

# OPAMA Module Approval:

## *Panel scrutiny of module proposals*

User Guide for School Education Committee/Module  
Approval Panel members

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# Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to this User Guide, which is designed to help School Education Committee/Module Approval Panellists through the process of accessing and scrutinising new module proposals submitted to your School, making comments on the proposal and sending them on through the process to the Panel Chair.

The Project Team is keen to receive your feedback on the usability of the system, on the OPAMA process, and on this User Guide, so that we can improve OPAMA in the months and years to come. Please do get in touch with us at [opama.support@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:opama.support@kcl.ac.uk) with any comments, compliments or problems you may experience in using OPAMA.

## 1. Why put module approval online?

### 1.1 ACCURACY, AUDITABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

The information that is entered on OPAMA has three main ‘corporate’ purposes - in addition to the overarching one of ensuring the excellent academic standard of King’s degree programmes and the modules which contribute to them - which should be borne in mind when completing the online form: these are **accuracy, auditability and accessibility**. The current system based on paper records, although adequate to reflect our internal processes, does not fulfil these requirements sufficiently to stand up to external scrutiny. Switching to an online process will enable us to:

- ensure that our students receive accurate information about their curriculum: the quality of information provision is also subject to external audit as well as being a potentially vulnerable area of student complaint if information is incomplete or inaccurate
- advertise and showcase the College’s module catalogue to potential students all over the world
- provide an opportunity for your School to streamline its approval processes to determine more quickly and easily whether the proposal meets the College’s – and the Quality Assurance Agency’s – quality criteria. Both the information itself and the process through which it gets approval are subject to external audit
- ensure that the approval process used in each School can maintain its local character whilst complying with quality assurance requirements consistently across the College, and with much greater transparency than previously

### 1.2 AUTOMATING MODULE SET-UP

The OPAMA online module proposal form replaces the MAF paper form. The questions that are asked are essentially the same as those you would have found on the MAF, but the order in which the information is gathered has been changed. This is in order to ensure that the correct relationships are created in the background between the pieces of data, enabling

the complete module dataset to be downloaded into the relevant SITS fields as soon as the module is approved, with no separate creation process on SITS necessary.

### 1.3 SITS AS THE GOLD SOURCE OF DATA

Using OPAMA will enable the College to store information on SITS which was not previously stored in electronic form: notably the text entered to describe the educational aims and learning outcomes, along with a student-friendly module description. The aim is to make SITS the 'gold source' of information about our programmes and modules with a view to enabling information to be used in other publications such as the online prospectus, web pages and Departmental handbooks and module catalogues, without the need to key in the information again to another system, thereby ensuring consistency of information for students. When scrutinising proposals, therefore, please check that the information you see is of 'publishable' quality!

## 2. Role of Module Approval Panels

### 2.1 WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The 'Module Approval Panel' is a generic term used within the OPAMA module approval process to describe the body responsible at School level for scrutinising and approving proposals for new modules on behalf of the College Education Committee, from which these powers are delegated. It is assumed that the Panel will be members either of the relevant School Education Committee or of a sub-committee reporting to it; each individual module will be scrutinised by either an entire Panel or by a subset of its members – and in either case the Panel Chair is required to sign off all approved proposals. As a matter of local School policy, the Panel Chair can choose whether to be involved in the scrutiny of each proposal when it goes to the Panel members, or whether to stay outside the process until the final stage, making a decision once panellists have had a chance to comment and make recommendations on approval, or otherwise, of the proposal.

### 2.2 THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL PANEL MEMBERS IN THE OPAMA PROCESS

Individual Panel members play a vital part in the quality assurance process by reading each proposal and testing its detail against the standards laid down by the Quality Assurance Agency as embodied in College QA policies. OPAMA enables you to read and make comments and recommendations on proposals online; these are then collated by the system and presented in full to the Panel Chair, who decides, on the basis of those comments and his/her own expertise, whether the proposal can be approved or needs to be referred back to the proposer for more work.

