

VALIDATION DOCUMENTATION, VALIDATION CRITERIA and the AGENDA FOR VALIDATION EVENTS

A. Validation Documentation

The typical documentation to be provided to Validation Panels is listed below for the most common major proposals¹. The documentation may however be modified by agreement in individual cases to help describe and support such proposals (see section 3.4 of the validation Handbook in particular).

Details of the documentation and approval mechanisms for a wider range of proposals, including any involvement by external panel members, are provided in Annex B of the Validation Handbook. Note however that it is not possible to definitively prescribe the precise requirements for each and every proposal in advance of gaining an understanding of the proposal. The final documentation and approval mechanisms will therefore need to be agreed **in all cases** with the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards, either through the usual planning meeting with the Panel Chair and School/Centre representatives held in advance of the validation event, or otherwise.

It should be emphasised that whilst documentation is of course important in helping to express the Programme Team's intentions with respect to the various aspects of the programme, it is not the only source of evidence available to a Panel. Thus, full account should be taken of the various meetings held with the Programme Team and others and of other activities during the course of a validation event, and of available contextual information, to help the Panel determine whether, all things considered, they have sufficient confidence in the Programme Team and their intentions to be able to approve the proposal, specifying conditions and/or recommendations as appropriate.

The validation documentation applicable to a particular proposal should be bound as a single document wherever feasible, using a cover page as described in Annex H of the Validation Handbook. There may be occasions (e.g. if it has been agreed that sample learning or other additional materials should be provided as part of the documentation) where it is more practical to supply the additional documentation separately.

¹ Part A of this annex does not apply to programmes leading to Professional Development credits or CPD awards, for which the documentation requirements are described in the University's [Professional Development Framework document](#). The validation criteria described in Part B of this annex will however apply as appropriate to such credits and awards.

1. **Documentation for new programmes**

1.1 For on-campus or collaborative, off-campus delivery

- a. Approved **ADA1**² (minus the business plan but including any comments from the Deputy Vice Chancellor); any amendments, clarifications, or elaborations to the ADA1 should be provided in an addendum.
- b. **Course Marketing Information**, complying with University and/or Partner requirements, as appropriate to the proposed programme.
- c. **Programme Handbook** (Annex J of the Validation Handbook), including the **Programme Specification Document** (with maps of how the modules contribute to the programme's intended learning outcomes, transferable skills, and assessment methods) and all **Module Specifications**, in full, naming current module tutors.
- d. **Staff Curricula Vitae** (Annex S of the Validation Handbook) for all staff contributing to the delivery of any modules available within the Programme, including any co-credited modules. CV's should reflect individual research, scholarship and other professional development activities supporting delivery of the proposal.
- e. **Statement of tutor responsibilities** for module delivery, indicating which member(s) of staff will be responsible for the delivery of each module.
- f. The Programme Team's **Professional Development Plans**.
- g. **Statement of learning resources** summarising the specialised learning resources which are or will be available to support programme delivery, including laboratories, studios and other specialised accommodation, specialised equipment, printed and electronic textbooks, journals, periodicals and databases.
- h. **ADA3** and **Module Listing** forms to permit the setting up of the programmes on the University's course and module records databases (these will need to be resubmitted post-event if the validation process results in changes).

1.2 Additionally, for collaborative, off-campus delivery

- i. Approved **ADA2**³, including any comments from the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
- j. **Institutional Appraisal Report**⁴ for new partners and/or delivery locations (unless appraisal is to be incorporated within the validation event).

² An approved ADA1 confirms to the Panel that the University is committed to delivering the proposal and is satisfied that it helps to fulfil the School's/Centre's and University's strategic and specific goals, that there are indicators of sufficient demand, that the underpinning academic infrastructure is in place, that the human and physical resources needed to deliver the proposal are present or will be forthcoming, and that the business plan demonstrates financial viability. These matters are therefore not expected to be the focus of Panel scrutiny and indeed the business plan component of the ADA1 is not provided to the Panel. The substantive ADA1 thus provides background information to help the Panel determine whether the proposal, as presented, meets the intentions declared in the ADA1.

³ The approved ADA2 likewise confirms that the University is committed to delivering the proposal in line with its collaborative partnerships strategy and that the outline arrangements for the collaborative proposal are in keeping with the University's expectations.

⁴ The institutional appraisal process and subsequent report will reflect the nature of the partner organisation, the type of collaborative arrangement proposed and whether the partner, delivery location and/or programme are already subject to a collaborative partnership agreement with the University.

