

A guide to Apprenticeship Validation

Edition number 1

This guide is intended to provide support to all those involved in, the validation of new Apprenticeship programmes and the revalidation of existing provisions.

For forms, templates, and further guidance, please contact:

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Introduction

Who is this Guide for and what does it cover?

This guide is aimed at staff and external parties who are involved in the development of new apprenticeship programmes/revalidation of existing provision, in particular:

- Apprenticeship programme leaders and programme teams
- Staff with responsibility for the management of apprenticeships
- Servicing officers
- Associate Professors (Quality)/Head of Quality
- Associate Deans (Academic)
- The Central Apprenticeships Team (CAT)
- The Department of Academic Quality (DAQ)
- Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
- Marketing Team
- External panel members
- Employers

This guide is only to be used where De Montfort University (DMU) is delivering the apprenticeship. Where a proposal includes partner institutions and delivery off DMU campus, it is important to liaise with Educational Partnerships as appropriate, in the first instance, to ensure that relevant guidance is followed regarding partner and programme approval. For further guidance please refer to the [Guide to Managing a Collaborative Provision](#). Where the academic programme is delivered at DMU but the apprenticeship is not, please follow the [standard Guide to Validation](#).

Given the number of external organisations that play a key role in the apprenticeship system of England, DMU must ensure that it is fully equipped to meet the various requirements governing the sector. By doing so, DMU will be deemed a successful provider of Higher and degree apprenticeships. In order for this to be achieved, this guide should be followed by all those involved in an apprenticeship validation, paying close attention to areas relating to funding and occupational competence. This document should be read in conjunction with other guidance written internally and by external organisations; as listed in Section 8.

Background to apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a tripartite agreement between a provider, an employer and an apprentice. Through an apprenticeship, an apprentice will gain the technical knowledge, practical experience and wider skills and behaviours that they need for their immediate job and future career. The apprentice will gain this through formal off-the-job training (delivered by the provider) and the opportunity to apply these new skills in a real work environment (in a productive job role) through on-the-job training, which is the responsibility of the apprentice's employer.

Higher and degree apprenticeships were first introduced in 2015 and have been a part of the University's offering since 2017. The University delivers apprenticeships between Level 4 and Level 7 enabling learners to gain a higher and degree qualification such as a foundation degree, Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree whilst remaining in employment.

Higher and degree apprenticeships have increased in popularity and are expected to grow each year. They are available in every industry sector, providing exciting, high quality opportunities in a variety of careers.

Key considerations

The University is subject to consumer rights legislation in relation to the accuracy of information we provide to applicants and students about their programme, including information about programme content and structure, tuition fees and other costs. While, the legislation may not apply to apprenticeships directly, it is still strongly advised that you follow procedures which will continue to enhance the learner's experience. For further information please refer to the [Competition and Markets Authority](#) guidance.

DMU academic quality processes (such as; validation, curriculum modifications, periodic review, annual monitoring, external examining, collaborative provision) ensure that the University's approach to quality management, articulated through the University's [Academic Quality Policy](#), is embedded with the focus on enhancing the learning opportunities made available to all learners and assuring quality and standards.

Intrinsic to our academic quality processes is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is an educational framework that guides the design of learning, specifically around curriculum delivery, materials, assessments, policy and practice. The DMU UDL framework is based on a rigorous, research-based foundation; it provides a focussed and student-centred basis for understanding and applying inclusivity within teaching practice. A universal curriculum refers to planning programmes that are barrier-free wherever feasible. If programme content is well designed, delivered and assessed so that it is accessible to students with learning differences and physical disabilities, it will enable them to receive an equivalent learning experience to their peers.

Our approach to teaching, learning, assessment and learner support should be capable of anticipating, and adapting to, the differentiated learner needs. These can be known and clear, as in the case of many learners with disabilities, or subtle and intrinsic, arising from cultural or racial identity, self-expectation, learning 'styles' or other psychological attributes. The value of applying UDL is that if a DMU programme of study is made accessible and inclusive; it benefits those learners identified above but also all other learners too. Faculty UDL Champions can assist academic staff to explore, embed and strengthen UDL within their own practise, curriculum and assessment design and delivery.

Further information on UDL can be found by visiting the [DMU website](#) or by visiting the [UDL SharePoint site](#).

