

Course Development and Design Process- (Standard and Fast-Track Validation)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. All new course proposals are required to go through the validation process. Validation ensures that a newly developed course meets threshold standards, meets the London Metropolitan University's strategic plan and ensures a positive student experience and outcomes. It is a peer review process involving a panel of internal staff, external advisors, students, academics, industry experts and students.
- 1.2. For a course to qualify for the Fast-Track validation process, it must be within an existing subject area and contain no more than three new modules. This does not include integrated Masters courses.

2. Stage 1 - Approval of Business Cases

- 2.1. The Academic Portfolio Committee (APC) is responsible under delegated authority from the Academic Board for the development and oversight of the University's internal and collaborative academic portfolio. The Committee considers business cases for new courses being developed against criteria such as market demand, unique selling points and contribution to the University's strategy.
- 2.2. The APC will examine the nature and likelihood of any risks that may be posed by the proposed development of a new course. Depending on the level of risk, either a full business case or a fast-track business case may be used. Only when the business case approval has been granted can a proposal move on to be considered for validation.
- 2.3. Due to the nature of collaborative academic provision, the fast-track validation process will not be applicable to collaborative courses.
- 2.4. All business cases must be submitted and approved at the Academic Portfolio Committee (APC) by the required deadlines, which allows a 20-month lead for Undergraduate and 18 months for Postgraduate courses. After that point, no further validations will be added to the validation schedule, unless exceptionally approved by the Chair of APC.
- 2.5. Course team(s) should complete the relevant business case template (AQD001a or AQD002a) and submit to AQD, before the required deadline. Where a course is being developed for delivery at a collaborative academic partner institution, the collaborative business case template should be completed (AQDC005). The template must include the financial analysis and evidence of engagement and discussion with the Dean of School, relevant professional service Heads and employers where appropriate.

3. Stage 2 - Validation Preparation

- 3.1. Once the business case is approved by APC, the relevant AQD Quality Enhancement Officer will liaise with the Dean of School/ Head of Subject to confirm an event date and timeline. In the case of new and/ or existing collaborative partners, the Quality Manager (Partnerships) will liaise and confirm an event date and schedule with Course teams. A briefing note for validations can be found in document AQD003. For collaborative partners that will be also undergoing institutional approval, a validation date will be agreed with the Quality Manager (Partnerships) in line with this process.
- 3.2. The Course team are required to submit the validation paperwork to AQD by the agreed deadlines. The Head of Subject or nominated member of the Course team must upload the validation paperwork by the agreed date to a designated area sign-posted by AQD.
- 3.3. The Collaborative Partner should work with the appointed Academic Liaison Tutor from the School to complete the validation paperwork and submit it to the Quality Manager (Partnerships) by the agreed date.

4. Key Information to Consider

- 4.1. During the design phase of course(s) and module(s), there are a number of important documents which should be considered in relation to course structure, types of modules and assessment. Please click on the links to access the relevant information
 - [APC Business Schedule](#)
 - [APC ABC Workflow](#)
 - [Assessment Principles](#)
 - [Assessment Equivalencies](#)
 - [PG Dissertation Equivalencies](#)
 - [Module Codes](#)
 - [System Weeks and Days \(Evision\)](#)
 - [Additional Supporting Information](#) (including Qualifying Marks, Work Based Learning Modules and Visa Compliance, International Office – Summer School and Study Abroad modules, Stand-alone Modules, Extension of Knowledge modules, Elective Modules)

5. Appointment of External Advisors

- 5.1. Heads of Subject and Course Leaders are required to nominate suitably experienced External Advisor(s) to their AQD Quality Enhancement Officer. For collaborative academic courses, the Dean of School will nominate the External Advisor.
- 5.2. Advisor to the Quality Manager (Partnerships). AQD will liaise with the External Advisor to

confirm approval of the nomination, complete the Right to Work Check and engagement with the validation event. An External Panel member for a fast-track validation can be either an existing external examiner or an external advisor. See External Advisor appointment form (AQD013) for further guidance.

6. Purpose of the Validation Panel

6.1. The validation panel will act as a critical friend to promote best practice, help to enhance the new course and the student experience, and ensure the course meets threshold standards before the course commences. The panel will focus on:

- Course rationale and fit within the portfolio
- Anticipated demand for the course(s)
- Design principles underpinning the course(s) and the nature of the learning opportunities offered
- Student/ employer/ PSRB involvement in course design
- Resources necessary to support the course(s).
- Planned Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy
- Graduate opportunities and employability support
- Relationship between the course's curriculum and current research in the same area
- Articulation with QAA UK Quality Code (FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statements), Sector/ PSRB requirements – if appropriate
- Course specific regulations (where appropriate)
- Articulation with relevant internal frameworks (including ESJF and digital literacy)
- Contents of the course and module specifications
- Future developments/financial sustainability enhancement strategy.

