Department of

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Programme approval and management

A guide to validation
Programme approval and management

2023/24

Contents

Introduction 2

Section 1: Seeking approval to take a proposal to validation 5

Approval by faculty and university committees 5

Development and Review Committee (DARC) 6

Academic Portfolio Strategy Committee (APSC) 7

Fast-track proposals 7

Consultation 7

Faculty and university marketing teams 8

Educational Partnerships (EP)

Section 1: Seeking approval to take a proposal to validation

Approval by faculty and university committees

Before a validation event can be scheduled, a new programme proposal must be scrutinised

- Admissions
- Careers and Employability
- Other faculties (revalidation – see curriculum modification guidance)
- Students (revalidation – see curriculum modification guidance)

Faculty and university marketing teams

Unless a new programme has been commissioned and clearly has a waiting student market, market research and analysis should be undertaken to support the new programme proposal. Programme developers should approach faculty marketing teams in the first instance for advice and support. It is also important to consider student information that will be advertised to prospective students and whether that information might change as a result of validation activity. Details of programmes that have not yet been validated that are advertised via the prospectus and website need to clearly advertise that they are still subject to validation and content may be changed.

Educational Partnerships (EP) – for programmes delivered at partner institutions in the UK – and the Global Partnerships Unit (GPU) – for programmes delivered at partner institutions overseas

Educational Parnterships (EP) and the Global Partnerships Unit (GPU) are responsible for managing the operation and quality assurance of DMU's UK and overseas based collaborative provision respectively, working with the Department of Academic Quality

and if the programme title is similar to that of a programme or programme area owned by another faculty this should be discussed between the faculties and/or Educational Partnerships.

Admissions

The Admissions team will require early notification that a new programme is being planned and what the recruitment cycle will look like, such as first intake dates. It is important to have early discussions with your faculty admissions team to ensure the relevant information is collected for the new programme. This is particularly important for undergraduate new programme proposals which will recruit through UCAS. In such cases the validaton event will need to be held early to ensure the programme is available to applicants for the start of the UCAS cycle. Please see the information on timing and scheduling for more information.

Careers and Employability

It is important to consult with the careers and employability team for your faculty at an early stage of development, particularly if there is planned placement activity for the students.

Students

Where revalidation is

Section 2: Development of proposal

validations are managed by the Global Partnerships Unit (GPU) within Strategic and International Partnerships, with DAQ involvement.

Indicative validation timelines

Type of proposal	Faculty committee approval	University committee approval	Validation	Conditions deadline
UCAS undergrad	Latest – 18 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 15 months prior to intended start date (e.g. June 2024 for Oct 2025 start)	Latest – 12 months prior to intended start date (eg. Sept 2024 for Oct 2025 start)	Latest 10 months prior to intended start date

Panel and documentary requirements for each type of event

Event Type	Panel constitution	Documentary requirements
Type A – Revalidation of existing programme	• Chair (senior academic from outside faculty) • Academic member from outside faculty • Student representative (either in person or input via written comments) • Department of Academic Quality representative • Servicing officer from faculty • External Panel Member (either in person or input via written comments) It is also recommended to hold a short meeting (as part of the agenda) to meet with existing students to gather the student voice	• curriculum modification form • Short rationale/resources statement • critical appraisal of the programme • copies of external examiner reports and Annual Enhancement Review (AER) (previously programme appraisal and enhancement plans) (last 3 years) • programme and module specifications (template) (including for new modules any exemptions from the university's anonymous marking policy) • Enhancing learning through technology (ELT) checklist & Equality prompts (if not previously completed for the programme) • Match with Office for Students sector-recognised standards level descriptors any new pathways or new versions of the QAA benchmark statements are available (mapping document) • Include a matrix to map modules to programme outcomes • Indicative student assessment timetable • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for new starting student • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for continuing students moving between levels of study • Information on how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are linked to within the programme and how sustainability education is embedded within the curriculum • Relevant minutes/extracts of communications with existing students on the proposal • Reference to how spelling, punctuation and grammar will be appropriately assessed on the course and to how students' technical proficiency in written English will be assessed

- Chair (senior academic from outside faculty)
- Academic representative from outside the faculty
- External panel member(s) (either in person or input via written comments)
- Student representative (either in person or input via written comments)
- Library and Student Services representative
- Department oepa08epa08epab(r)6-1r