The purpose of apprenticeship validation

Apprenticeship validation is the process through which the university establishes that a new apprenticeship programme is viable, that academic standards have been appropriately defined while incorporating occupational standards and that it will offer apprentices an excellent opportunity to learn. It is about assuring quality but must also be about promoting best practice and adding value by enhancing the quality of the proposal.

Validation provides an opportunity to review the information that will be provided to employers and apprentices and ensure that it complies with the requirements of the various organisations that govern apprenticeships in England. DMU's approach to validation is one of rigour and proportionality with flexible arrangements for programme approval, allowing us to be responsive to external demands and take account of the different levels of risk involved.

Apprenticeship validation involves an event during which a panel of academic peers, various members of professional services departments within the university and external representatives from the relevant employment sector scrutinise the new proposal. However, the approval process also places great emphasis on the apprenticeship programme development stage, and the preparation and consideration of draft documentation at faculty level is considered key to facilitating an effective apprenticeship validation event. Arrangements for the event itself and the level of scrutiny involved will depend on the type and level of risk a proposal poses (see section 2).

Section 1: Pre-Validation approval of the apprenticeship proposal

Pre-Validation Process Map

The pre-validation process map can be accessed via the DAQ webpages.

The process map provides a comprehensive account of the journey the apprenticeship proposal will take right from the initial idea, to apprenticeship viability, to course content and design, to committee approvals and preparation for the validation event. The pre-validation process involves a number of internal stakeholders and as mentioned above there is an array of external stakeholders that also need to be considered. The apprenticeship programme team need to ensure compliance with the respective requirements and expectations of the relevant organisations, as they progress through this stage of the process.

Support and advice

Support and advice for programme developers will exist within the faculty and also within DAQ and the Central Apprenticeships Team (CAT). Given the recent changes surrounding apprenticeships including, Ofsted quality inspections and the revised ESFA funding rules, DAQ is in the process of working closely with CAT and Centre for Academic Innovation and Teaching Excellence (CAITE) to enhance training and guidance within this area and will provide further information in due course.

Timing and scheduling

DAQ advises that new proposals for apprenticeship validation should be presented to the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) six to nine months prior to the planned start date. However, programme developers should aim to seek approval as early as possible to allow adequate time for the subsequent period of apprenticeship programme development and preparation of documentation for validation (electronic submission to the validation panel is required five weeks prior to the validation event). The AQC meet regularly during each academic session and proposals coming forward outside of this schedule may be handled by Chair's action if appropriate.

The programme team will need to consider timeframes from the outset. It is recommended that apprenticeship validation events take place with sufficient time to address any issues arising from the validation event and to allow for any conditions to be met. Once the conditions have been met, a 3 month onboarding period will be required prior to the planned start date of the apprenticeship.

If the apprenticeship needs to be developed to shorter timescales, the programme team should contact their faculty Associate Dean (Academic) in the first instance. They should then arrange a meeting with a member of DAQ and CAT who will discuss the possibility of a fast-track approach*.

An annual schedule of validations is maintained by DAQ.

*Please note a fast-track approach is one which would be completed in a shorter space of time, however, the process and requirements would remain the same.

Approval of faculty and university committees

Before an apprenticeship validation event can be scheduled, a new apprenticeship programme proposal must be scrutinised both within the faculty and at university level to ensure that it will enhance the university's portfolio. During these stages, advice from faculty and university committees can help to ensure that the proposal is as robust as possible by the time it comes to validation.

Where an existing apprenticeship programme is due for revalidation either, due to changes in the standard or Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements or because significant modifications have been made to the apprenticeship programme, or the programme has not delivered in the last two years, approval for the revalidation will be given by the Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/ Head of Quality, in liaison with the faculty Development and Review Committee (DARC) (see below), if required.

The revalidation of a new programme should be fully approved via the Faculty Leadership Board (FLB) to ensure the amended proposal fits within the university/faculty strategy and is still marketable and financially viable.

Programme Management Board (PMB)*

Most new apprenticeship programme proposals will start as ideas by members of the faculty, or by Business Development Managers (BDMs). Some however, will arise from elsewhere, for example at FLB level, via a partner institution, employer or PSRB. In such cases it is still the management board which takes ownership of the idea and begins the planning and approval process.

