03.1

VALIDATION OF NEW PROGRAMMES

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

1

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

VALIDATION OF NEW PROGRAMMES

Introduction

1.   This section aims to set out the purpose of and procedure for the validation of new credit-bearing programmes. It covers:

 - An Outline of Validation;
 - Initial Approval;
 - Purpose of Validation;
 - Role of the Standing Panel;
 - School Quality Assurance;
 - Documentation to be Submitted for Academic Approval;
 - Formulation of Standing Panel Decisions;
 - Academic Approval Check-list;
 - Guidance Notes for the Standing Panel and Programme Teams about the validation of Degree Apprenticeships are appended (pp16- 22].

2.   Guidance on submitting a new proposal for PDC approval, and approval and validation checklists for proposers, QED and the Standing Panel are contained in Volume 2, Section 3 of the Academic Handbook.

3.   Guidance Notes and Templates for Programme Specifications and Module Descriptors are also contained in Volume 2, Section 2 of the Academic Handbook.

4.   Details of the University's curriculum principles and parameters can be found on the QED Design and Planning webpages.

Validation in Outline

5.   All new credit-bearing programmes at the University must undergo validation. This section is applicable where new credit-bearing programmes to be validated fall within the authority of the University for such validation, including those programmes which are covered by the Pearson's (formerly Edexcel) License.

6.   The generality of this section applies to all validations, but the reader is also referred to the sections on Collaborative Provision and Blended/Online Programmes where further specification is given. The full process of validation including its 3 stages is outlined on the QED Validation and Review Webpages.

7.   In order to give full consideration to programmes undergoing validation, it may be acceptable for schemes which incorporate several generically related programmes to be considered at the same time: examples of this

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

2

might be closely related programmes, such as an HND, HNC and Foundation Degrees, or a grouping of cognate programmes with a substantial degree of commonality at sub-degree and degree level.

8. Final academic approval must, normally, have taken place before the end of March if the intention is to recruit to a new UK-based programme in the September of the same year. TNE programmes must, normally, have achieved final academic approval by May.

9. A schedule of proposals for validation (updated as necessary) is made available to the Academic Quality & Standards Committee at appropriate intervals so that all Schools may be made aware of programme proposals.

Initial Approval to Proceed to a Academic Approval (Volume 3, Section 4 contains guidance and a link to an online application form).

10. Prior to a submission to the Programme Approval Standing Panel (commonly referred to as the Standing Panel or the Panel), a proposed new programme must:

   .1 Receive approval of the business and strategic case by the Portfolio Development Committee. The purpose of the initial approval process is to ascertain that adequate investigation has taken place with regards to the marketability of the programme, and to ensure that the programme is in-keeping with the University's Strategic Plan. Deans of Schools must submit a business case to the PDC by its October meeting in respect of new programme proposals that they intend to be validated for delivery the following September. The final academic case should then be submitted to the Standing Panel no later than March in respect of new programme proposals that they intend to be validated for delivery from September of the same year (or May for TNE proposals);

   .2 Alert QED to any proposed deviation from the University's academic regulations or curriculum parameters in the early stages of academic development for early consideration by the Standing Panel;

   .3 Have nominated, gained QED approval of, and liaised with, an External Academic Advisor, Student Reviewer and (where applicable) an Industry Advisor in the development of the curriculum.

N.B. A programme that does not run within three years of its validation will normally be referred back for re-approval by the PDC.

Purpose of Validation

11. The purpose of validation is to ascertain that the proposed programme is aligned to the University's Strategic Plan and Curriculum Principles, will attain appropriate levels of quality and standards and takes cognisance of

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

3

external benchmark statements as necessary, including relevant QAA subject benchmark statements (for foundation degree proposals, the QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark and for Apprenticeships, the QAA Characteristics Statement), FHEQ qualification descriptors, the CQFW, and the requirements of employers and relevant PSRBs.

Standing Panel

12. Consideration of the academic case for a new programme will be undertaken by a Programme Approval Standing Panel, which will be comprised from:

PVC Student Engagement (Chair)
Director of Learning Enhancement (Deputy Chair)
Students' Union Vice-President
Director of Student Services
Academic representatives drawn from Schools

Senior Academic representatives may be invited to Chair the Standing Panel, following training by QED, if deemed appropriate and/or if the Chair and Deputy Chair is not available.

