards for the awards;

• Programmes being delivered were cognisant with the programme specifications;

• The College clearly devotes attention to ensuring that its students are well supported in their studies;

• The College is proactive in developing and supporting its virtual learning environment.

10. **Conclusions on currency and validity of the programmes under review**

The Panel recommended to the Joint Faculty Board for Teaching and Learning for Science and Life Sciences that the programmes reviewed be revalidated for a further six years.

11. **Summary of Recommendations**

The Review Panel considered it advisable that:

• In view of the professional nature of its programmes, the College embed oral communication more firmly within the learning outcomes

• The College undertake greater pre-planned intervention by tutors during the period that students are researching and writing their dissertations

• The College introduce some moderation by means of sampling of some scripts in the middle of the range of students’ performance

• A simplified and robust method of reporting is established by the College and the University to ensure that the quality process is not compromised by lack of communication

The Review Panel considered it desirable that:

• The College consider how to better encourage the use of the excellent research it undertakes in informing curricula developments

• The College consider whether some arrangement of discussion groups by geographical location or other devices might be used to encourage increased student-to-student contact
• The College consider assisting those students with difficulties in certain subject areas, particularly numerate disciplines, by utilising some of the resources available elsewhere in the University, if the associated resourcing questions can be resolved.

12. **Summary of actions taken in response to the Review**

In response to these recommendations, the College of Estate Management has taken the following actions:

- Conducted a review of the inclusion of oral communication skills within its programmes, and concluded that, due to the geographical spread of its students, it would be impractical to formalise oral communications within its learning outcomes. It will, however, continue to promote best practice in oral communication within its general course delivery.
- Launched a pilot scheme on the Graduate Development Programme (with a view to extending it across all postgraduate courses) that makes use of online technology to ensure a more interventionist approach to student support during the dissertation.
- Made clear its intention to revisit the College’s moderation procedures and review their efficacy.
- Revised the composition of its Boards of Studies to include greater representation from the University to ensure closer co-operation.
- Revised the composition of its Subject Advisory Committees and annual Course review to include a member of the research team, in order to better encourage the use of research in informing curriculum developments.
- Providing greater encouragement to students to make increased use of the Virtual Learning Environment make contact with each other and form informal support networks.
- Continued to develop plans for a cross-course study support resource delivered through the Virtual Learning Environment, which will signpost students to available support from the College, the University and elsewhere. The College would welcome the opportunity to explore ways in which the College could further utilise University resources in this area, and hopes to initiate discussions shortly.