The PMB will:

- Decide if it wishes to proceed with the idea. It should be noted however, that where a strategic decision has already been taken by the FLB the management board should support the proposal
- Liaise with the Pro Vice-Chancellor/Dean (PVC/Dean) and FLB to ensure that the proposal is compatible with the wider faculty strategic plan
- Consider when it would like the new apprenticeship programme to begin and who will be responsible for developing the proposal
- Decide who will be involved in the apprenticeship programme development team. This may include colleagues from other management boards or faculties, or from partner institutions
- Liaise with CAT and complete the Apprenticeship Options Evaluation (AOE)
- Consider resources
- Begin the process of market analysis
- Liaise directly with BDMs to confirm and evidence market demand for the apprenticeship
- Draft outline apprenticeship programme design, content and delivery model
- Complete a financial viability exercise

All new apprenticeship programme proposals must be presented to and approved by the FLB. Once this approval has been granted, the proposal must go through the rest of the committee structures, as detailed on the Apprenticeship Programme Planning Form (APPF).

Ideally the PMB will begin this process several months prior to forwarding a detailed proposal to the faculty's Development and Review Committee (DARC), acting on behalf of the Faculty Academic Committee (FAC). All new apprenticeship programme proposals for consideration by the FAC should be presented on the APPF.

Use of this proforma provides an assurance that a suitable level of information regarding the proposal is presented to the Development and Review Committee (DARC) (or equivalent) to allow it to make an informed decision about the proposal. The form also requires the programme team to highlight the potential impact of the new proposal on other faculties and partners, and possible areas of inter-faculty collaboration. It is important that such issues are addressed before the proposal is considered at university level, as unresolved inter-faculty issues may delay or prevent the proposal being approved to go forward to validation. Market demand information should be presented alongside the APPF to support viability of the proposal. A clear marketing plan should be present along with, details of engagement and communication with prospective employers so far and some information about anticipated cohort sizes supported by relevant evidence.

* Please note for the purpose of this document PMB also includes other programme management boards including the Quality Improvement Committee and the Subject Authority Committee.

Development and Review Committee (DARC)

The Development and Review Committee (DARC) is a sub-committee of the Faculty Academic Committee (FAC).

In terms of new apprenticeship programme development DARC's role is to:

- Consider and approve, as appropriate, all new apprenticeship programme proposals, including the proposed start date, market analysis and relationship to other provision. This information is provided on the APPF. In considering new provision the faculty will scrutinise each proposal in terms of its fit with the faculty and university strategic plan
- Consider timescales involved in developing the new apprenticeship programmes and time needed to develop the proposal, ensuring that realistic timescales are set for validation events and that documentation will be completed within the required timescale
- Oversee the faculty's academic planning and validation schedules
- Scrutinise each apprenticeship proposal as it progresses to ensure that it is appropriately prepared for validation; this will include approving the validation documentation. In practice the DARC may delegate this task to either the faculty's Associate Professor (Quality) or to a sub-group which will act as a 'reading panel'. However, the ultimate responsibility for approving the validation documentation lies with the PVC/Dean
- Convene a validation panel for devolved proposals, usually completed by the Associate Professor (Quality) and the Servicing Officer
- Receive all validation reports related to the faculty, and ensure that conditions of validation for devolved proposals are met in a timely fashion and reporting to the FAC.

Taught Programmes Management Committee (TPMC)

The Taught Programmes Management Committee is a sub-committee of the Academic Quality Committee (AQC), with responsibility for overseeing the undergraduate and

postgraduate schemes and regulations, respectively. In terms of new programme development, these committees receive, via faculty Associate Dean (Academic), notification of new programme proposals arising from the DARCs.

TPMC's role is to:

- Consider each faculty's new apprenticeship programme proposals, taking into account a strategic overview by each PVC/Dean and the priorities set by the FACs
- Ensure that full consideration has been given to addressing any issues which might impact on other faculties, and that opportunities for inter-faculty collaboration have been explored, where appropriate
- Ratify the overall university planning and development schedule
- Ratify any non-standard regulations which form part of the new apprenticeship proposal

Consultation

There are a number of areas of the university which can provide support during the apprenticeship programme development process and others which require early notification of new apprenticeship programme developments. The list below sets out the areas that should be contacted as a minimum, but may not be limited to (further details below):