Co-opted members with expertise in the following areas will be invited by the Chair to consider proposals where deemed necessary:

Apprenticeships
Employability/Entrepreneurship
PSRBs
Welsh language provision
TNE provision
Online/blended provision
Dual/double/joint awards

13. The Quality Enhancement Directorate (QED) will facilitate and record the decisions of the Standing Panel.

School Quality Assurance

14. The stage between PDC approval and submission to the Standing Panel is crucial. Following PDC approval of a proposal the QED will link with the proposers to discuss the support needs of the proposing team. Proposers who fail to engage with QED will not be permitted to submit their proposals to the Standing Panel. Schools should also consult employers and, if appropriate, PSRBs during programme design. The Standing Panel, with the student experience the focus of their scrutiny, has the right to expect that the SMPT has ensured thorough preparation of both the submission documentation and the Programme Team, including peer review of the draft submission to inform the Deputy/Associate Dean's release of the documentation to the Panel. The Quality Enhancement Directorate will also review proposals prior to the submission to the Standing Panel. Incomplete or poorly considered proposals, or those that deviate from the University's

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

4

curriculum parameters without prior Standing Panel approval, will not be considered by the Standing Panel.

15. The Programme Director and Programme Team will produce the programme submission documentation for scrutiny by the Standing Panel. This documentation will be the basis for critical evaluation by the Standing Panel and its quality will be of crucial importance. The QED must receive submissions for draft consideration by the Standing Panel at least 8 weeks before the date set for final consideration by the Standing Panel; failure to do this will result in the proposal being deferred to a later date when the Standing Panel has capacity to consider the proposal.

16. Before submitting programme documentation for draft academic approval to the QED, measures must be taken within proposing Schools (via the School Deputy/Associate Dean) to ensure that:

    .1 the form, content and quality of the documentation complies with requirements, including those on the 'Proposer and D/AD Submission Checklist';

    .2 there is ownership of the proposal by the Programme Team, which will respond to any QED or Standing Panel commentary or required changes;

    .3 the resources needed to deliver the programme will be available;

    .4 if appropriate, any servicing required by Schools other than the proposing School is properly organised and will be available for the lifespan of the programme;

    .5 the design of the programme complies with the University's Curriculum Principles, relevant academic regulations, structural framework and curriculum parameters and has taken account of the programme design process and any consultation with External Academic Advisors, Student Reviewers and Industry Advisors;

    .6 the programme incorporates the University's statutory requirements in regard to assessment regulations, skills development, etc.; including the number of re-assessment attempts (1 or 2) for the programme;

    .7 the programme incorporates and is aligned to the requirements of any relevant external benchmark statements including QAA subject benchmark statements, (including for Foundation Degrees, the QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark and for Apprenticeships the QAA Characteristics Statement), FHEQ qualification descriptors, and the requirements of relevant PSRBs;

    .8 the programme incorporates the desired policy direction and EDGE

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

5

as outlined in the current University Corporate Strategic Plan and Student Engagement Strategy;

.9 the School has fully considered the pedagogic and resource implications of adopting blended or online learning and the proposal aligns with the University's '10 Principles of Online Learning';

.10 the programme endorses and demonstrates means for developing employability skills through its learning and teaching strategies and any recommendations made by the Employability team have been addressed;

.11 the programme enables students to understand, learn and benefit from research-based enquiry, particularly that which is relevant to their discipline; where appropriate, undertake such research; and acquire and apply research skills appropriate to their level and discipline.

17. On submitting the draft programme documentation to the QED, the QED will undertake an initial scrutiny of the submission to ascertain that the documentation is compliant with requirements (structural, regulatory) and will inform the Standing Panel of any areas that require further development. Following scrutiny by the Standing Panel the QED, Standing Panel recommendations for changes will be passed to the Deputy/Associate Dean and the Programme Director for consideration before the submission of revised documentation for final academic approval.

18. In instances where the documentation is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the Quality Operations Manager will inform the proposing School that the proposal is unfit to be considered by the Standing Panel.

