1. **Programmes covered by the Periodic Review**

   - BA Business Analysis
   - BA Economics
   - BSc Business Economics
   - BSc Economics
   - BSc Economics and Econometrics
   - MA Business and Management in Emerging Markets
   - MSc Business Economics and Policy
   - MSc Economic Development in Emerging Markets
   - MSc International Business and Economic Integration
   - MSc International Business and Finance

2. The Periodic Review took place on 9 and 10 February 2005.

3. **Objectives of the Periodic Review**

   The objectives of the Periodic Review were to:

   - monitor the quality and standards of the degree programmes under Review;

   - enable the Department of Economics to evaluate its taught programme provision, particularly student achievement of the appropriate academic standards, and the learning opportunities offered to students;

   - enable an independent Panel to review this self-evaluation through consideration of documentation and discussions with staff and students;

   - provide a means by which the Department was able to reflect on the success, development and possible improvement of its taught programmes;

   - ask fundamental questions about the rationale, structure and resourcing of the programmes under Review;

   - consider the educational aims and objectives of the programmes;

   - review teaching, learning and methods of assessment in their contexts;
consider whether the programmes under Review should continue to run for a further period of up to six years.

4. **Conduct of the Periodic Review**

The Periodic Review was conducted by a Panel chaired by the Director of Teaching and Learning of the University's School of Health and Social Care, and also comprising two other internal members of academic staff (neither from the Department of Economics or the University's Business School) and two external academic members.

The Panel received a range of documentation in advance of the Review, including a Self-Evaluation Document prepared by the Department and also relevant programme specifications. During the Review Visit, the Panel considered other documentation and met with relevant staff from the Department and from University service departments. Members of the Panel also met with current students studying on all of the degree programmes under review and with former students.

5. **Evidence Base**

In addition to the meetings held with academic staff and current and former students, the Panel considered a wide range of evidence, including examples of student work, copies of programme handbooks, minutes of relevant committees and statistical data. The Panel was able to see External Examiners reports for the three previous years, as well as comprehensive responses written by the Head of Department. The reports produced by the External Examiners commented on the high levels of student achievement.

The Panel was also able to see the minutes of recent meetings of the termly Department student-staff committee, and minutes of the Department's Annual Quality Review, which undertakes a holistic review of the quality of the Department's teaching provision. Examples of staff feedback to students on their written work were seen in some cases but not all.

6. **External peer contributors to process**

The external members of the Panel were present for the duration of the Periodic Review. They were appointed by the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences Board for Teaching and Learning after considering nominations from the Department of Economics. 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**

*Undergraduate programmes*
The Department of Economics provides a range of single and joint programmes in economics and business economics which appropriately reflect the staff’s expertise and research interests and the department’s location within a Business School. The Department uses differences in the quantitative content of programmes to distinguish between BSc and BA degrees, with the latter having less quantitative content and more policy focus.

All of the programmes have a similar structure; 60 credits of compulsory economics and quantitative techniques in Part 1, 120 credits of compulsory modules in Part 2 (all with core macroeconomics and microeconomics and differing requirements of quantitative and policy-oriented modules), and a mixture of compulsory and optional modules in Part 3. The range of optional modules available to students is reasonably broad and reflects the Department’s specialisms. The commonality of Part 1 compulsory modules allows considerable flexibility for students in choosing between alternative degrees in subsequent years.

Postgraduate programmes

The Department of Economics provides a set of specialist economics, finance and policy oriented Masters programmes. There is no common core in the MSc programmes – instead there are a number of 20 credit compulsory modules selected as core to the specific degree and the balance is made up of a project and 20 credit options (9 months) or dissertation and 20 credit options (12 months) chosen from a specified list of options appropriate to that degree. While there is some degree of commonality in the compulsory elements and options that can be chosen between programmes in related areas each of the programmes has appropriately specified aims and learning outcomes and forms a distinctive offering, in line with its title.

8. Conclusions on innovation and good practice

Examples of good practice identified included:

- a high level of commitment amongst staff to the quality of teaching;

- strong links with employers through an Employers Advisory Board;

- a well developed role for the Senior Tutor of undergraduate students and postgraduate students, which students stated they highly valued;

- a valuable and well managed Departmental Resource Base, which students enthusiastically commended.
9. **Conclusions on quality and standards**

The Review Panel concluded:

- that the intended learning outcomes of the Department's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes were clear and appropriate and were being obtained by students;

- the range of interlocking degree programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level is impressive. It allows students a degree of choice and specialism that is highly valued. For staff this allows a strong interplay between research and teaching which is a real strength for teaching quality;

- that mechanisms in place to enhance quality, in particular the Annual Quality Review, work well.

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

The Review Panel concluded that the programmes under review remained current and valid and recommended that all programmes be **re-approved** to run for a further six years, or until such time as the next Periodic Review of programmes in the Department of Sociology and in the Department of Computer Science respectively for the following:

- BA Business Economics and Organisational Studies (Sociology)
- BA Economics and Sociology (Sociology)
- BSc Economics with Information Technology (Computer Science)

The University Board for Teaching and Learning approved these recommendations on 2 June 2005.

11. **Summary of Recommendations**

The Panel made the following advisory recommendations that the Department should:

**Undergraduate programmes**

- consider introducing greater diversity into its assessment regimes and consider preparing a formal statement of its assessment strategy;

- consider including information on generic assessment criteria in student handbooks;
• slightly revise its module descriptions to bring them fully in line with university requirements.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes

• consider standardising assessment feedback, possibly by means of a set of assessment feedback forms;

• considers whether information on the distribution of results for each module should be made available at Examinations Boards and at the Annual Quality Review;

• seeks a mechanism of ensuring that all module convenors complete reports for all modules.

12. Summary of actions taken in response to the Review

In response to these recommendations, the Department of Economics has completed or has undertaken to complete the following actions:

Undergraduate programmes

• a revision of undergraduate module descriptions bringing them fully in line with university requirements;

• the development of a comprehensive assessment strategy for undergraduate programmes, including a review of the diversity of assessment regimes;

• the inclusion of information on assessment in undergraduate handbooks.

Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

• the introduction of a standard coursework feedback form;

• the inclusion of more detailed module examination statistics for Examiners' Meetings and for the Annual Programme Review;

• improved guidance to all staff on the content and form of module reports and their importance in the quality assurance process.