### 2.3 LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

In some Schools the scrutiny process is currently done at physical meetings of the Panel, whilst in others it often happens between formal meetings using email or file transfer processes to communicate electronic versions of the existing paper form and the comments

made by Panel members. OPAMA enables these differences to continue, although if a School chooses to continue considering proposals at formal meetings, we recommend you consider using an environment such as Sharepoint to streamline the committee process as much as possible without compromising the rigour of your local quality assurance processes. Whatever your School's local methodology, however, the final decision needs to be recorded on OPAMA so that approval can be date-stamped and the final, approved version of the module transferred to SITS.

### 3. Accessing a new module proposal for Panel scrutiny – Stage 3 of OPAMA

#### 3.1 HOW TO LOCATE AND VIEW THE MODULE PROPOSAL

Unless your local process is completely offline (in which case you will be contacted direct by your School Quality Administrator or Panel Chair), OPAMA will notify you by email when a new proposal is ready for scrutiny (Fig. 1)

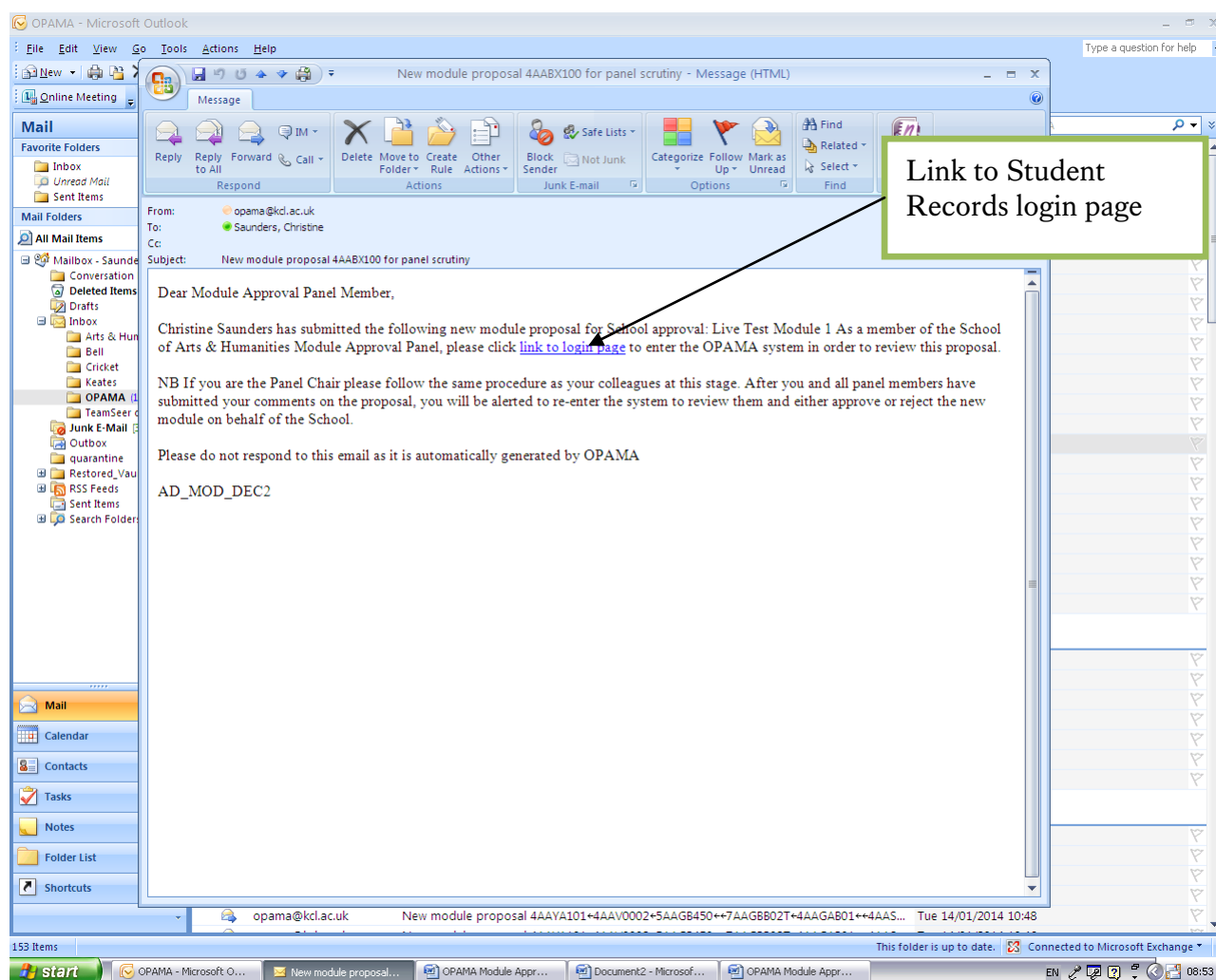


Fig. 1

You can either use the link in the email to go to the Student Records login page, or else you can go straight there from your web browser via the King's website. Once you've logged in, click on the OPAMA tab. You will see one or more modules listed in your task tray for action (Fig. 2).

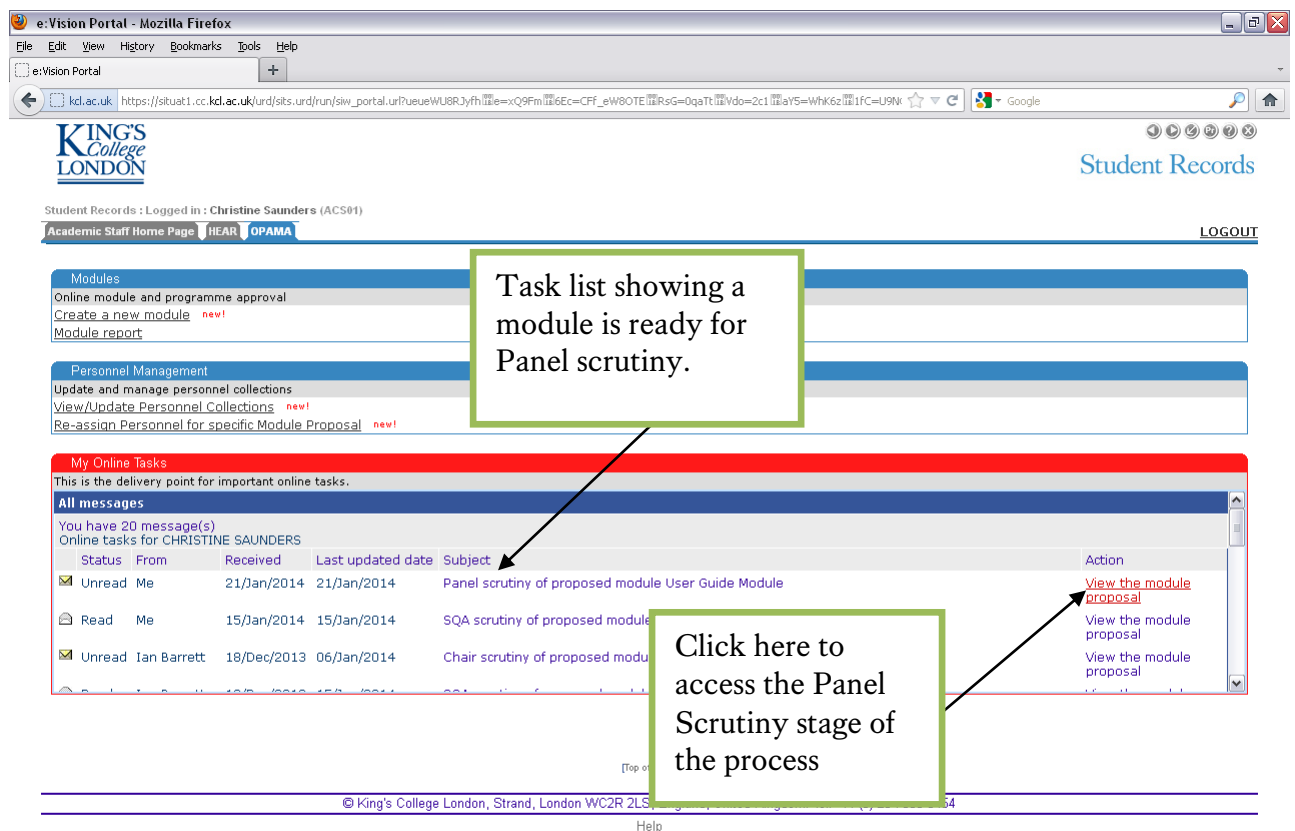


Fig. 2

Clicking View the module proposal will take you into the task.