Documentation to be Submitted for Academic Approval by the Standing Panel

19. The submission document for academic approval must contain the following:

.1 Rationale including a brief background to the programme and its development, with reference to:

a) its location within and endorsement of the University's Strategic Plan, the Student Engagement Strategy and School Plans;

b) details of the market for the programme and, where appropriate (e.g. NVQs), information pertaining to relationships with industrial partners. Where the proposal aligns with marketing information provided by the Strategy Office, relevant extracts of that research may be included. Where an employability report has been completed by the Employability team, please attach this as an appendix and articulate here how the recommendations included

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

6

therein have been addressed in the programme design;

c) details of the main facilities available for the programme/scheme (including, where appropriate, any 'off-site' facilities to be used);

d) if appropriate, any delivery via blended or online learning (see also Volume 2, Section 3.2 *Validation of Programmes Delivered in Blended or Online Mode*;

e) if appropriate, identification of any modules that will be offered as short courses;

f) School in which the programme will reside, name of Programme Director;

g) anticipated month and year of first intake and anticipated intake numbers; where the programme is to be offered across more than one School this should also be signified;

h) the date on which the proposal was approved by the PDC to progress to validation;

i) if the programme deviates from the academic regulations or curriculum parameters, details of the proposed deviation and confirmation that the academic case for the deviation has been considered and approved by the Standing Panel;

j) a description of the student journey through the programme including the rationale linking learning outcomes, content, learning and teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies (including feedback to students) and the balance of assessment methods. This can be provided as a text narrative or include graphic depictions where useful;

k) a description of the approach to authentic learning including the arrangements for work-based or placement learning opportunities. Where a placement or work-based learning element isn't included in the programme please give an overview of the approach to authentic assessment;

l) a description of the programme approach to inclusivity to include a summary of the alignment of the proposal to relevant curriculum principles and the Student Engagement Strategy. This should include a reflection on the forms of assessment proposed across the programme and the arrangements to be put in place for alternative assessment opportunities for students;

m) details of stakeholder feedback on the programme proposal and how this has informed the design (the External Academic Advisor,

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

7

Student Reviewer and, where applicable, Industry Advisor report forms should be submitted here as an appendix. Responses to the stakeholder feedback should be completed by the proposing team.

.2 Programme Specification: See Volume 2, Section 1 for guidance notes and template Note: the programme specification must include identification of which modules cannot be compensated and state the method of calculating degree classifications (weighting 30% level 5 and 70% level 6 or 100% L6 unless it is a top-up award), or if deviation from this norm has been previously agreed by the Standing Panel. The number of re-assessment attempts (1 or 2) for the programme must also be included.

.3 Programme Specification Appendices which concisely demonstrate mapping exercises referred to in the programme specifications, for example:

a) programme learning outcomes and modules;

b) assessment methods and modules;

c) EDGE and modules;

d) programme and module learning outcomes to relevant benchmark statements (QAA subject benchmark statements, FHEQ qualification descriptors, Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark, Apprenticeship Characteristics Statement, relevant PSRB requirements);

e) employability enhancement and modules;

f) links between research and teaching (see para 15.11 above).

.4 Programme Specification Additional Appendices which expand on issues that are unique to the programme and are not adequately covered in the Academic Handbook, for example:

a) Assessment Strategy/Regulations – a School-wide or programme specific document;

b) Placement Learning Handbook to include details of the management, support and assessment principles involved;

c) Where student exchange and/or other forms of study away which might involve third party assessment, details of the management and supervision of such elements, and the methods by which both academic credit and marking/assessment levels will be assured with regards to those required by the University;

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

8

> d) In the case of major projects or dissertations or similar, the arrangements for their selection, supervision and assessment.

.5   Module Descriptors (See Volume 2, Section 1 Guidance Notes and Templates).

.6   Curriculum Vitae of all staff who will teach on the programme (corporate CVs are available from the Human Resources Unit) and a map or diagram relating module tutors to module titles.

.7   Draft Student Programme Handbook (to include details of the personal tutoring support that will be available to students).

.8   For collaborative provision only:

> a) Report of the Initial Vetting Visit to the collaborating institution (If a new partner);

N.B.   The School should ensure in the case of a proposal where some of submission documents are in Welsh, that English translations are included.

Definitive Programme Document

20.   Once approval of a programme has been granted by the Standing Panel and has been approved through the University's academic committee structure, Programme Directors are required to send to the QED an electronic PDF version of the definitive programme document, which will be held as a source of information about the programme.

Academic Approval by the Standing Panel: Scope and Process

Scope

21.   The nature of the Standing Panel's scrutiny of the proposal will reflect the nature of the proposed programme. For all new programme proposals, details of the facilities that will be available to the programme will be included in the submission documentation. In the case of collaborative partners, a tour of facilities (in-person or virtually) by the Standing Panel may be required.

