

## **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.
- 1.3. Due to the nature of collaborative academic provision, the fast-track validation process is not applicable.

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

- 2.1. Academic Board is responsible 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.
- 2.2. Business Cases for Collaborative Courses are considered by the Collaborative Partnership Committee (CPC).
- 2.3. 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 (AQDC001a).
- 2.4. All business cases must be submitted and approved at the Academic Board for on-campus provision 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 validation schedule, unless exceptionally approved by the Chair of Academic Board.

- 2.5. Academic Board 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.
- 2.6. Where a business case is approved by Academic Board, the Course team is required to complete the Post Approval Information form (AQD001b or AQD002b) by a 2-week deadline and in time for the Post Academic Board Portfolio matters meeting. 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.
- 2.7. Where a business case is approved by Collaborative Partnership Committee, the Quality Manager (Partnerships) completes the Post Approval Information form (AQDC001b).

### **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. Please click on the links to access the relevant information

- [Academic Board Portfolio 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](#)

4.2. 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 Enhancement Officer. For collaborative academic courses, the Dean of School will nominate the External Advisor to the Quality Manager (Partnerships)

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. 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. Paperwork Required for a Standard Validation**

6.1. When completing the following paperwork, Course teams should liaise with their AQD Quality and Standards 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,
- 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) -if required.

## **7. Paperwork Required for a Fast-Track Validation**

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

- Validation overview document (AQD004)
- Course Specification (AQD006)
- All new module specifications (AQD007)
- Assessment map(s) (AQD008)
- CVs for new staff only (AQD009)

## **8. Purpose 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 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.

## **9. Document Submission/ Internal Scrutiny**

9.1. 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. A briefing note for validations can be found in document AQD003.

- 9.2. Following submission of validation paperwork Course Leaders are required to take part in a reflective teaching and learning meeting with a member of CTE.
- 9.3. 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.
- 9.4. 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, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the panel.
- 9.5. The Chair of the panel will retain the 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 a sufficient standard; the Chair may advise of a postponement of the validation event.

## **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:** [OBJ]

- 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 deciding 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 identified in either the course documentation or resulting from the discussion on the day and can also set conditions and recommendations of the OBJ 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 considering 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 a 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**

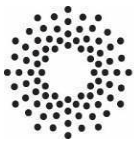
- 14.1. Once validated, the course enters the standard University quality monitoring processes.



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 Re-validation 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