## 4. The process

### 4.1 THE PROCESS DIAGRAM

This shows you where the module is in the approval cycle. There are links from here to various reference websites/contact details if you need to seek advice.

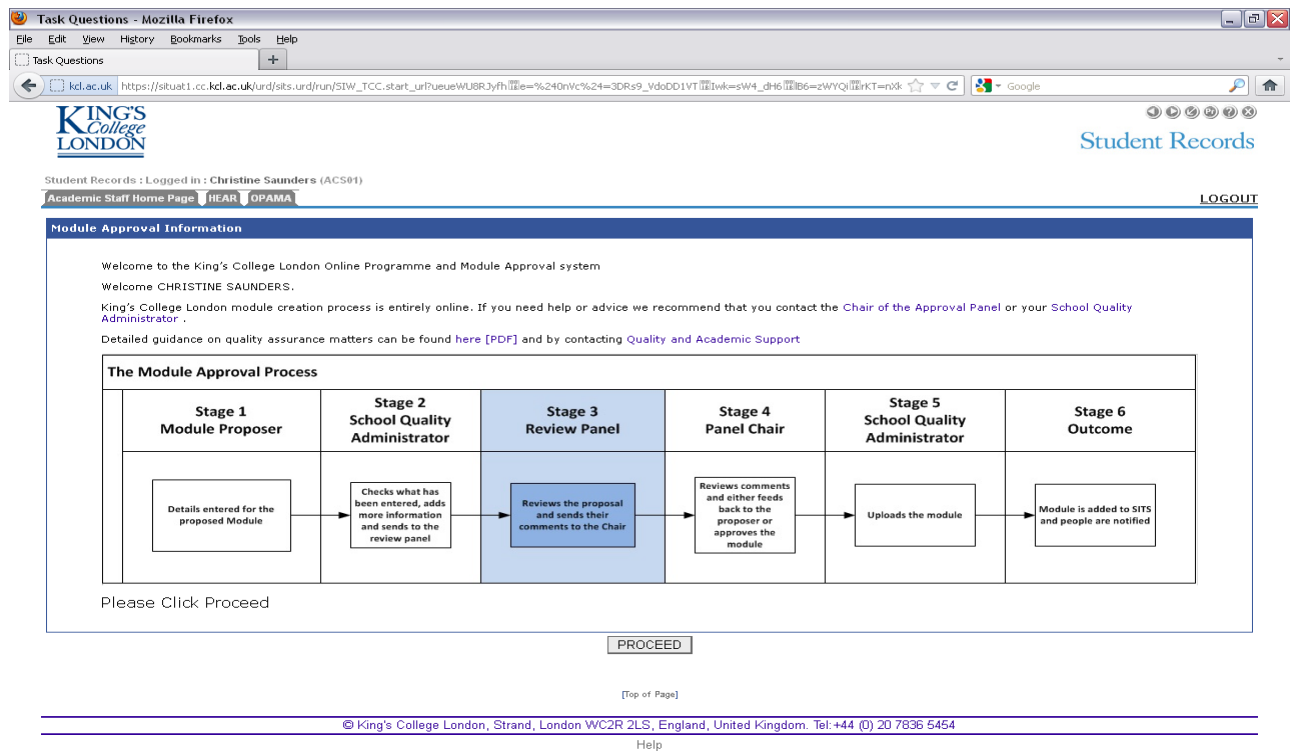


Fig. 3

Click **Proceed** to continue.