22.   The Standing Panel will explore issues arising from the documentation and hold meetings with the proposing teams (and other stakeholders where deemed necessary) and assure itself of the following:

> 1. The curriculum aligns with the Student Engagement Strategy and Curriculum Principles and any recommendations made by PDC have been observed;
>
> 2. Any proposed deviations from the University's curriculum

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

9

parameters including those for contact hours, optional modules, credit weightings, placements, and authentic assessment and modes of delivery are supported by a robust academic case;

3. The academic coherence of the programme and the appropriateness of the programme aims, learning outcomes and outcomes across the proposed modules;

4. The soundness of the student journey through the programme including the rationale linking learning outcomes, content, learning and teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies (including feedback to students) and the balance of assessment methods;

5. That the proposer has taken into account any recommendations made at PDC stage in regard to embedding employability through curriculum design;

6. That the proposal has been responsive to stakeholder feedback internally and externally;

7. That the proposal aligns with the University's requirements for different modes of learning (on-campus/blended/online);

8. The relationship/comparability of the programme in relation to any national benchmarks or standards (e.g. QAA subject benchmark statement, FHEQ qualification descriptor, Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark, QAA Apprenticeships Characteristics Statement, PSRB requirements, local ministry requirements);

9. Where professional practice, work placement, etc. are incorporated, the management, support and assessment principles involved and that there is general compliance with the University's policy and guidelines for work-based and placement learning;

10. Where student exchange and/or other forms of study away from the University which might involve third party assessment, the management and supervision of such elements, and the methods by which both academic credit and marking/assessment levels will be assured with regards to those required by the University;

11. In instances where online or blended learning is to be employed, the approach to be used, support available, the learning materials proposed and the alignment of the proposals with the University's 10 Principles of Online Learning;

12. Where a proposal is an existing curriculum undergoing review, that the proposed changes reflect the performance of the programme to date;

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

10

13. In the case of major projects or dissertations or similar, the arrangements for their selection, supervision and assessment;

14. The quality of the Student Programme Handbook and learning platform;

15. Arrangements for personal tutoring;

16. That all required documentation for approval has been completed fully and appropriately.

In the case of new programmes submitted by collaborative partners, the Panel will also seek to ensure:

17. That the management and academic staffing is sufficient to ensure that academic standards will be achieved successfully, and that the quality of provision will be at a comparable level;

18. That appropriate learning resources and student support mechanisms are in place to deliver the programme;

19. In the case of franchised provision that any minor changes proposed to the curriculum (e.g. to contextualise) are acceptable in terms of content, breadth and academic level.

23. The list above is not intended to be restrictive or exhaustive.

Proposal Scrutiny

24. Consideration of proposals will be undertaken via the scrutiny of submitted documentation and meetings with the Standing Panel. In the case of proposals for new partners, complex modes of provision or where there is a significant PSRB requirement, the Panel may determine that meetings in addition to those listed below should also be held. Meetings to consider a proposal will typically include:

.1 a meeting of the Panel with the Dean of School, School Deputy Dean, Associate Dean: Student Engagement and Programme Director to explore context and management issues;

.2 a meeting, or meetings, of the Panel with the Programme Team to investigate fully the programme proposal including rationale, content, assessment and entry to the programme; it is expected that all Programme Team members, including external lecturers where there is substantial input, will attend this meeting; the Dean of School and/or School Deputy/Associate Dean may also be present as appropriate;

.3 where appropriate, a tour of facilities, both general (for example, library and information technology) and those specific to the programme;

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

11

.4 where appropriate, a meeting with students from the School in which the programme is to be located.

Formulation of Standing Panel Decisions

25. Approval should not be recommended to the Academic Quality & Standards Committee if the Panel retains major reservations about the aims, academic standard, structure, content, assessment regulations, etc., after scrutiny and any dialogue with the Programme Team is completed.

26. Decisions should be made on the basis of the documentary submission and pressures resulting from the timing of approval should not influence the academic decision.

27. The situation which causes most difficulty arises where the document is deficient but where the reservations of the Panel have been satisfied in discussion. In such cases, the Panel must be satisfied that the issues have been or can be resolved and that the documentation will be amended accordingly.