- Director of Faculty Operations
- Central Apprenticeship Team
- Disability, Advice and Support
- Marketing
- Admissions
- Information Technology and Media Services
- Strategic Planning Services
- Associate Dean (Academic)
- Library and Learning Services
- Careers and Employability services
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion
- Education for Sustainable Development
- Timetable Office
- Other faculties which may be impacted
- Subject areas which may be impacted
- Associate Professor (Quality)
- Business Development Manager
- Finance
- Learners/Apprentices

Faculty and university marketing teams

Unless a new apprenticeship programme has been commissioned and clearly has a waiting learner market, market research and analysis should be undertaken to support the new apprenticeship programme proposal. Programme developers should approach faculty marketing teams in the first instance for advice and support. They should also work closely with the university's BDMs who can assist in raising an awareness amongst relevant employers within the sector to gauge whether there is a demand for the apprenticeship and whether there are any expressions of interest.

Consideration should also be given to how apprenticeship information will be advertised to prospective employers and apprentices.

Strategic Planning Services

The Strategic Planning Services (SPS) provide a range of data analysis and intelligence on market trends, demographic and student profiles. Much of this information is available electronically through university systems including Tableau. An increasing amount of summary data and analyses are available through Tableau, faculties are free to contact their Faculty Planning Partners or the wider SPS team who are happy to advise you on their interpretation and relevance in specific contexts. If a particular development is not adequately covered by existing reports, where possible, SPS will work with faculties to devise research that is more focused and specific to a particular development.

Library and Learning Services

Library and Learning Services can provide help in developing your learning resource requirements for apprenticeship programmes based at DMU. This includes assistance with costing, identification of existing or alternative resources in a variety of media, compilation of bibliographies, timescales for ordering materials and writing relevant sections of the Apprenticeship Programme Handbook. Library and Learning Services can also provide advice on copyright issues if you are considering using, for example, study packs to support the new programme or inclusion of materials on the VLE. Library and Learning Services has a small central budget to assist with start-up funding for new programmes, particularly in new subject areas; you should discuss new developments with your subject librarian at an early stage in order to benefit from this funding if needed.

Your faculty subject librarian will also assist in the completion of the Library Requirements for New Course form (available from Library and Learning Services). Representatives of Library and Learning Services will participate in devolved validation events as panel members, and you should involve your subject librarian in the programme team at validation.

At validation you will be expected to have identified, costed and budgeted for any new resources to support the apprenticeship programme, including the purchase of software, media items and journals as well as books; you will also need to allow sufficient time for any additional resources to be obtained.

The Timetable Office, Student and Academic Services

The Timetable Office can help with modelling of new apprenticeship programme proposals for delivery on-site to advise whether they are deliverable within the current physical resources of the department and university. If not deliverable within the current resource profile, or if to the significant detriment of current provision, the Timetable Office will help to identify what would be required to facilitate successful delivery of the new/amended programme.

As part of any new proposal, reference should be made to any physical resource requirements (including mentors), as well as how delivery patterns will possibly increase their impact elsewhere (e.g. block-week teaching mixed with year-long).

It is extremely important that for new apprenticeships programmes to be delivered at DMU, the Timetable Office is informed and consulted at the earliest opportunity.

Other faculties

Other faculties should be consulted for any new apprenticeship programmes where an existing module may wish to be used, if it is owned by another faculty. Programme titles should also be considered and if the apprenticeship programme title and award title is similar to that of a programme or programme area owned by another faculty this should be discussed between the faculties.

Admissions

CAT will require early notification that a new apprenticeship programme is being planned and what the recruitment cycle will look like, such as first intake dates. Please liaise with CAT namely the Operations Manager (Regulatory) or the Regulatory Officer in this respect. It is also important to have early discussions with your faculty admissions team to ensure the relevant information is collected for the new programme.

Careers and Employability

The apprenticeship is a tri-partite relationship between the university, the apprentice and the employer. While the apprentice is already in employment, the university is still required to provide careers advice and guidance to the apprentice throughout the duration of their time on the programme. Advice and guidance could relate to roles within the sector, or outside of the sector. It could even relate to guidance around further areas of study. It is fundamental that there are suitable provisions in place for this from the very outset and that these conversations are documented appropriately.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

DMU is committed to all of its academic programmes considering issues associated with EDI and ESD, reflecting the university's strategic commitments to creating a fairer and more sustainable society. This is essential at the course development stage, as these issues may affect recruitment priorities, the purpose of the curriculum and the pedagogic approach taken. Guidance is available from DMU teams leading on EDI and ESD and these colleagues should be consulted for formative feedback as programmes are developed.