## 4.2 CHECK YOUR DETAILS

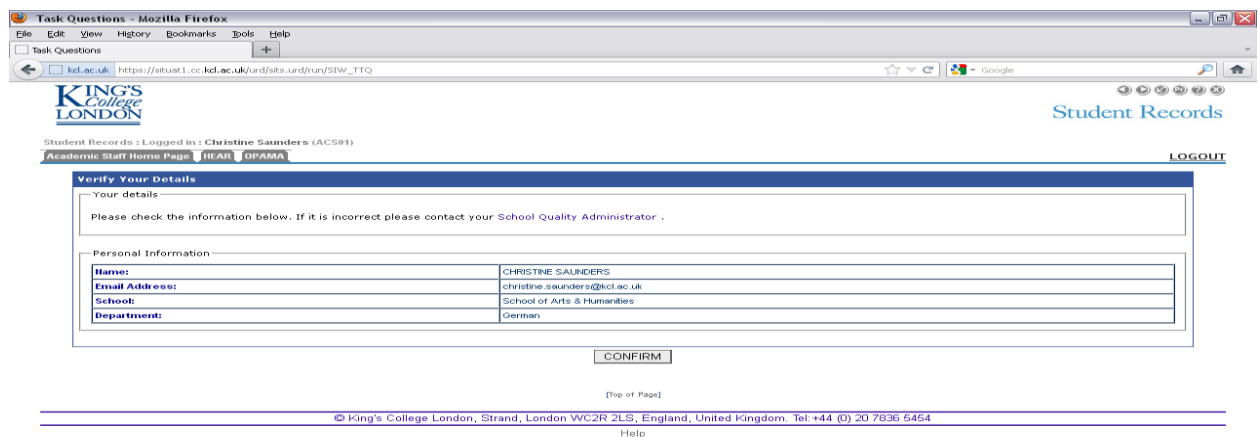


Fig. 4

A last chance to check and verify your details, to make sure that communications are going to the right place and that you have the access you need. **Any problems**, contact your School Quality Administrator; assuming all's well, click **Confirm**.

## 5. The module proposal

### 5.1 SCRUTINISING THE DETAILS

For ease of scrutiny, the module proposal summary has been designed to look like a written form. Below is a screenshot of the first part of the proposal (Fig. 5).

**Task Questions - Mozilla Firefox**

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

Task Questions

kd.ac.uk https://situat1.cc.kd.ac.uk/urd/sits.urd/run/SIW\_TTQ

Student Records : Logged in : Christine Saunders (ACS01)

Academic Staff Home Page HEAR OPAMA

LOGOUT

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**Module Proposal Details**

**Information**

Christine Saunders has proposed a new module entitled **User Guide Module**.

Please review the information that has been entered and enter your recommendation to the Chair for approval or rejection in the text box at the end of the document, together with any comments you may have about specific sections. You can either save and submit later, or submit your comments immediately.

NB If you are the Panel Chair please follow the same procedure as your colleagues at this stage. After you and all panel members have submitted your comments on the proposal, you will be alerted to re-enter the system to review them and either approve or reject the new module on behalf of the School.

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**Module Proposal**

**Module Information (step 1/1b)**

Module Code:	5AAGX606
Module Name:	User Guide Module
Department:	AAG
Level:	5
Credit:	30
Module Organiser:	Christine Saunders
Start Year:	2014/5
Module Type:	Taught Module

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**Educational Aims (step 2)**

Educational Aims:	The aim of this module is to illustrate the steps for the OPAMA user guide.
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**Learning Outcomes (step 3)**

Learning Outcomes:	By the end of the module, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read and understand the OPAMA User Guide for Module Proposers</li> <li>Write a similar Guide of their own....</li> </ul>
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**Module Description (step 4)**

Module description:	I'd describe this module as 'a real eye-opener' Join us on Mondays at 9 am to see just how riveting User Guide creation can be....
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Fig. 5

*Tip: You will probably find it helpful, particularly if you haven't used OPAMA before, to have a copy of the User Guidance document for module proposers handy so that you can easily check the questions and guidance on completion which have produced the information you're seeing in front of you.*