28. Following consideration of the final academic proposal, the Standing Panel may make the following recommendations:

   .1 that the programme be approved;

   .2 that the programme be approved subject to minor changes to the documentation;

   .3 that the programme be approved subject to ongoing monitoring by AQSC. In the case of resource issues, including staffing, this may result in a requirement for an action plan, to be monitored through the Academic Quality & Standards Committee;

   .4 that the programme be not approved but resubmitted after a process of further development or re-design;

   .5 that the programme be rejected, on the grounds that neither the application of changes nor further development would result in a programme of appropriate quality or standard.

29. In the case of recommendation 1, 2 or 3 above, AQSC will be advised to approve the programmes (following, where applicable, the completion of any minor changes or an appropriate action plan).

CONFIRMATION OF VALIDATION

30. The following process will apply if changes above the threshold of a modification are proposed in the interval between validation and recruitment, provided that interval does not exceed two years. Such occasions may arise, for example, where a new programme does not recruit

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

12

the year following validation.

Purpose

31. The purpose of confirmation is to approve changes to programme content, organisation or delivery that were not covered by the original validation. For example, in the case of a programme being re- structured, the focus of the confirmation will be on the re-structure and any new content. The focus would not necessarily revisit content that remains as originally validated but has merely been re-distributed as a consequence of the proposed re-structure. In approving the changes, the Panel will be confirming that the changed programme is aligned with the University's Strategic Plan, will attain appropriate levels of quality and standards, and takes cognisance of external benchmarks as necessary. Any proposed changes to the programme title, award, mode or language will need PDC approval before academic scrutiny by the Standing Panel.

Submission Documents

32. The set of documentation to be submitted are as prescribed in the validation procedure. The rationale must justify and describe the proposed changes clearly and identify where the changes can be located in the programme specification and module descriptors.

Process

33. In the following respects, the process will echo that for validation: Objective scrutiny; School quality assurance prior to submission; QED review of draft submission; formal submission to the Panel via QED; recommendation AQSC; definitive programme document submitted to QED.

34. Where the process may differ from the original validation is that scrutiny via the Standing Panel may be replaced by scrutiny conducted via an on-going dialogue between an allocated member of the Panel and the DD and Programme Team. Changes to the submission will be made iteratively over the approval interval with work signed-off by the Panel member as it is completed; the approval interval being the duration between formal submission and a date agreed for final approval. In normal circumstances, the approval interval will be four working weeks.

Formulation of Panel Decisions

35. As with the original validation, the panel should not recommend approval to AQSC if it retains reservations about the proposed changes.

36. The panel may not set conditions; either the work has been submitted to the required standard by the end of the approval interval or it has not. In the latter case, the panel will recommend to AQSC that the programme remain as originally validated.

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

13

Programme Validation Timeline

Action	Responsibility	Deadline
Alert QED to proposal including title, level and lead proposer	Dean of School	By September
Create employability report (as appropriate)	Employability	By October
Submit programme for approval to PDC	Dean of School	By October
Meet with QED to confirm proposed date for final academic approval and curriculum design support needs.	Lead Proposer/DD/AD	By November
Present annual schedule of proposals to Standing Panel and Academic Quality & Standards Committee	QED	By November
Propose External Advisor(s) for QED approval	DD/AD	By November
Allocate Student Reviewer(s)	QED	By November
Submit draft academic proposal to QED	School D/AD	40 working days before final approval date
Undertake review and submit report and proposal documents to Standing Panel	QED	35 working days before final approval date.
Submit comments on draft academic proposal. Confirm if any additional meetings are required with the proposers.	Standing Panel	30 working days before final approval date

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

14

Inform School of QED and Panel recommendations and provide support as necessary	QED	30-25 working days before final approval date
Submit final academic proposal to QED	School D/AD	15 working days before final approval date
Review final proposal and inform School of any recommended changes	QED	10 working days before final approval date
Submit final academic approval to QED for Standing Panel scrutiny	DD/AD	5 working days working days before final approval date
Meetings of proposing team and Standing Panel held	School/Standing Panel/Partners	Final approval date
Approve final academic proposal or refer back to School	Standing Panel	Final approval date
Communicate outcomes and submit any recommendations for approval to AQSC	QED	5 working days after final approval date

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

15

<u>The Validation of Degree Apprenticeships: A Guide for Panel Members and Programme Teams.</u>

The generality of the University's validation requirements set out above apply also to the validation of Degree Apprenticeship programmes.

