

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

(Approved by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, 15 October 2008)

1. Aims

The aim of the University's Professional Development Framework is to provide a simple, quick and flexible way of offering University credits for professional development learning based on existing or new modules, or externally-devised and/or delivered courses.

2. Design of the Framework and Records of Credit Achieved

Successful achievement of credits in the Framework does not lead to any University award but a record of credit is issued to successful students. Records are headed either:

- **Professional Development** (for credits at levels FE3, HE4 and HE5) or
- **Advanced Professional Development** (for credits at levels HE6 and HE7)

and marked with the University's crest.

Records contain:

- the full name of the student and the statement that they have successfully completed a programme of study in:
- the name given to the particular collection of professional development credits (usually - but not necessarily - the same as the module title in the case of single module credits; individual names may be given to collections of credits made up of more than one module);
- the number of credits and their level(s) which the student has been awarded;
- Vice Chancellor's signature and date.

If any of the named collections of credit has been endorsed, accredited or otherwise approved by an external body as being equivalent to an accepted qualification title devised by them and/or as conferring eligibility for professional status in a particular field, then this will be stated on the record, if approved through initial validation or subsequently.

Where it is deemed appropriate to award a specific CPD award to recognize a particular collection of professional development credits, the titles **Foundation Certificate, Certificate, Diploma, and Advanced Diploma** (of Continuing Professional Development) will apply for awards at levels 3, 4, 5, and 6 and 7 respectively. The volume of credit associated with a named professional development programme, whether it leads to credits or an award, should be less

than 120 sub-degree or undergraduate credits, or 60 postgraduate credits. Market demand will however normally restrict the size of such programmes. Students studying for professional development credits will have their qualification aim recorded as 'undergraduate credit' or 'postgraduate credit' for the purposes of the University's HESA return and the funding claim to HEFCE, unless a specific CPD award is conferred.

3. Validation of On-Campus Professional Development Programmes

We do not ask for a programme specification or a programme handbook for professional development credits because they do not lead directly to the conferment of any University award and because credits are made up of single modules; module descriptions and module guides will therefore already exist. Handbooks describing the totality of the professional development offer in a particular subject area can however be a useful marketing tool.

- **For programmes using only existing current modules, with no changes**, approval requires:
 - an ADA3 form for the programme (<http://data.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/Word/ADAP3.doc>), authorised by the Director of School/Centre or nominee;
 - a module listing if the programme comprises more than one module (http://data.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/Word/VAL_ANNEX_R.doc).
- **For programmes using one or more new modules and/or which require changes to existing modules**, approval requires:
 - an ADA3 form to define the programme, authorised by the Director of School/Centre or nominee (<http://data.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/Word/ADAP3.doc>);
 - module specifications from the online module database for any new and amended modules, plus a module listing if the programme comprises more than one module (http://data.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/Word/VAL_ANNEX_R.doc);
 - evidence of consideration and approval of the new and/or amended module(s) at programme and School levels, via submission of the usual minor modification request (http://data.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/Word/VAL_%20ANNEX_%20L.doc), with external examiner comment (http://data.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/Word/VAL_ANNEX_M.doc).

If the new modules are simultaneously being added to an existing mainstream programme then of course a revised programme specification document is required for that programme, including revised maps of how the modules making up the programme contribute to the programme's intended learning outcomes, skills, and assessment methodologies. The requirements, and examples of maps, are provided in Annex P of the Validation Handbook (http://data.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/PDF/VAL_ANNEX_K.pdf).

Approval will be via the Chair of the Standing Panel for AP(E)L and CPD or the Chair of the Standing Approvals Panel of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

