

INTEGRATED DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS REVALIDATION AND VALIDATION PROCEDURES: INFORMATION FOR PANELS

OVERVIEW

Lancaster University's validation and revalidation procedures for the approval of awards made in its name by the Associated Colleges are designed to comply with the requirements of the QAA Quality Code *Course Design and Development, Monitoring and Evaluation and Partnerships*. These processes and procedures enable the University to:

- secure the academic standards of those awards and qualifications made in its name by the Colleges, and
- assure the quality of the learning opportunities available to students studying on those programmes leading to an award of the University.

The University seeks, through these procedures, to secure equivalence with its own awards and qualifications.

Apprenticeships are funded by the Government to boost staff training in organisations for specific occupations. Training Provider, Employer and Apprentice work closely in a tripartite relationship to design an individualised curriculum based on the Apprentice's starting point, monitor the Apprentice's progress in building Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours outlined in the Apprenticeship Standard to move towards End-Point Assessment, identify personal development opportunities and create a safe and engaging environment for learning.

Apprenticeships are a tightly regulated and fast changing area. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) approve and coordinate Apprenticeship standards. The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) regulates providers through the Register of Approved Training Providers (RoATP) and funds Apprentices via monthly returns of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). OfS are responsible for the academic standards of Higher Apprenticeships. Ofsted inspect the quality of Apprenticeship training provision.

Integrated degree apprenticeships are where a degree qualification is included in the apprenticeship, and all assessment relating to the degree qualification is integrated with the end-point assessment of the apprenticeship. For integrated degree apprenticeships the Training Provider delivering the degree apprenticeship will also conduct the end point assessment as generally it forms part of the degree qualification. Hence consideration is given to the delivery of the apprenticeship including the end point assessment, by LU as part of the validation process.

Training Providers act as the End Point Assessment Organisation for Integrated Degree Apprenticeships so are also subject to external quality assurance by the Designated Quality Body for England.

Validation

The aim of a validation event is to determine whether or not a proposed new programme fulfils the requirements of the University with regard to the academic standards of the award and the

quality and standards of the learning opportunities available to students. Initial validation is normally for a period of five years.

Revalidation (incorporating Programme Monitoring and Review)

The aim of a revalidation event is to review a currently validated programme and consider whether or not validation may be renewed for a further five years, taking into account the following factors:

- the programme remains current and up-to-date
- the standards of the award are maintained
- student achievement is satisfactory
- there is a continuing demand for the programme
- there continue to be sufficient resources for programme delivery
- QA procedures continue to be implemented effectively for the programme

In this regard, revalidation incorporates the Monitoring and Review of a programme. In addition, revalidation provides an opportunity for the College to propose any minor/major amendments to the programme. The Panel will also meet with a group of students on the day to review the student experience.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Panel Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the University Panel will include the Chair, at least one Subject Specialist, a Degree Apprenticeship specialist and an AQSC representative. An External Assessor from another institution who has Degree Apprenticeship and specialist subject knowledge will also be a member of the panel. The University will determine membership of the Panel. The Panel's task is to consider the proposal and make a recommendation to the University on the revalidation or validation of the programme(s). All members of the Panel have a responsibility to review the full proposal; however, individual members have specific responsibilities as follows:

Chair

The Chair will:

- Manage the agenda for the day;
- focus on institutional issues and how the programme fits in with the College strategy;
- guide the Panel in its deliberations and consideration of the issues;
- **provide formal feedback to the College on the Panel's decision.**

If the Chair has subject specialist knowledge, s/he may provide additional support to the subject specialist as a secondary role.

Subject Specialist(s)

The Subject Specialist will be an expert in the subject area and will:

- interrogate the curriculum and its constituent elements;
- interrogate the teaching, learning and assessment methods, subject resources, specific module content and other subject-related issues;
- consider the programme in comparison with Lancaster University standards.

Degree Apprenticeship Specialist

The Degree Apprenticeship Specialist will normally be an expert in Degree Apprenticeships and will:

- focus on Apprenticeship issues and how the degree programme aligns with the apprenticeship standard;
- consider the requirements for the end point assessment plan;
- interrogate the teaching, learning and assessment methods in relation to the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs).

AQSC Representative

The AQSC Representative will:

- Provide guidance on procedures and regulations and on the University's requirements for revalidation/validation;
- Provide guidance on any generic issues to provide a consistency of message and parity across programmes.

All AQSC representatives work closely with the Colleges and can provide context and background on the College and the relationship with Lancaster University.