- k. **Draft formal agreement** for the collaborative arrangement, including the agreed distribution of responsibilities for the **Management of Collaborative Programmes**.
 - l. Any **additional Programme Handbook** to be supplied to students at the Partner organisation by the collaborative partner.
- 2. Documentation for existing, University-validated programmes to be delivered off-campus with a new or existing partner under a new collaborative arrangement**
- a. Approved **ADA2**, including any comments from the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
 - b. **Course Marketing Information**, complying with University and/or Partner requirements, as appropriate to the proposed programme.
 - c. **Institutional Appraisal Report** for new partners and/or delivery locations (unless appraisal is to be incorporated within the validation event).
 - d. **Draft formal agreement** for the collaborative arrangement, including the agreed distribution of responsibilities for the **Management of Collaborative Programmes**.
 - e. **Programme Handbook** (Annex J of the Validation Handbook), including the **Programme Specification Document** (with maps of how the modules contribute to the programme's intended learning outcomes, transferable skills, and assessment methods) and all **Module Specifications**, in full, naming current module tutors.
 - f. **Staff Curricula Vitae** (Annex S of the Validation Handbook) for all staff contributing to the delivery of any modules available within the Programme, including any co-credited modules. CV's should reflect individual research, scholarship and other professional development activities supporting delivery of the proposal.
 - g. **Statement of tutor responsibilities** for module delivery, indicating which member(s) of staff will be responsible for the delivery of each module.
 - h. The Programme Team's **Professional Development Plans**.
 - i. **Statement of learning resources** summarising the specialised learning resources which are or will be available to support programme delivery, including laboratories, studios and other specialised accommodation, specialised equipment, printed and electronic textbooks, journals, periodicals and databases.
 - j. **ADA3 and Module Listing** forms to permit the setting up of the programmes on the University's course and module records databases (these will need to be resubmitted post-event if the validation process results in changes).
- 3. Documentation for major modifications to existing programmes**
- a. Approved **ADA1** (minus the business plan but including any comments from the Deputy Vice Chancellor); any amendments, clarifications, or elaborations to the ADA1 (in particular to further describe and explain the modifications actually made) should be provided in an addendum.

- b. **Revised Course Marketing Information (if appropriate)**, complying with University and/or Partner requirements, as appropriate to the proposed programme.
- c. **Programme Handbook** (Annex J of the Validation Handbook), including the **Programme Specification Document** (with maps of how the modules contribute to the programme's intended learning outcomes, transferable skills, and assessment methods) and all **Module Specifications**, in full, naming current module tutors.
- d. **ADA3** and **Module Listing** forms to permit the setting up of the revised programmes on the University's course and module records databases (these will need to be resubmitted post-event if the validation process results in changes).

Additionally, if and as agreed as necessary to reflect and support the nature and scale of proposed modifications:

- e. **Staff Curricula Vitae** (Annex S of the Validation Handbook) for all staff contributing to the delivery of any modules available within the Programme, including any co-credited modules. CV's should reflect individual research, scholarship and other professional development activities supporting delivery of the proposal.
- f. **Statement of tutor responsibilities** for module delivery, indicating which member(s) of staff will be responsible for the delivery of each module.
- g. The Programme Team's **Professional Development Plans**.
- h. **Statement of learning resources** summarising the specialised learning resources which are or will be available to support programme delivery, including laboratories, studios and other specialised accommodation, specialised equipment, printed and electronic textbooks, journals, periodicals and databases.

Additionally, for collaborative provision

- i. Other documentation relevant to the nature and scale of the modifications. This may encompass, for example, an approved ADA2 form, a revised formal agreement between the University and the partner, including amendments to the management of collaborative programmes.

B. Validation Criteria and the Agenda for Validation Events

The validation process for proposed **new programmes and delivery arrangements** will address all of the headings and criteria below. For proposed **major modifications to existing programmes and delivery arrangements** the headings and criteria will be addressed selectively according to the nature and extent of the proposed modifications.

In the case of **collaborative programmes, programmes using flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning), foundation degrees and other work-based learning provision**, there are additional criteria to be taken into account which will be notified to the Panel separately.

Panels should use the broad headings below, supplemented in the light of any additional criteria, to construct their agendas for the various meetings and other activities held during the validation event. Note however that there are separate model agendas for meetings with current and former students and with employers.

The detailed criteria are provided to help draw Panel members' (and Programme Teams') attention to the individual programme features which should underpin the broad headings, rather than as a 'checklist' to be pursued methodically during the validation event. These features will be directly or indirectly addressed by the validation documentation and Panels will normally use the validation event to further explore selected individual criteria where, in their view, there are lines of enquiry worth pursuing. Panel scrutiny under each selected heading will be determined by the nature of the proposal, the significance of the criterion and the Panel's chosen lines of enquiry.