The following are supplemental considerations to be taken into account by the Standing Panel when scrutinising a proposal to approve a degree apprenticeship programme and by the Programme Team when writing their degree apprenticeship validation submission. These supplemental considerations take cognisance of the QAA publication *Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships* (second edition) and the QAA's Apprenticeships Characteristics Statement. Attention should also be paid to the University's [Guidelines for Work-based and Placement Learning](#) which sets out the University's minimum standards for work-based and placement learning. Note that although the ASET Good Practice Guide referenced in the University's Guidelines is still current, its references to the UK Code are not. The relevant advice and guidance themes regarding Enabling Student Achievement, Partnerships, Assessment, Learning and Teaching and WBL can be found in the [Revised UK Quality Code](#). In particular, advice on developing, implementing and evaluating apprenticeships is available in the [UK Quality Code's](#) [Advice and Guidance on WBL.](#)

Background to Degree Apprenticeships in Wales

Degree apprenticeships are work-based learning programmes that provide opportunities for individuals working in Wales to develop relevant industry knowledge and job competencies while in paid employment, gaining the experience of doing a particular job. Requirements for completing a degree apprenticeship are set out in degree apprenticeship frameworks commissioned by the Welsh Government that have been developed with and are recognised by employers across an industry or range of industries.

Welsh Government has developed three Regional Skills Partnerships to identify and respond to the skills needs of Wales, each of which has higher education representation. This offers the opportunity for collaboration across the higher education and work-based learning sectors to best meet the needs of employers and to avoid nugatory competition. HEFCW-funded institutions have been involved in the development of higher-level apprenticeships with a commitment to improving access, equality and equity of opportunity through flexible learning pathways. This would include top-up degrees, strengthening progression pathways into the Degree Apprenticeship being delivered. HEFCW-funded institutions are also encouraged to offer delivery through other providers where it best meets the needs of the employer and the apprentice.

A full Degree Apprenticeship will be a minimum of three years in duration, although they can be longer to ensure that the apprenticeship student has sufficient time to meet the apprenticeship framework requirements while working.

Setting Academic Standards

The University has responsibility for both assuring the quality of the apprenticeship training it provides and for the academic standards and quality of its degree apprenticeship qualifications**.** The UK Quality Code is clear that higher education providers can be flexible in the design and application of internal quality assurance processes to ensure that these are appropriate to the different timescales and contexts

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

16

within which they may need to operate, and which can support the central role that employers play in apprenticeships. This can be achieved without undermining the broad principles that underpin the assurance of academic standards and quality.

<u>Degree Apprenticeship Standard</u>

Qualifications included on the degree apprenticeship frameworks will have gone through a process to ensure that they meet the requirements of an apprenticeship framework and the needs of employers. Therefore prior to being submitted for University approval, a proposed degree apprenticeship programme will first have been accepted onto the relevant Apprenticeship Framework for Wales, which defines the learning and skills outcomes expected to be covered by a degree apprenticeship.

The Standing Panel need to ensure that the Apprenticeship Framework learning and skills outcomes have been mapped to the learning outcomes of the proposed degree apprenticeship.

<u>Recruitment, Selection and Admission</u>

The selection of apprentices in Wales is principally an employer-led activity, as all apprentices will be recruited on an employed status. Their job role will need to fulfil the requirements of the level 6 Apprenticeship framework identified for delivery and admission processes in Wales for Degree Apprenticeships and comprise the employer and awarding body entry requirements. The University will recognise prior learning, particularly where individuals have undertaken apprenticeships at lower levels. Where such prior learning has been recognised, the Degree Apprenticeships will be of a shorter duration.

The Standing Panel should ensure that the proposed entry requirements set are within the relevant approved apprenticeship standards as well as the University's requirements.

<u>Degree Apprenticeship Support</u>

Apprenticeship students will need to have access to the full range of student services and support offered by the University.

The Standing Panel should consider how accessibility to these services by students who are also employees may be achieved.

The University needs to be clear and transparent with the employer and the apprenticeship student about the commitments they are signing up to including commitment to release the apprenticeship student for any off-the-job training. In addition, the employer and the University must be clear that the apprenticeship student will have the opportunity, in the workplace, to meet the competency requirements of the apprenticeship framework.