Type B – Validation of a new programme

Type C – PSRB or new subject area	• Chair (senior academic from outside the faculty) • Academic representative from outside the faculty • External panel member (in person) • Student representative (in person) • Library and Student Services representative • Department of Academic Quality representative • Servicing officer from faculty	As B above and additionally: either Information about the PSRB and the way in which the programme meets its requirements or Faculty rationale for introduction of wholly new subject area as appropriate
Type D – Partnership provision	•	

Validation of provision at a partner institution

Validation of provision to run at a UK (includ

14:15 – 14:30 Feedback to the programme team on validation outcomes

Event Type D

Partnership provision

As this may be part of a larger event, the times are subject to other factors. It is also more likely than standard events to be an in-person event. Please contact the Partnerships Manager (Quality) or Senior Quality Officer (Partnerships) in DAQ for advice.

Section 4: The validation panel and participants

The validation panel – authority and constitution

For new programmes to be delivered by DMU staff/at DMU, the validation panel is convened by the faculty Associate Professor Quality/Head of Quality and the faculty professional services quality assurance team. The faculty QA team will circulate the documentation and support the validation event. For UK collaborative provision this function is provided by Educational Partnerships, on behalf of DAQ, while overseas collaborative validations are supported by the partnerships team within DAQ.

Validation panel terms of reference

The validation panel will:

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The external member on the validation panel should not be a current external examiner for the parent programme management board of the programme under consideration or a recently-departed member of DMU staff. Normally five years should have elapsed before asking a previous external examiner or former member of DMU staff to act as external panel member. In the case of collaborative partnership events the external panel member must be completely independent from the partner institution they are asked to comment on and not have taken part in other approval, validation or revalidation events for that partner institution. External panel members can only be appointed a maximum of three times.

The PVC/Dean should approve the choice of external panel members, using the Nomination of External Validation Panel Member for Approval, Validation and Review Panels form. The nomination form, which is available on the DAQ website, should then be sent to the Head of Academic Quality, for approval on behalf of the Quality Sub-Committee. In the case of external panel members for collaborative provision, the process is slightly different. Please refer to the

are also delivered at a partner institution require the focus of scrutiny to be on the calibre of

- Consult with all relevant professional services departments, specifically your subject/faculty librarian and the Timetable Office, but also others such as the ELT Coordinator, the Head of Equality and Diversity or Equality Reviewer, Information Technology and Media Services (ITMS).
- Nominate a suitable external panel member and arrange for the nomination to be signed off by the appropriate senior colleagues as per the nomination form.
- Take the lead in the programme team's preparations for the validation, co-ordinating development meetings, the production of documentation, attendance at DAQ briefings etc
- Communicate regularly with the validation servicing officer and faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality
- Ensure that appropriate timescales are created for the event and time for draft copies and return of comments are built in, in order to provide both the programme team and the panel enough time for a thorough review of the documentation
- Ensure appropriate levels of consideration/consultation with and by the Faculty Executive/Leadership Board
- Co-ordinate responses to the issues raised by panel members on the validation documentation in advance of the event, through liaison with the validation servicing officer
- Attend the validation event and give a short contextual presentation to the panel as

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of Quality and PVC/Dean, mediated by the Head of Academic Quality. The Chair of the Quality Sub-Committee will arbitrate where the decision is contentious.

Review of processes

To learn lessons from the situation all parties should reflect on what might be done differently to avoid similar cases in the future. More formally, it is within the remit of the Quality Sub-Committee to monitor trends and make recommendation to changes in practice.

Protocols for situations where significant issues are identified during the validation event and the panel is unable to proceed

Very exceptionally cases arise where it is evident to the panexec t seran v1.8 5 3t t3t sallyi10.1 (a4.1 (h)3

Submission and circulation of documentation

The documentation should normally be received by validation panel members digitally (hard copy requests should be made to the servicing officer in advance) three weeks before the validation event (four weeks for a collaborative partnership event). Panel members should endeavour to return their comments on the documentation to the validation servicing officer by the deadline specified to allow time for consideration by the programme team. The process is different for collaborative provision validation events whereby the panel's comments to the servicing officer must be submitted two weeks before the validation event date to allow the panel to hold a pre-event meeting and agree the lines of enquiry for the partner. Unlike DMU-based events, the panel's comments are not shared with the programme team but the panel provide key lines of enquiry derived at the end of the pre-event meeting. Please refer to Section 1 in the Guide to managing collaborative provision for more information.