Panels must however be satisfied that the relevant criteria have been met before they recommend approval of a proposal.

Documentation which is potentially relevant to the various criteria is noted in italics.

The Panel will need to be satisfied that:

1. Rationale, Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes

ADA1/2; Programme Handbook; Programme Specification Document.

1.1 Overview

The rationale, aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme and/or collaborative partnership address the intentions espoused in the ADA1/2.

1.2 Progression Opportunities and Anticipated Destinations of Students

Successful students may progress to related programmes offered by the University or elsewhere and/or to careers in fields known to accept award holders in the subject(s) under consideration.

1.3 Learning Outcomes

- a. Intended learning outcomes relate to and are appropriate for the rationale and aims of the programme.

- b. Intended learning outcomes relate to external reference points, including the qualifications descriptors in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and its associated levels descriptors, subject benchmark statements and relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements.
- c. Intended learning outcomes are appropriately distributed to reflect the expectations associated with any intermediate awards.

2. Admissions Criteria

ADA1/2; Programme Handbook; Programme Specification Document, including the outcomes and skills maps.

- 2.1 Admissions criteria are appropriately reflected in the formal entry qualifications and target profile (student characteristics) to indicate the knowledge, understanding and skills required of entrants.
- 2.2 Admissions criteria relate to the main ways in which knowledge, understanding and skills will be developed and added to during programme delivery.
- 2.3 Admissions criteria mention any routine credit for prior learning, provision for direct entry to specific stages of the programme and the way in which access is facilitated.

3. Curriculum Structure and Content

ADA1/2; Programme Handbook; Programme Specification Document, including the outcomes, skills and assessment maps; Module Specifications; Staff Curricula Vitae; Statement of Tutor Responsibilities; Professional Development Plans.

- 3.1 The curriculum has been designed with reference to the qualifications descriptors in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and its associated levels descriptors, to relevant subject benchmark statements and to any professional or accrediting body requirements.
- 3.2 There is an appropriate rationale for the design, organisation and content of the curriculum (i.e. how the relationship between modules (including cores and options) achieves progression and coherence within and between levels and how the modules contribute to programme learning outcomes at each level).
- 3.3 The curriculum content achieves relevance, currency and an appropriate balance of depth and breadth.
- 3.4 Any unique or innovative features of the curriculum are justifiable and the curriculum reflects research, scholarly activity and professional development of the relevant staff.
- 3.5 The programme develops relevant transferable skills and opportunities exist for students to set their own learning objectives, identify and use appropriate learning resources and assess their own achievement of learning outcomes.
- 3.6 Students are encouraged to develop their capabilities and qualities to enhance their career chances and their role as life-long learners, including opportunities to experience and become familiar with the world of work, and to reflect on such experience.

- 3.7 Opportunities exist for students to develop and display critical reasoning, analysis, conceptualisation, reflection and evaluation, imagination, originality and synthesis, as appropriate to the programme.

4. Learning and Teaching

Programme Handbook; Programme Specification Document, including the outcomes, skills and assessment maps; Module Specifications; Staff Curricula Vitae; Statement of Tutor Responsibilities; Professional Development Plans; Statement of Learning Resources.

- 4.1 The learning and teaching strategy matches the programme's aims and intended learning outcomes and the student profile and is supported by the design, content and organisation of the curriculum, including the learning and teaching methods, the different levels of the programme and the ways in which students' learning capabilities are developed across these levels.
- 4.2 Reference is made to the balance between individual and group work, practical and theoretical activities, direct contact and individual study and modifications to the learning and teaching strategy to cater for flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning), work-based learning and/or collaborative delivery.
- 4.2 Any claimed innovative approaches to learning and teaching are justified and the learning and teaching approaches respond to relevant University and School/Centre strategies, to the need to engage with and encourage participation by students, and draw upon research, scholarship and the professional development activities of staff.
- 4.3 Any impact of recent professional development and peer review on learning and teaching is evident in the context of what systematic approaches exist for evaluating learning and teaching and enhancing its effectiveness.
- 4.4 The learning resources for the programme support the stated approaches to learning and teaching, not just in terms of the adequacy of resources but also in terms of the effectiveness with which they are deployed in support of the intended learning outcomes.

5. Assessment

Programme Handbook; Programme Specification Document, including the outcomes, skills and assessment maps; Module Specifications; Staff Curricula Vitae; Professional Development Plans; additionally, for collaborative provision, the formal partnership agreement and distribution of responsibilities for the management of the collaborative programme(s).