Learners/Apprentices

Where revalidation is taking place, learner and employers views should be gathered and a consultation should take place with any future employers and apprentices who will be affected by the changes. Where any core modules have been introduced or withdrawn or a name change has taken place, there is also a requirement to write to both employers, future learners/applicants. Further guidance can be found in the [Guide to Curriculum Modification](#).

Section 2: The risk-based approach to apprenticeship validation

The university applies a risk-based approach to validation to ensure that the appropriate level of scrutiny is given to each proposal, recognising that not all proposals are the same. At its most basic level this recognises that adding a new pathway to an existing programme requires a different approach from the introduction of a whole new subject or programmes involving a subcontract.

The table below outlines indicative approaches to be taken depending on the type of apprenticeship proposal.

It is recognised that proposals may arise which do not completely fit within this model and will need individual discussion between the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/ Head of Quality and DAQ regarding the nature of the validation event.

Changes to existing curriculum

Changes to existing curriculum fall into one of two modification categories. The approval process for the changes will differ depending on which category it falls within. The two categories are:

- Modification
- Revalidation

Modifications do not warrant a revalidation and therefore, in the event of a modification to an existing curriculum you are advised to follow the [Guide to Curriculum Modification](#). Please ensure that any changes are supported by evidence of remapping the outcomes to the relevant standard by way of the KSBs.

Revalidations are prompted where the changes are so substantive that programme revalidation is required to approve them. Changes which will always trigger a revalidation event are:

- Changes to the outcomes of a programme
- Change in programme title, except where the change is purely for marketing reasons and does not affect the content of the programme in any way. If a change in title reflects changes to the programme's content or outcomes a revalidation must be held
- Addition or removal of a significant* number of a programme's modules
- Creation of a new pathway or specialism in a programme, leading to a new named award or the removal of an existing pathway
- Re-using or revitalising a programme that has not been delivered for at least the last two academic years

* It is not possible or desirable to define universally what a 'significant' number of a programme's modules will mean in every case. This will depend both on the nature of the programme and the nature of the modules being added or removed, and is a matter of academic judgement. Your Faculty's Associate Professor (Quality), in discussion with DAQ, will determine for each case whether the proportion of modules being added and/or removed should constitute a revalidation.

Types of validation event

Type of validation	Indicative risk level	Validation event
Substantive changes to existing curriculum requiring revalidation	Low-Medium	Event Type 1
New apprenticeship programme in existing subject area	Medium	Event Type 2
New professionally-accredited apprenticeship programme or amendment to existing professionally apprenticeship accredited programme*	Medium-High	Event Type 3
Apprenticeship programme in entirely new subject area	High	Event Type 3

*may vary depending on individual PSRB requirements

Panel and documentary requirements for each type of event

Event Type: Type 1 – Substantive changes to existing apprenticeship curriculum requiring revalidation	
Panel constitution	Documentary requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair (senior academic from outside faculty) Academic representative from outside faculty Department of Academic Quality representative Central Apprenticeships Team representative Servicing officer from faculty Apprentice representative (either in person or input via written comments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum Modification Form Short rationale/resources statement Critical appraisal of the programme Copies of external examiner reports and apprenticeship programme appraisal and enhancement plans (last 3 years where available) Revised programme and module specification documents (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) Reference to any recommendations set at the original validation event and the faculty response

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library and Learning Services representative • External representative with relevant academic and apprenticeship background • Employer representative (either in person or input via written comments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of module outcomes to programme outcomes with OFS sector recognised standards level descriptors to ensure they are pitched at the correct level (see OFS Sector-recognised standards) • Updated indicative Gateway and EPA schedule (for integrated programmes only) • Updated EPA support materials for apprentices, employers, Independent Assessors and EQA External Assessors (where applicable) • Updated EPA Standard Operating Procedure (for integrated programmes only) • Evidence of employer consultation (could include Curriculum Modification Form) • Relevant minutes/extracts of communications with existing learners on the proposal • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for continuing apprentices moving between levels of study • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for new starting apprentice • A draft indicative Apprenticeship Commitment statement • A draft indicative Apprenticeship Agreement • An indicative Apprenticeship Contract • Information on how Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is addressed within the programme and confirmation of consultation with DMU ESD team and/or completion of ESD prompts.
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Event Type: Type 2 – Validation of a new apprenticeship programme in existing subject area