The Standing Panel should consider proposals to work with employers to ensure that the working environment is appropriate to enable apprentices to achieve the skills and learning outcomes of the proposed degree apprenticeship programme.

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

17

Learning, Teaching and Apprenticeship Student Development

The majority of learning and training takes place 'on-the-job' while apprentices are engaged in work activity. The integration of on-and off-the-job learning and training is fundamental for delivery of a high-quality apprenticeship.

The Standing Panel should consider who will support learning and how are they qualified, supported and developed. If workplace mentors are involved, how are they developed and supported and how is the interaction between workplace mentor, apprentice and University's tutor structured?

The Standing Panel should explore arrangements for the provision of individual learning plans by the Programme Team.

The Standing Panel should ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all individuals and organisations involved in supporting apprentice development and achievement are clear.

Apprenticeship Student Experience/Engagement

Student apprentices have rights and entitlements as students and rights and obligations as employees. The University needs to navigate these different rights and obligations and ensure that they can be appropriately aligned. The Student Union will need to ensure that it can represent the voice of student apprentices and appropriate student representation will also need to be established.

The Standing Panel should explore the opportunities afforded by the degree apprenticeship proposal for apprenticeship students to contribute to the shaping of their learning experience and to engage in the quality assurance and enhancement of their learning. As employers play an equally significant role in apprenticeships, it is important that the proposed degree apprenticeship includes arrangements for managing and reconciles the requirements and demands of both apprentices and employers.

Assessment

Unlike England, the Degree Apprenticeship Framework in Wales has no separate End Point Assessment, with the achievement of the overall framework based on assessment of the qualification success and achievement of the relevant module learning outcomes in the credit and qualification.

Where the University works with others to deliver degree apprenticeships, delivery partners (that is, those without degree awarding powers) are expected to operate assessment processes within the University's academic framework and regulations in accordance with their delegated role. All those involved in assessment should be trained in effective ways to evaluate the extent to which learning outcomes have been achieved, including delivery partners and employers, where they are involved in assessment processes.

The Standing Panel should consider whether all those who are involved in assessment have undertaken appropriate training and are competent to undertake their various roles and responsibilities.

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

18

The degree apprenticeship proposal may involve the assessment of occupational or professional competence, particularly where the apprenticeship provides a vehicle for PSRB recognition, as well as the assessment of academic standards. Such assessment may occur simultaneously or may involve separate assessments. The University is primarily responsible for the assessment that pertains to its award but may also be responsible for assessment that directly relates to other apprenticeship and/or professional standards.

In this case, the Standing Panel should consider how the various assessment requirements of the proposed degree apprenticeship as a whole might be most effectively coordinated.

External Examining

The University must ensure that all examiners appointed to its degree apprenticeships are suitably qualified to undertake the role, which might mean, for example, having an appropriate level of practice-based expertise. The required balance of subject and practice expertise might be achieved through the appointment of two external examiners, one a subject expert and the other with practice expertise.

The Standing Panel should consider the appropriateness of the external arrangements for the proposed degree apprenticeship.

Complaints and Appeals

Apprentices following a University degree apprenticeship are its students and as such have recourse to the University's complaints and academic appeals processes.

The Standing Panel should satisfy itself with the accessibility and inclusiveness of the University's complaints and appeals procedures in the context of the degree apprenticeship proposal.

Monitoring and Review

The regular monitoring and review of degree apprenticeship programmes will ensure that the appropriate learning opportunities continue to be available to apprentices. In degree apprenticeships, the learning and training environment will be multi-location and a number of parties will be involved in the design, delivery and assessment of a degree apprenticeship including the employer and workplace mentors, for example. In addition, there may also be a requirement for external monitoring and review. Providers should ensure that all those involved in an apprentice's learning and training experience are included in monitoring and review processes.

It will also be expected that the apprentice should have their progress reviewed every two months as part of the apprenticeship contract.

The Standing Panel should ensure that the monitoring and review arrangements of the proposed degree apprenticeship allow for the input of all relevant parties.