- 5.1 The assessment strategy relates to the programme aims and intended learning outcomes; the nature, balance and patterns of assessment are justifiable in the context of those aims and outcomes, taking account of the student profile, the formative role of assessment as well as its summative function, the need to demonstrate progression through the levels encompassed by the programme and the development and assessment of transferable skills.
- 5.2 The academic standards it is intended that learners should achieve at each level are defined and located by reference to: the qualifications descriptors in the Framework for

Higher Education Qualifications and its associated levels descriptors, the relevant subject benchmark statement(s) and any relevant professional or accrediting body requirements.

- 5.3 The relevant reference points are linked to the learning outcomes and related assessment criteria at each level encompassed by the programme.
- 5.4 Grading criteria, marking schemes and model answers ensure consistent application of appropriate academic standards by facilitating discrimination between different categories of achievement.
- 5.5 There are appropriate mechanisms for provision of qualitative and quantitative feedback to students on their assessed work.
- 5.6 Assessment is properly managed and organised, including:
 - a. The compilation of assessment calendars and scheduling of student workloads.
 - b. Design and internal and external moderation of assignment and examination questions.
 - c. Marking and internal and external moderation of coursework, examinations and other assessments.
 - d. Special arrangements for distance delivery and/or collaborative programmes.
 - e. Arrangements for educating students about plagiarism and other unfair means in assessment and for responding to any occurrence thereof.
 - f. Procedures for handling student appeals.

6. Student Support and Guidance

Programme Handbook; Programme Specification Document; Staff Curricula Vitae; Professional Development Plans; additionally, for collaborative provision, the formal partnership agreement and distribution of responsibilities for the management of the collaborative programme(s).

The overall strategy is appropriate in terms of:

- 6.1 The balance between local and institutional support; what is available at each level; the nature of the programme; the student profile and the identification and meeting of the needs of specific groups (eg part-time, mature, alternatively qualified, international, disabled).
- 6.2 Admission, induction and enrolment (pre-entry, point of entry, ongoing at programme milestones).
- 6.3 Staff accessibility; academic and personal tutorial systems.
- 6.4 Special arrangements for practical, project/dissertation, open study or work-based learning and for distance delivery and/or collaborative programmes.

- 6.5 Monitoring student progress; developing independent learning through a student-centred approach to academic support.
- 6.6 Advice and guidance on mitigating circumstances for poor attendance or performance; mechanisms for feedback from students, including formal complaints.

7. Management and Organisation

Programme Handbook; additionally, for collaborative provision, the formal partnership agreement and distribution of responsibilities for the management of the collaborative programme(s).

The University's normal requirements in terms of programme management, course committees and assessment boards should be complied with. Any particular, unusual or otherwise noteworthy features should be referred to in the appropriate document, including arrangements for the management and organisation of collaborative programmes and programmes using flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning), or for any other variances from the norm.

8. Resources

ADA1/2; Statement of Resources; Staff Curricula Vitae; Professional Development Plans; Statement of Tutor Responsibilities.

The proposal will be effectively supported with appropriate resources in terms of:

- Academic staff - their number, qualifications and experience, research, scholarly and enterprise activities.
- Support staff - the nature and level of technical and administrative support.
- Staff development policy, activities and funding directly related to the programme.
- Accommodation, particularly any specialist laboratory, studio or other facilities.
- Technical equipment and other specialist resources (including specialist IT).
- Library resources, including books, periodicals, electronic resources.
- General IT facilities.
- Budgetary allocation, including any start-up allocation e.g. for staffing, equipment, materials, books, journals, software.

9. Maintenance and Enhancement of Standards and Quality

Programme Handbook; additionally, for collaborative provision, the formal partnership agreement and distribution of responsibilities for the management of the collaborative programme(s).

- a. There are appropriate systems in place, including any departures from the standard University framework or special arrangements to cater for the nature of the proposal e.g. collaborative provision, flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning), work-based learning.
- b. Such systems include: Annual Monitoring; the Programme Committee with student representation; Assessment Boards with external examiner involvement; the School/Centre Board of Study and its committees, with student and cross-School/Centre representation.

- c. Quality assurance and enhancement systems encompass both the assurance and continuous improvement of standards and quality through the use of quantitative and qualitative data such as:
- Entry qualifications.
 - Progression and completion rates.
 - Statistics on student achievement in all forms of summative assessment.
 - Degree classifications.
 - First employment destinations.
 - Student feedback (module and programme questionnaires and/or reviews; student-staff liaison forums; student complaints and appeals).
 - Staff feedback.
 - External examiners' reports.
 - Employers' views on graduates they have recruited.
 - Accreditation and monitoring reports by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.