7. Paperwork Required for a Standard Validation

7.1. When completing the following paperwork, Course teams should liaise with their AQD Quality Enhancement Officer to agree deadlines and where to upload the documents:

- Validation overview document (AQD004) -for on-campus courses, or Validation overview document (AQDC024) – for Collaborative, which includes the rationale, demand, LTA strategy, support and resource statement, employability details, details of PSRB accreditation if applicable.
- Course Specification (AQD006 or AQD006b)
- Module Specifications (AQD007)
- Assessment map(s) (AQD008)

- Staff CVs (AQD009)
- ESJF Curriculum Checklist (AQD011)
- Digital Literacy Checklist (AQD010)
- Course Timetable - Collaborative (AQDC037)
- QAA Subject Benchmark mapping (AQD015) - for collaborative partners

8. Paperwork Required for a Fast-Track Validation

8.1. When completing the following paperwork, Course teams should liaise with their AQD Quality Enhancement Officer to agree deadlines and location to upload the documents:

- Validation overview document (AQD004) which includes the rationale, demand, LTA strategy, support and resource statement, employability details, details of PSRB accreditation if applicable,
- Course Specification (AQD006)
- All new module specifications (AQD007)
- Assessment map(s) (AQD008)
- Staff CVs for new staff only (AQD009)

9. Internal Scrutiny

9.1. Before a course proceeds to a standard or fast-track validation, the Course team must submit all validation paperwork to AQD for scrutiny.

9.2. AQD will consider the paperwork and confirm the next steps- for a standard validation this can be proceeding to either a validation event or a desk-based validation process. The latter decision is based on the completeness and accuracy of documents submitted. A fast-track validation will normally proceed to a desk-based process, but may involve a meeting online.

9.3. AQD scrutiny may also result in recommended changes to the documentation to be completed prior to submission to the validation panel, or if there are serious concerns, a recommendation that the Course team delays the validation to allow time for significant changes.

10. The Validation Event

10.1. A standard validation involves an event with a panel and the Course team, and can take up to a full working day. As a hybrid event can encompass both written feedback and a short meeting. The Validation Event Agenda Template (AQD012 for an on-campus

course or AQDC017 for a collaborative course) outlines an indicative agenda for validation events, panel members and Course team members involved and the suggested duration of the event.

- 10.2. All validation events, including Desk based, will require the Chair and Internal to complete an Internal Panel Member feedback form (AQD037A), for Student Panel Members a Report (AQD026) and the External Advisor(s) a report (AQD014).
- 10.3. All reports must be received by AQD two weeks before the event, to allow the Course team time to respond. This will enable AQD to decide whether the Course team is required to attend the online validation meeting to deal with any outstanding issues, or whether the Panel can meet alone to agree the outcomes.

11. Validation Panel Role Descriptor

- 11.1. Typically, each validation panel should include the following personnel, and their roles are to function as outlined below: All types of validation and Periodic Review events must include input from External and Student Panel Members.
- 11.2. An External Panel member for a fast-track validation can be either an existing External Examiner or an External Advisor. An External Panel member submits comments for a fast-track validation but is not required to attend if an on-line meeting takes place.
- 11.3. Panel members and their roles in the Validation process:

Chair:

- Complete an Internal Panel Member Feedback Form
- Guide the discussion during the event
- Assign areas of questions to panel members
- Agree the event outcomes and provide a summary conclusion
- Ensure the Course team are clear on any further actions required as a condition of the course(s) being approved
- Work with the Officer to confirm the event outcomes report
- Receive revised validation paperwork and sign off once all conditions have been met by the Course team

External Advisor (Academic and/or Industry)

- Provide an independent external view of the course(s)
- Advise the panel on any necessary revisions to course content, module content and assessments
- Contribute to the summarising of the debate

Internal (Academic staff member from a different School or an AQD representative in a management role)

- Complete an Internal Panel Member Feedback Form
- Follow line of questioning agreed with Chair and plays an active part in discussions with the Course team
- Ensure compliance of the courses being validated or reviewed with relevant internal and external academic regulations and frameworks
- Ensure quality assurance processes have been embedded in the course by the Course team