4. Professional Development Programmes as Collaborative Provision

Institutional Appraisal

- For professional development programmes to be delivered in collaboration with another public or private provider, including those based on the validation or accreditation of employer-devised courses, learners will be registering for University credits whilst learning, teaching and assessment will usually be delivered wholly or predominantly by the partner on their premises. In addition to assuring **academic standards** (for which the University, as the awarding body, cannot delegate responsibility), we also have obligations to assure the **quality of learning opportunities**. To an extent determined partly by the nature of the relationship and of the delivery, we need to confirm the **appropriateness of the learning environment for the delivery of HE programmes**, including matters such as learning, teaching, assessment, student access to learning resources and student support, and the existence and/or applicability of legal and quasi-legal policies and procedures related to health and safety, equal opportunities, disability, complaints and appeals, etc.
- We are therefore obliged, for new partners, to conduct an institutional and/or site appraisal of a nature and scale determined by the University's current procedures for the approval of new collaborative partners and/or delivery locations. **An ADA2 form** (<http://data.bolton.ac.uk/agas/Word/ADA2.doc>) will therefore be required to seek University approval of the new partnership and to initiate the appropriate appraisal. With the approval of the Deputy Vice Chancellor the institutional and/or site appraisal and validation (see below) may be conducted simultaneously.
- Employer-devised and delivered programmes will often be defined as 'closed courses' for the purposes of our HESA return, i.e. available only to a specific group and not open for general application. Unless the programme has specifically been granted co-funded student numbers from HEFCE, such 'closed' programmes are not eligible for HEFCE funding.

Accountability and Responsibility

- **Accountability** for the quality of learning opportunities is to the body that is **funding the provision** and is borne by the **direct recipient** of that funding, whoever is delivering the provision. **Responsibility** for the quality of learning opportunities can however be delegated under the terms of the agreement between the University and the partner. Accountability-responsibility relationships can become complex in collaborative provision. To illustrate: where an employer is wholly funding and delivering the provision themselves on their premises, they are effectively self-accountable and will also have delegated responsibility for quality. If there was a University contribution to delivery, for which we received some funding from the employer, then we would be accountable to the employer and also responsible for the quality of what we delivered. If the provision was co-funded by HEFCE and the employer, then **in addition to the foregoing**, the University also remains accountable to HEFCE.

- However the professional development provision is funded and whether it is delivered on- or off-campus by partner and/or University staff, the University, as a HEFCE-funded institution, is subject to scrutiny of its overall management of quality and standards through QAA institutional and collaborative provision audits. Professional development programmes, particularly collaborative provision, will be within the scope of such scrutiny. **It is therefore very important that responsibilities for the quality of collaborative professional development provision are carefully considered, discussed, agreed, and embodied in the formal partnership agreement and other validation documents.** Ultimately, this is all for the benefit and protection of the students.

Validation of Collaborative Professional Development Programmes

- Validation of professional development programmes designed and delivered by an employer, or delivered in association with another partner, e.g. a Further Education College or private training provider, is effected via the Standing Panel for AP(E)L and CPD of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Where any of the provision is newly devised, the Panel will require **independent external verification** of the appropriateness of the outcomes, curriculum and assessment to the level and volume of credit being sought. The curriculum should be specified using the University module template. **Where the partner is new**, the Sub-committee will meet with relevant staff from the employer or other partner organisation and from the proposing subject area in the School, usually at the location where delivery is to take place.
- Currently, for any collaborative professional development proposal, the following are required **in addition to any applicable documentation listed in 3 above**:
 - The approved ADA2 form;
 - a draft formal agreement (<https://myfiles.bolton.ac.uk/staff-shared/Public/University%20Documents/Academic%20Quality%20and%20Standards%20Documents>);
 - partner staff CVs and their module delivery responsibilities;
 - a resources statement providing factual information on the physical and learning resources to be deployed in delivering the programme and on student access to the same;
 - a programme or module handbook or guide. For collaborative provision, certain matters must be suitably explained to students in a handbook or guide and detailed in the formal agreement. The nature of the relationship (e.g. whether it is a recognition, credit recognition, validation, or franchise agreement) will determine the extent to which students will be able to avail themselves of University facilities and be governed by University policies, procedures, regulations and administrative processes relating to assessment, complaints, appeals, course committees, assessment boards, etc. It is important that these matters are made clear to students.

5. Management and Quality Assurance of Professional Development Programmes

All professional development programmes need a 'home' course committee and assessment board and a role akin to a 'programme leader' or 'link tutor' to manage the programme and any student cohort(s) separately from any 'mainstream' students who might be taking the same module(s).

The way in which the University manages the quality and standards of its professional development programmes comes within the scope of the relevant QAA scrutiny; such programmes are therefore subject to the appropriate annual monitoring and periodic review requirements for campus-based and collaborative arrangements. Further information on the requirements is available in the University guides to these procedures.

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Dean of Academic Quality and Standards

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