External Assessor

The External Assessor will be an expert in Degree Apprenticeships and in the subject area and will:

- consider how the degree programmes aligns with the apprenticeship;
- consider the requirements for the end point assessment plan;
- interrogate the teaching, learning and assessment methods in relation to the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) of the apprenticeship.
- Provide guidance on the curriculum and its constituent elements;
- Offer independence and objectivity to the decisions taken and provide a basis for comparability of academic standards across the higher education sector;
- Verify that threshold academic standards are set by reference to national reference points;
- Contribute to enhancement, by providing additional perspectives;
- Provide expertise on current developments both in the subject area and in learning and teaching practice.

Other Roles

College Facilitator/Minute Taker

The College is responsible for providing a member of staff to take notes of the meeting and provide a draft report to the University. The College Facilitator/minute taker will be present for all meetings including the private meetings of the Panel and will be able to answer questions around College procedures if necessary. **To note the College Facilitator/Minute Taker is not a member of the Panel and should not participate in directing questions to the Programme Team.**

College Degree Apprenticeship Specialist

The College may provide a member of staff who has Degree Apprenticeship expertise and knowledge of the programme to participate in the panel.

External representatives' attendance at events

As work-based learning is a key feature of Degree Apprenticeship programmes, external representatives (e.g. employers, sector representatives) should be present at a validation/revalidation event in order that the Panel can question them directly about the programme.

PROCEDURES

Pre-Event

Documentation

Documentation must be provided by the College by the due submission deadline (three weeks prior to the event date). The Panel will receive:

- Minutes of the internal validation event held at the College with a series of action points which should have been completed
- Programme document (**for Revalidation only** to include a review of the delivery, quality and standards of the programme over the last five years)
- Mapping document against the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour (KSBs)
- Link to the Apprenticeship
- Degree Apprenticeship Strategy document
- Mentor Guidance
- Apprenticeship handbook (including the delivery plan and the End Point Assessment Plan)

- Programme Specification

AQSC may raise with the College at this point issues for clarification or resolution prior to the event.

Panel members will also receive a template on which to identify the main points of discussion. This is to enable AQSC to determine the format and timing of the agenda for the events.

Set Agenda

AQSC will circulate an agenda prior to the validation/revalidation event. A validation/revalidation event is typically a half-day or full day depending on the size and scope of the proposal.

Validation/Revalidation Event

Possible Areas for Review with the College's Senior Management team (if necessary):

- College strategy for the programme
- Market demand/recruitment
- Staffing
- Resources

The meeting with the Programme Team will focus primarily on the following aspects:

- Entry criteria

- Programme structure and progression through the programme
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods in relation to the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs)
- Employer engagement and mentoring
- Module review
- How the Apprenticeship aligns with the Degree programme;
- The requirements for the end point assessment plan;

For Degree Apprenticeships a meeting with employers will be held. For programmes undergoing Revalidation, the Panel will also meet with a group of students. Panel members will be provided with suggested questions for the students and employers.

Panel Decision and Conditions and Recommendations

At the end of the event, the Panel will take a decision on the validation/revalidation proposal, and will recommend **one** of the following to the University:

- (a) **To validate/revalidate** the programme as it stands for the following five years.
- (b) **To validate/revalidate** the programme for the following five years **subject to** a number of Conditions (changes which must be satisfactorily addressed prior to the commencement of the delivery of the programme) and/or Recommendations (areas that the Programme Team are invited to review but which are not considered essential changes).
- (c) **Not to validate/revalidate the programme at this stage** due to substantial concerns about one or more aspects of the programme, e.g. staffing/resources, academic content/coherence, etc. The Panel will then advise the College as to whether or not a resubmission of the proposal is possible and, if so, the time-scale for resubmission.

The recommendation will be reported verbally to the Senior Management team at the University.

Post-Event

Reporting on the event

The University will provide a draft of the Panel's decision and any Conditions and/or Recommendations for incorporation into the report. The College Facilitator will provide this draft report to the University **within two weeks** of the event. AQSC will circulate the draft report for consideration and approval by the Panel and forward the final version of the report to the College.

Amendments to the documentation

Where amendments to the proposal and documentation are required as a condition of validation/revalidation, these must be made **within six weeks of the event**. The revised document(s) should be submitted highlighting clearly in the body of the text where revisions have been made. In addition, a summary of the changes, with page numbers, should be provided in a separate document. Following approval (see below), the College is required to submit a **final version of the documentation** to AQSC for record purposes, in the form of an electronic copy.

Final approval

The AQSC representative is responsible for providing an initial check on whether the conditions of the revalidation/validation have been met, and will advise the Panel members accordingly when circulating the revised documentation. The Panel will confirm whether or not the Conditions have been met. Following this, the programme will be submitted for **final approval** to the Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, who has delegated authority from Senate.

If, following consideration by the Panel of the revised documentation, there remain substantive issues with the programme, which need wider discussion within the University, these may be referred to the Chair of the Regional Partner Teaching Committee (RPTC) for wider consideration.