Student Panel Member:

- Provide a student's view on the content of the course(s) being validated or reviewed by completing the Student Panel Member Report Form
- Share relevant experience as a student within the institution
- Advise the panel and Course team on issues such as resourcing, assessment methods and chosen mode(s) of delivery
- Explore issues of further study/employability connected to the course(s) being validated or reviewed

Officer:

- Arrange the event, liaises with Course team(s), the panel and other members of professional staff
- Ensure the validation process is followed before, during and after the meeting
- Work closely with the Chair of the panel to make sure thorough questioning of the Course team takes place and that the meeting(s) keep(s) to the agenda and to time
- Ensure an accurate record of commendations, conditions and recommendations is made by the end of the meeting
- Produce an outcomes report and circulates to the Course team within one week of the validation event taking place
- Produce a full report on the validation/review event and circulate it to the Course team within three weeks of the event taking place where an in person/ PSRB accredited event occurs.
- Work with the Course team to ensure they submit revised course documentation by the due date, that this documentation and attached commentary on any changes is sent to the Chair and that the Chair feeds back via the Officer in a timely fashion.

12. Validation Outcomes

12.1. The validation panel are responsible for making a decision on behalf of the Academic Board on the approval of the course(s). The panel can commend the Course team(s) for

any areas of good practice which stand out in either the course documentation or as a result of the discussion on the day and can also set conditions and recommendations of the validation.

- 12.2. Courses are usually approved for a period of 5 years. For Collaborative partners the initial period is three years.
- 12.3. Possible standard validation outcomes are as follows:
- Approved
 - Approved with conditions (and recommendations)
 - Not Approved / Referred back to the Course team for further consideration.
- 12.4. The Course team(s) must revise the course documentation in light of any conditions set by the panel using track changes or highlighting to indicate changes. The revised documentation must be resubmitted along with a supporting summary explaining the changes, by the deadline agreed by the panel. The panel Chair must check the revised documentation and put in writing that the course can be signed off and officially validated before the course can be delivered to students.
- 12.5. The Course team(s) must consider any recommendations the panel make and address those through the course enhancement process.
- 12.6. The Course team(s) may also be provided with a specific list of minor changes required in course and module specifications which should also be completed by the deadline set and reviewed by the panel Chair.
- 12.7. Where the panel considers there to be serious concerns with quality or viability of a course or courses the panel will not recommend the course(s) for approval. At this stage the business case will need to be redeveloped and submitted to APC for approval.
- 12.8. An unsuccessful validation could mean deferring the implementation date of the course(s).
- 12.9. Where possible the original make-up of the panel will remain to ensure concerns are addressed going forward. In instances where this is not possible, new panel members will be privy to the outcomes set by the original panel to ensure continuity and to uphold the expected standards of the course(s).

13. The Validation Report

- 13.1. The Panel Officer is responsible for preparing the validation report, in agreement with the Chair. The validation reports provide detail on the outcome of the meeting and any further work required by the Course team.

- 13.2. The Outcomes Report, detailing commendations, conditions and recommendations must be sent to the Course team within one week of the validation event. This applies to all validations. For a Standard Validation a further full Outcomes Report will also be sent to the Course team within three weeks of the validation event where an in person or PSRB accredited event occurs.
- 13.3. Course team(s) will usually have four weeks to formally respond to conditions, unless there is a decision agreed by the panel and Course team to vary. For Fast-track validations, the team normally have two weeks to respond to conditions.

14. Next Steps in the Process

- 14.1. Once validated, the course enters into the standard University quality monitoring processes.
- 14.2. Course team(s) will have the opportunity to make amendments to the course until the course is due to be periodically reviewed. The course will be subject to a Periodic Review within five years of the date of final approval or three years for collaborative provision.

15. Module Validation Process

- 15.1. Where an individual or a series of modules require validation which are not part of a standard course offer, a Module Validation Form (AQD017) should be completed and submitted to AQD with any associated documentation including module specification(s).
- 15.2. An AQD Officer will set up a desk-based process to consider the module(s), involving two internal panel members. These can include an academic member of staff from a different subject area, an external examiner or a member of AQD.
- 15.3. An outcomes summary detailing conditions and recommendations will be sent to the module leader(s) within one week of the completion of the desk-based process, with a requirement to respond with two weeks.

16. Validation Event Timeline