## 5.2 MAKING NOTES AND COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL

For technical as well as aesthetic reasons we have not been able to provide space for comments next to every field on the form. Please enter summary comments at the **end** of the form in the free text box provided. However, if you want to make notes as you read the form, you can use a text editor such as NotePad which you can keep on your desktop and 'float' over the form as you read it. Then you can paste your notes into the comments box and edit as you wish. An example of how this might work is given below (Fig. 6):

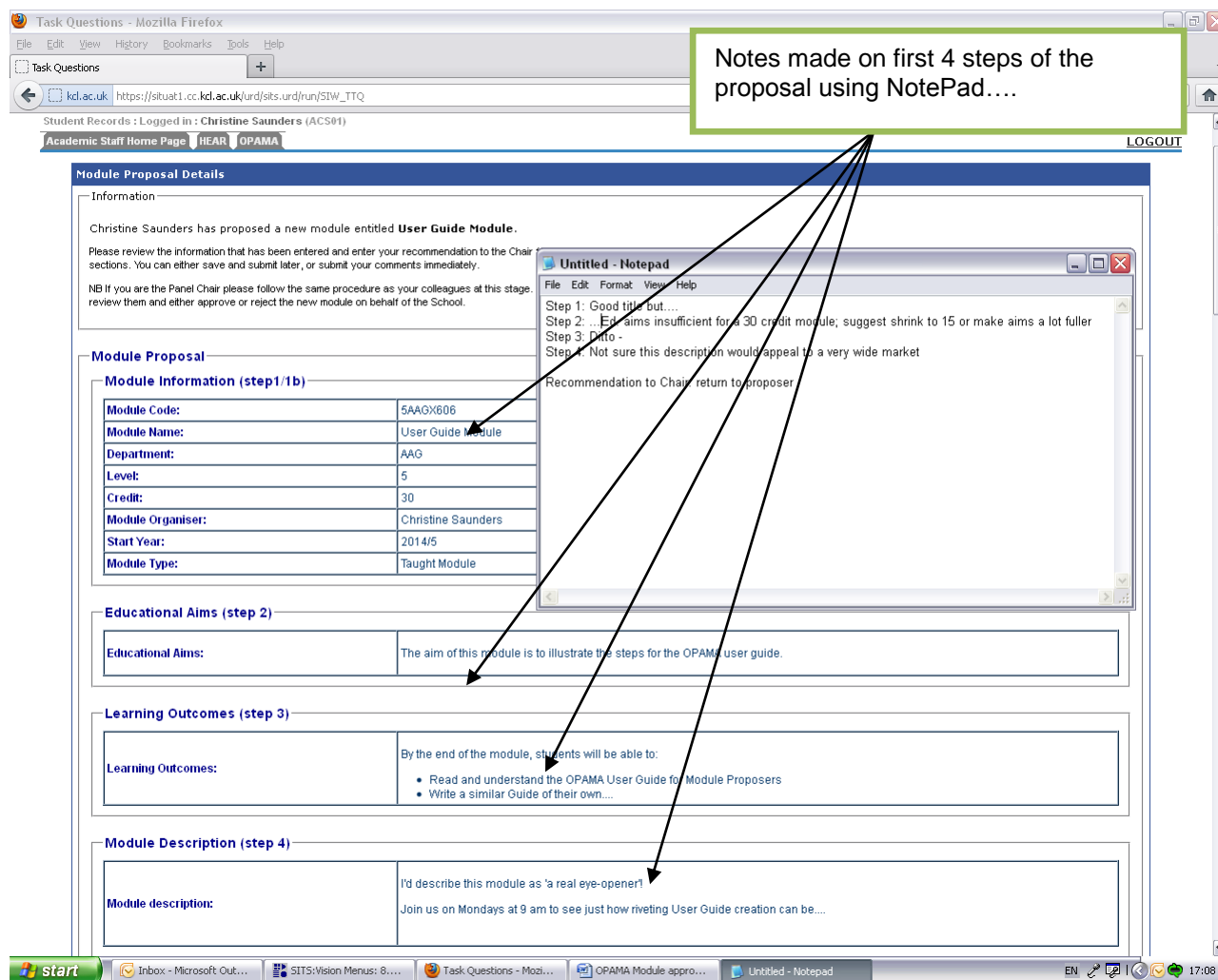


Fig. 6

The comments on NotePad are then pasted into the Comments box at the bottom of the form (Fig. 7).