Additional Submission Documents for the Validation of Degree Apprenticeships

In addition to the usual validation submission documents, Programme Teams are required to submit:

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

19

- Apprenticeship Contract

- Apprenticeship Learning Agreement

- A mapping of the relevant Wales Apprenticeship Framework learning and skills outcomes to the learning outcomes of the proposed degree apprenticeship programme

- Confirmation of the alignment of the programme to the QAA Apprenticeship Characteristics Statement

<u>Programme Specification Contextualisation</u>

Note that appropriate contextualisation, as exemplified below, should be included in the Programme Specification for a Degree Apprenticeship under the following headings in the Programme Specification Template:

<u>Normal Duration of Programme</u>

The minimum duration of this degree apprenticeship programme is three years.

<u>Criteria for Admission to the Programme</u>

[Enter programme-specific requirements not explicitly covered in the Academic Handbook and supplement with contextualization as exemplified below]

Applicants must be in full time relevant employment in a role aligned to the Wales Framework Specifications for (insert name of Framework e.g. IT/Digital Framework). Decisions on entry for this programme will be made in partnership between the University and the Employer ensuring that the candidate meets the standard academic entry requirements as well as the professional and employer entry requirements, which varies between employer. This will be determined pre- application by the relationship manager, industry link within the Programme Team and employer representative. All apprentices enter into a three way learning agreement upon acceptance to the programme.

<u>Aim of the Programme</u>

[Enter concise general overview and supplement with contextualization as exemplified below]

Competencies additional to the knowledge outcomes of the programme will be assessed within the workplace by the employer; specifically professional behaviour, health and safety and company roles, responsibilities and working practices. This will be evidenced within the three-way progress meetings throughout the programme by the personal/industry tutor. These are detailed in the apprenticeship framework mapping document attached to this specification and are required by Specification of Apprenticeship Standards, Wales.

<u>Distinctive features of the programme</u>

[Enter a reference to the Cardiff Met EDGE characteristics and supplement with contextualization as exemplified below]

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

20

Students will develop and apply the knowledge and professional skills developed within this programme of learning to their workplace. Developed as a three-way learning partnership between the employer, the student and the academic Programme Team, this programme will enable students to develop skills, which will be in high demand in the future, meeting regional skills gaps. Designed in response to employer need, students may for example study one day per week with the remaining four days in employment or via block teaching periods with the same benefits and entitlements as a standard employee. By utilising the full calendar year and applying core tenets of work-based learning, students will achieve their award within the same period as a standard full-time student, minimising the opportunity cost for employers and ensuring that the future skills needs of employers are met as effectively and efficiently as possible. All aspects of this programme and its delivery align with the relevant competencies and outcomes detailed on the [insert name] Apprenticeship Framework [insert year] for the [insert name of programme area e.g. Applied Data Science] as well as complying with the provisions of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009), Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales and aligning with the QAA guidance for apprenticeship programmes.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies

[Enter a brief description of teaching, learning and assessment strategies and supplement with contextualization as exemplified below]

In addition to the learning and teaching strategies referred to above, apprentices are expected to demonstrate professional competencies and behaviour within the workplace. A three-way learning plan is agreed between employer, apprentice and University which will detail the on-the-job training and professional competencies detailed within the relevant apprenticeship framework. These will be reviewed as part of the progress update process every two months and is specific to the individual employer (such as working practices, company structure and processes, induction, and professional behaviour). The personal/industry tutor will be responsible for gathering progress and behaviour information from the academic team and feeding this information into the progress update process. The notes from these meetings will be shared with relevant academic staff if they impact on any aspect of the teaching or learning required.

Work based/placement learning statement

[Enter information about location and activities to be undertaken to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated,

Students are expected to be in a relevant full-time position and to apply relevant learning to their workplace through applied projects and utilising real-world examples within their assessments.

Support for students and their learning

[In addition to the mandatory standard text and supplement with contextualization as exemplified below]

Programme Management

Each student will be assigned a personal tutor who in partnership with the enterprise

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

21

relationship manager assigned to the employer will liaise in relation to the individual learning agreement and plan, ensuring that feedback and progress is shared with employer, student and funding body. This is a requirement of the Welsh Apprenticeship guidance. Records will be stored as per the standard University data protection policy and process.

<u>Student Feedback</u>

In addition to the University's student feedback mechanisms, the Programme Team will liaise and gather employer feedback relevant to HEFCW requirements.

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Volume 2 - 03.1 - Validation of New Programmes – modified 06.01.14, 15.05.14, 20.10.15, 07.03.16, 23.06.16, 27.03.19, 27.09.19, 13.08.21; last modified 26.08.22

22