Panel constitution	Documentary requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair (senior academic from outside faculty) • Academic representative from outside faculty • Department of Academic Quality representative • Central Apprenticeships Team representative • Servicing officer from faculty • Apprentice representative (either in person or input via written comments) • Library and Learning Services representative • External representative with relevant academic and apprenticeship background • Employer representative (either in person or input via written comments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship Programme Proposal Form • Programme and Module specifications • Confirmation of the viability of the apprenticeship • Evidence of external consultation • Information on the employer(s) the university will deliver the apprenticeship with, including an indication of any plans for future expansion of the offer • Evidence of communication with employers; expressions of interest; marketing plan to support the projected apprentice numbers • A draft indicative Apprenticeship Commitment Statement <p>A draft indicative Apprenticeship Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An indicative Apprenticeship Contract • Mapping of module outcomes to programme outcomes with OFS sector recognised standards level descriptors to ensure they are pitched at the correct level (see OFS Sector-recognised standards) • Mapping of the academic programme/modules to the relevant apprenticeship standard, including identifying what has changed in an existing programme, to make it suitable as a vehicle for the apprenticeship • Mapping of the module learning outcomes and assessment to the: required KSBs of the apprenticeship standard; the apprenticeship assessment plan; and the End Point Assessment (EPA). Please contact the Central Apprenticeship Team for a standardised mapping template to complete this exercise. • Matching learning outcomes with OFS sector recognised standards level descriptors to ensure they are pitched at the correct level (see OFS Sector recognised standards)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Initial Needs Assessment (INA) and Training Needs Assessment (TNA) will be undertaken and the process for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) • Processes to support apprentices during the 80% On-the-Job training and commentary on the integration of the on-the-job and 20% learning of new KSBs Delivery plan for the Development Evidence Log, used to evidence and capture the 20% Off-the-Job required hours, and apprenticeship KSBs • Work-based learning plan showing how the work-based learning is monitored and how apprentices will be supported in the workplace • Plans for the training and support available for workplace mentors • Indicative Gateway and EPA schedule (integrated programmes only) • Updated EPA Standard Operating Procedure (for integrated programmes only) • Details of EPA Costings • Completed draft RoEPAO template • For non-integrated programmes provide Agreement in Principle with EPAO or evidence of discussions with EPAO • For non-integrated programmes provide a timeline for contract being agreed with EPAO following successful validation of apprenticeship • Commentary on future study options and how they will embed careers and employability in their programme • Resources statement (physical; human and learning, including Library and Learning Services requirements form for new programmes) • Indicative student assessment timetable • Enhancing learning through technology (ELT) checklist • Equality prompts checklist • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for new starting student
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on any preparatory transitions activity for continuing students moving between levels of study Information on how Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is addressed within the programme and confirmation of consultation with DMU ESD team and/or completion of ESD prompts.
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Event Type: Type 3 – PSRB or new subject area	
Panel constitution	Documentary requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair (senior academic from outside faculty) Academic representative from outside faculty Department of Academic Quality representative Central Apprenticeships Team representative Servicing officer from faculty Apprentice representative (either in person or input via written comments) Library and Learning Services representative External representative with relevant academic and apprenticeship background 	<p>As B above and additionally:</p> <p>Either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about the PSRB and the way in which the apprenticeship programme meets its requirements <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty rationale for introduction of new subject area

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PSRB representative*• Employer representative (either in person or input via written comments)	
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*Some validation panels, for example apprenticeship programmes delivered for the NHS, may have additional panel members such as PSRB representatives and service users.

Validation event indicative programmes

Below are indicative event programmes suitable for each type of validation event. The apprenticeship programme team may discuss with the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality any additional or different requirements as appropriate.

Events will be carried out virtually using MS Teams. The Servicing Officer should ensure all relevant meeting invites are sent out to required attendees with joining instructions.