## 6. What to do next

### 6.1 SUBMISSION OPTIONS

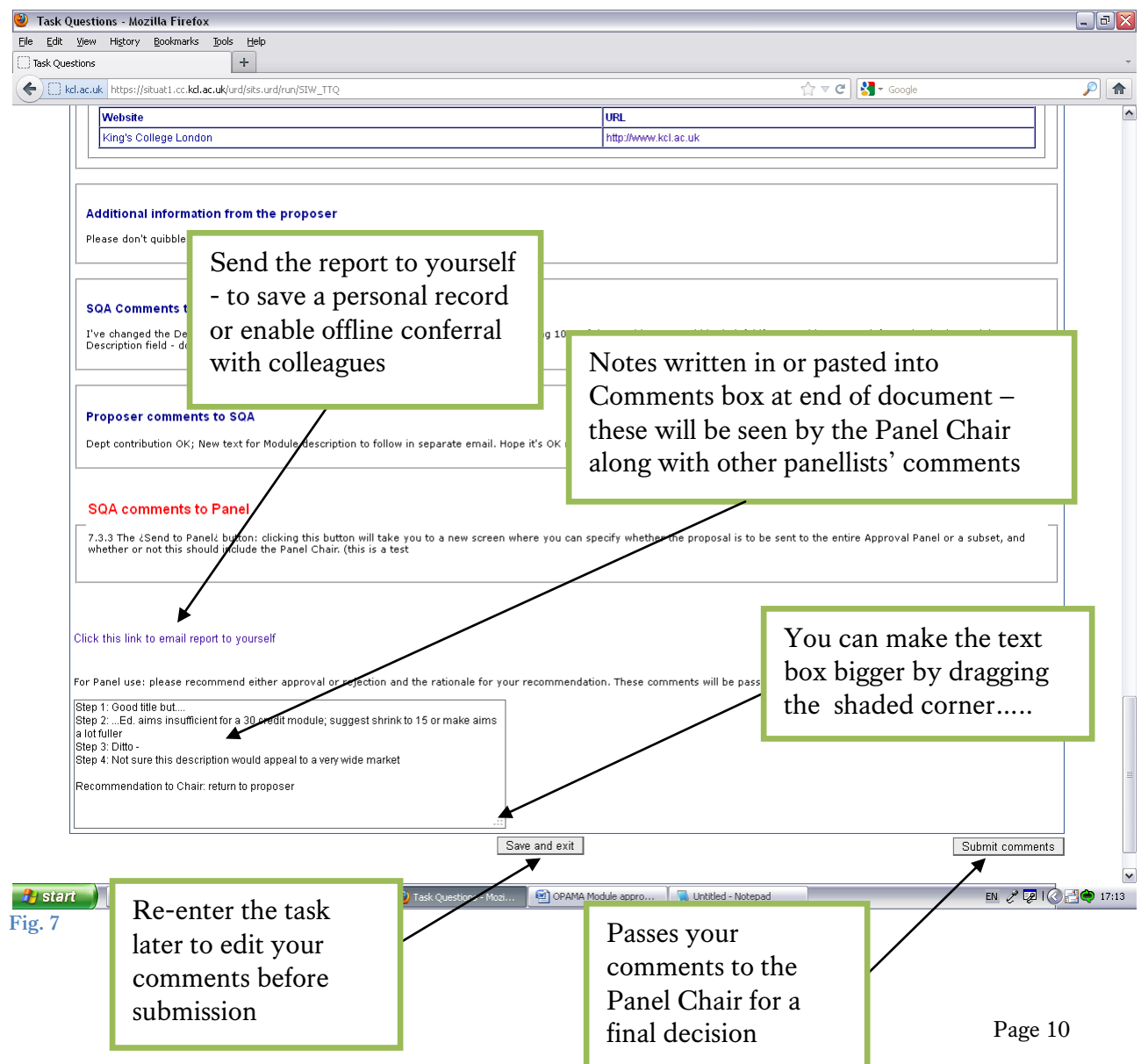
Once you have made your comments/recommendations on the proposal you can click either

- **Save and exit:** this just holds your comments in a temporary file so you can come out of the system and return later to edit your comments if you wish; or
- **Submit comments:** this will add your comments to those of other Panel members so that the Chair can see what all Panel members say about the proposal. **Note:** once you have clicked this option you will not be able to add/change your comments.