If due to the nature of the validation event (eg fast-

Section 6: The validation event

Consideration of the proposal will be undertaken through the analysis and review of all submission documents produced by the programme team.

During the validation process consideration is given to six main themes:

- The **rationale** for the new programme
- The programme **curriculum**, its design, content, delivery and assessment
- The appropriateness of the **standards** set for the level of the award
- The suitability of human, physical and other learning **resources** to support the programme
- The **student experience** offered by the new programme including opportunities for employment and further study for its graduates
- The way in which the programme facilitates the **widest possible access** to ensure that

10. Does the curriculum impose an increasing level of demand on the learner during the course of the programme?
11. Is the programme balanced, for example in relation to academic and practical elements, personal development and academic outcomes, breadth and depth in the curriculum?
12. Does the award title reflect the intended learning outcomes of the programme?
13. Is it clear how the intended learning outcomes of the programme will be promoted,

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- Provision of training for work-based mentors and assessors, as appropriate
- Staff profiles and staff development
- Learning resources
- Personal tutorial support
- Learning support facilities for students
- Curriculum design and delivery to ensure the work-based learning includes knowledge and understanding to attract the award of credit
- Learning, teachingu od a(se)11.7ss (m)17.1 (e)8.9 (n)4.3 (t13.1 ((t)5 (r)10

- Programmes must clearly state subsequent arrangements for progression to honours degrees and to professional qualifications or higher-level NVQs
- For those students wishing to progress to the honours degree, the time taken should not normally exceed 1.3 years for a full-time equivalent (FTE) student
- For further information on Foundation Degrees please see the QAA's Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark, available via the QAA website. A similar document is available for taught postgraduate provision, the QAA's Master's Degree Characteristics Statement.

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- **Indefinite approval**, with or without conditions and/or required actions, and/or recommendations
- **Approval for a fixed period**, with or without conditions and/or required actions, and/or recommendations
- **Not approved** – an invitation given to resubmit, within an agreed timeframe
- **Not approved** – recommendation that the proposal be withdrawn.

Indefinite approval, which is the standard length of approval, is granted subject to the normal processes of ongoing review and university protocols for the approval of modifications o47lrov a1 0 2 (s)-6.3 8.2 ( )1 (1 e7 ()4 ((s)-8.0.7 (s)-1.4.8 (t)-1 (i)1.4 (6Ps a)11.1 (1n)fb)f1 (1 0

Recommendations

These should be addressed by the programme team and the programme management board(s) as part of subsequent review and development activities. The programme team is required to submit a formal response to the recommendations to the panel as a follow-up to the validation through the PMB; the recommendations can feed through into the programme Annual Enhancement Review (AER) if appropriate. **If the programme is revalidated, the recommendations and the responses will be reviewed.**

Observations/commendations

In addition to citing conditions and recommendations of approval, the panel may also wish to identify key observations/commendations arising from the validation process, to include exemplary features and examples of potential good practice; it is useful to highlight these for further investigation, verification and disseminationntrt1.4 (on4 (a-3.2 (e)1.3 (i)f2(f)7.2 8 (e)7.7 l)1.9 (ht)so

Section 7: After the validation

Formal notification of outcome of validation

The Department of Academic Quality (DAQ) will circulate an initial notification of the validation outcomes following the validation event to key faculty and central professional services staff.

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Section 7: Further information

Forms and useful publications

Internal documents

Document	Available from
A Guide for Validation Panel Members	Department of Academic Quality web pages
A Guide for Validation Servicing Officers	Department of Academic Quality web pages
A Guide to writing Programme Specifications	Department of Academic Quality web pages
A Guide to writing Module Specifications	Department of Academic Quality web pages
A Guide to Curriculum Modification	Department of Academic Quality web pages
A Guide to External Examining at DMU	Department of Academic Quality web pages
Validation external panel member nomination form	Department of Academic Quality web pages
Academic Regulations	Department of Academic Quality web pages
General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students	Academic Support Office web pages
A Guide to Managing Collaborative Provision	Department of Academic Quality web pages
Validation Service Operational Guide	Department of Academic Quality web pages
UDL	Centre for Academic Innovation and Teaching Excellence web page
Education for Sustainable Development	DMU website