

## **Course Development and Design Process- (Course 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, aligns with the London Metropolitan University's strategic plan and ensures a positive student experience and outcomes. Validation is a peer review activity involving a panel of internal staff, an external academic advisor, an industry expert and students.

### **2. Stage 1 - Approval of Business Cases**

- 2.1. Academic Portfolio Committee (APC) is responsible under delegated authority from the Academic Board for the development and oversight of the University's internal 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. Business Cases for Collaborative Courses are considered by the Collaborative Partnership Committee (CPC).
- 2.2. Course team(s) proposing a new course to be delivered on campus should complete the relevant business case part a template (AQD001a or AQD002a) and submit to AQD. Business cases must then be submitted and approved at APC within 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 schedule, unless exceptionally approved by the Chair of Academic Board.
- 2.3. Where a course is being developed for delivery at a collaborative academic partner institution, the collaborative business case part a template should be completed (AQDC001a) and submitted to the Collaborative Partnerships Committee.
- 2.4. APC and CPC will examine the nature and likelihood of any risks that may be posed by the proposed development of a new course. Only when the business case approval has been granted can a proposal move on to be considered for validation.
- 2.5. Once a business case is approved for on campus provision, the Course team is required to complete the Post Approval Information form (AQD001b or AQD002b) by a 2-week deadline. This form contains further information about the proposed course, including course overview and structure, proposed entry requirements, details about assessments, career opportunities, unique selling points and more.

- 2.6. Where a business case is approved for a Collaborative Partner, the Quality Manager (Partnerships) completes the Post Approval Information form (AQDC001b).
- 2.7. It should be noted that it is possible to make changes to information contained in a business case proposal between the business case sign off and that of the course approval.

### **3. Stage 2 - Validation Preparation**

- 3.1. Once a business case is approved, the relevant AQD Quality and Standards Officer will liaise with the Dean of School/ Head of Subject to confirm an event date and timeline. 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 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.
- 3.3. Course teams preparing for validation are recommended to undertake workshops on Learning Design, the ESJF Toolkit and on Artificial Intelligence- Learning Teaching and Assessment. Details are available through the Centre for Teaching Enhancement (CTE).

### **4. Key Information to Consider**

- 4.1. During the design phase of course(s) and module(s), there are several important documents which should be considered in relation to course structure, types of modules and assessment.
- 4.2. Please click on the links to access the relevant information:
- [Academic Portfolio Committee Business Schedule](#)
  - [Assessment Principles](#)
  - [Assessment Policy](#)
  - [PG Dissertation Equivalencies](#)
  - [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)
  - [System Weeks and Days \(Evision\)](#)
  - [Module Codes Request Form](#)

- 4.3. It is recommended that all undergraduate programmes have at least 15 credits at Level 5 or 6, dedicated to a work-based learning module as an essential element of developing employability skills. This can be an online work project through our Riipen online employer projects platform or a local work placement. The Graduate Success Team can provide support in creating these modules and can be contacted at [WBL@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:WBL@londonmet.ac.uk)".

## **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 and Standards Officer. For collaborative provision, AQD is responsible for finding and nominating suitable External Advisors.
- 5.2. 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. See External Advisor appointment form (AQD013) for further guidance.

## **6. Paperwork Required for Course Validation**

- 6.1. Proposing teams should prepare the following documentation :
- A validation overview document (AQD004) **-for on-campus**, or a Narrative document (There is no template for the narrative; instead, the partner will need to provide narrative regarding rationale for the course, projected student numbers, resources available, etc)-**for collaborative**,
  - Course Specification (AQD006 or AQD006b)
  - Module Specifications (AQD007)
  - Assessment map(s) (AQD008)
  - Staff CVs (AQD009)
  - ESJF Curriculum Checklist (AQD011)
  - Digital Literacy Checklist (AQD010)
  - Academic Calendar – Collaborative only (AQDC037)
  - QAA Subject Benchmark mapping (AQD015) -if required.

## **7. Paperwork Submission/ Internal Scrutiny**

- 7.1. The Head of Subject/ Course Leader or nominated member of the Course team is required to upload the validation paperwork by an agreed deadline to a designated area sign-posted by AQD.
- 7.2. Following submission of validation paperwork for on-campus courses, Course Leaders are required to take part in a reflective teaching and learning meeting with a member of CTE.
- 7.3. AQD will consider the paperwork and confirm the next steps, to proceed either to a standard validation event or a desk-based validation process. The latter decision is based on the completeness and accuracy of documents submitted.
- 7.4. AQD scrutiny may also result in changes to the documentation being required prior to submission to the validation panel, or if there are serious concerns, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the panel.
- 7.5. The Chair of the panel will retain overall authority to determine if the documentation is in sufficient order for the validation to go ahead; if it is the view of the Chair that the documentation is not of an appropriate standard or is incomplete, the Chair may advise of a postponement of the validation event.