Before you do either of these you can **email the report to yourself** by clicking the link above the comments box. This would give you a personal record of your input into the process if you need this; or, if you wish, you can use this facility to confer with others offline about the proposal before submitting your comments to the Chair (Fig. 7).

## 6.2 PLEASE RESPOND!

Please ensure, even if you have no comments on the contents of the proposal itself, that you do make a recommendation on approval (just 'OK' will do!) and that you do submit this to the Chair. This will enable the Panel Chair to ensure that the proposal has been scrutinised by all the members of Panel to whom it has been assigned (the Chair will have a list of scrutineers on his/her version of the form, and will no doubt chase you if you don't respond!).



## 6.3 EXIT THE SYSTEM

When you have clicked 'Submit comments' you will receive a confirmation message and be invited to exit the system (Fig. 8).

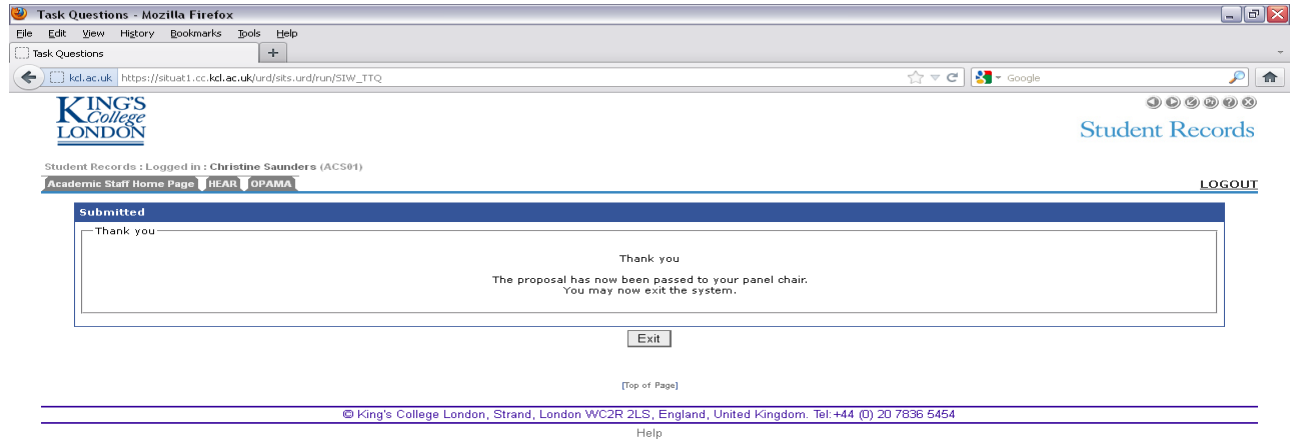


Fig. 8

This will normally end your involvement with the process for this module. However, if the Chair, on reading all the Panel comments, feels that the proposer needs to re-submit with significant changes, you may receive a further email inviting you to scrutinise the proposal again. If this does happen, simply repeat the process described above.

## 7. The Panel Chair as Panel member

### 7.1 TWO CHANCES TO LOOK AT THE PROPOSAL

It is expected that in many cases, the Panel Chair will also act as a panel member and will want to scrutinise the proposal along with other Panel members at Stage 3 of the OPAMA process. If this is part of your local School arrangement, the Chair will receive the same email alert as the other panel members, and can take part in the scrutiny process as described above, including making comments on the proposal, which will be included in the list of comments presented to the Chair at Stage 4 of the process. The Chair will receive a **separate** email alert for this (it will be clearly headed "X module....for Chair of Panel scrutiny") to enable him/her to re-enter OPAMA at the next stage of the process in order to make a final decision on the module proposal.