## **8. Purpose and Make-up of the Validation Panel**

- 8.1. 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 it commences.
- 8.2. The AQD Officer in liaison with the Quality Manager confirms the make-up of the validation panel, which includes the following:
  - A Chair (from a School other than that proposing the course)
  - An Internal Panel Member (from a School other than that proposing the course or an AQD representative in a management role)
  - One or more External Advisors with subject and/or industry expertise
  - A Student Panel Member (from a different School)
- 8.3. For more information regarding the Panel, see the Validation Briefing Note ([AQD003](#))

## **9. The Validation Event**

- 9.1. A standard validation involves an event either in person or online with a panel (see section 8) and the Course team, which can take up to a full working day.
- 9.2. The Validation Event Agenda Template ([AQD012](#)) outlines an indicative agenda for validation events, panel members and Course team members involved and the suggested duration of the event
- 9.3. Where paperwork submitted by the Course team is comprehensive and of good quality, a desk-based approach may be implemented. Alternatively, a hybrid event can encompass both written feedback and a short meeting.
- 9.4. All validation events, including those which are desk-based, require Panel members to provide feedback on the proposed documentation on a shared feedback form (AQD016).
- 9.5. All feedback must be received by AQD two weeks before the event, to allow the Course team time to respond. This will enable AQD to confirm 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.

## **10. Validation Outcomes**

- 10.1. The validation panel are responsible for deciding on behalf of Academic Board on the approval of the course(s).
- 10.2. Possible validation outcomes are as follows:
- Approved
  - Approved with conditions (and recommendations)
  - Not Approved / Referred back to the Course team for further consideration
- 10.3. The panel can commend the Course team(s) for any areas of good practice which are identified in either the course documentation or resulting from the discussion on the day and can also set conditions and recommendations of the validation.
- 10.4. Courses are usually approved for a period of 5 years. For Collaborative partner the initial period is 3 years.
- 10.5. Where the panel considers there to be serious concerns with quality or viability of a course or courses a recommendation will not be made for approval.

- 10.6. An unsuccessful validation could mean deferring the implementation date of the course(s) and/or necessitating the re-development of the business case, requiring Academic Board approval.
- 10.7. Where a further validation event is then arranged, the original make-up of the panel will remain where practicable, to ensure concerns are addressed going forward. In instances where this is not possible, new panel members will be privy to the outcomes from the original panel to ensure continuity and to uphold the expected standards of the course(s).

## **11. The Validation Outcomes Report and Responses**

- 11.1. The Officer for the event is responsible for preparing the Validation Outcomes report, in agreement with the Chair. The Report, which details commendations, conditions and recommendations must be sent to the Course team within one week of the validation event. This applies to all types of validations.
- 11.2. For a Standard Validation, and where an in person or PSRB accredited event occurs, a further full Outcomes Report will also be sent to the Course team within three weeks of the validation event.
- 11.3. Course team(s) will usually have four weeks to formally respond to conditions, unless agreed otherwise by the Panel team during the event.
- 11.4. Course team(s) must revise the course documentation using track changes or yellow highlighting to indicate changes. The revised documentation must be resubmitted along with supporting summary explaining the changes, by the agreed deadline.
- 11.5. The panel Chair must check the revised documentation and put in writing that the course can be signed off and become officially validated before the course can be delivered to students.
- 11.6. 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.
- 11.7. Course team(s) should consider any recommendations the panel make and address those through the course enhancement process.

## **12. Next Steps in the Process**

- 12.1. Once validated, the course enters the standard University quality monitoring

processes.

12.2. Course team(s) will have the opportunity to make amendments to the course until the course is due to be re-validated.

12.3. The course will be subject to a Revalidation within five years of the date of final approval or three years for collaborative provision.

### **13. Module Validation Process**

13.1. 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).

13.2. 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.

13.3. 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.

## 14. Validation Event Timeline-

### Proposing a New Course

- A new Business Case (AQD001a) is completed and presented at School LTQC for review.
- The Business case is submitted to Academic Portfolio Committee or Collaborative Partnership Committee for approval, by the required deadline. If approved, the Course team or Quality Manager (Academic Partnerships) is required to complete the Post Approval Information form.

### Planning Validation

- AQD and Dean of School/ Head of Subject confirm the date and deadlines for the event
- External Advisor (EAs) appointments are confirmed by AQD
- The paperwork for the event is submitted to AQD for scrutiny 8 weeks before the event date

### AQD Scrutiny

- AQD considers the paperwork and confirms the next steps – either a **standard** or **desk-based validation** process.
- AQD scrutiny may result in recommended changes to the documentation prior to submission to the review panel.
- Where AQD identifies issues with paperwork, the Chair of the Panel may advise that a postponement of the validation is necessary.

### Approval Event

- **Standard validation** is the default position, and it includes the attendance of the Panel team and proposing Course team, online or in person, to determine the outcome
- **Desk-based validation:** includes a shorter online meeting for the Panel team to decide outcome.
- Both types of validations will require all Panel members and External Advisors to produce a report, two weeks before the event takes place.

### Post-Event Outcome

- An Outcomes report is shared with Course team within 1 week of the validation, which includes reports submitted from the Panel and External Advisors.
- A full validation report is produced for standard validations within 3 weeks of the event, where an in person or PSRB accredited event occurs.

### Approving and Processing

- The proposing team responds formally to conditions and recommendations, providing revised documentation with changes clearly identified (using track-changes), by the agreed deadline.
- Revised documentation will be checked and signed off by Chair of event in cooperation with AQD officer.
- AQD shares documents with relevant stakeholders for implementation.