Event Type 1

09:30 – 09:45	Arrival, introductions and private meeting of the panel
09:45 – 10:00	Presentation by apprenticeship programme leader to the panel
10:00 – 10:30	Private meeting of the panel
10:30 – 13:30	Discussion between the panel and the programme team
13:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	Meeting with existing apprentices and employer representatives (or consideration of written submission)
15:00 – 15:30	Private meeting of the panel
15:30 – 16:30	Feedback to the programme team on validation outcomes

Event Type 2

09:30 – 09:45	Arrival and introductions
09:45 – 10:00	Presentation from the programme leader to the panel
10:00 – 10:30	Private meeting of the panel
10:30 – 13:30	Discussion between the panel and the programme team
13:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:45	Discussion between the panel, the programme team, external panel member, apprenticeship representative
15:45 – 16:00	Private meeting of the panel
16:00 – 16:30	Feedback to the programme team on validation outcomes

Event Type 3

09:30 – 09:45	Arrival and introductions
09:45 – 10:00	Presentation from the programme leader to the panel
10:00 – 10:30	Private meeting of the panel
10:30 – 13:30	Discussion between the panel and the programme team
13:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:45	Discussion between the panel, the programme team, external panel member, apprenticeship representative, and PSRB
15:45 – 16:00	Private meeting of the panel
16:00 – 16:30	Feedback to the programme team on validation outcomes

Section 3: The apprenticeship validation panel and participants

The apprenticeship validation panel – authority and constitution

For most new proposals the responsibility for validating and administering the validation process has been devolved to faculty DARCs. The validation panel reports to the FAC and the Academic Quality Committee (AQC).

Apprenticeship validation panel terms of reference

The apprenticeship validation panel will:

- Receive proposals for the validation of new apprenticeship programmes or the revalidation of existing apprenticeship programmes
- Ensure the effective scrutiny of proposals by a process which facilitates peer review and using methods deemed appropriate to the validation status and subject matter of the programmes concerned
- Assess the apprenticeship programme to ensure that it meets/satisfies quality criteria and threshold academic standards appropriate to the type and level of award
- Report to the FAC/AQC on the outcome of the apprenticeship programme validation/revalidation exercise and make recommendations as appropriate
- Review the programme against university standards and strategic priorities such as UDL, anonymous marking, ESD, EDI and Development and, DecolonisingDMU
- Ensure the apprenticeship programme promotes the Safeguarding Policy, raises awareness about the Prevent agenda and that it promotes British Values

Validation panel constitution

This will depend on the level of risk involved (to be determined by faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality in consultation with DAQ). (See table in section 2).

Criteria for appointing External Panel Members (EPM)

External scrutiny is required for all validation types. Please see the table in section 2 to determine whether this is achieved via correspondence or attendance at the validation event.

An EPM must have experience/knowledge or a background in apprenticeships and should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Experience as a QAA reviewer or auditor
- Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being considered
- Experience as an external examiner in apprenticeship at another Higher Education provider
- Participation in professional body accreditation activity as a panel member
- Contribution to the debate about subject quality at a national level, for example through subject associations
- Distinction by way of scholarship and research within the subject and have awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula

The EPM should not be a current external examiner for the parent PMB of the apprenticeship 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 an EPM.

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 Academic Quality Committee.

Please note that for each external panel member the relevant faculty must pay an agreed daily fee (normally £150) as well as covering their expenses (when required to attend an event on campus). The faculty can make and pay for travel arrangements in advance on behalf of the EPM or the EPM can provide full receipts. This should be arranged by the Servicing Officer with each individual EPM.

Ideally nominations should be made at least three to six months prior to the apprenticeship validation event, but it is recognised that sometimes this will have to be done on a quicker turnaround.

Where the validation is for a professionally accredited programme please discuss the requirements for external panel members with the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality in the first instance.

Roles and responsibilities

Panel members

The roles and responsibilities of apprenticeship panel members are outlined briefly below. If further information around roles and responsibilities is required then please contact a member of the DAQ team in the first instance. It is advisable that all panel members and Chairs attend a training session provided by DAQ.

Apprenticeship validation panel chair (Chair)

The role of the Chair is to ensure that a fair judgement about the proposed apprenticeship programme can be made by the end of the validation event and that issues are explored and debated and that the panel works in an effective and timely manner. The Chair should have apprenticeship experience.

Academic representative from outside the faculty

The non-faculty academic representative's main role is to give an independent and objective view of the quality of the apprenticeship proposal and to draw on experience of provision within their own faculty and across the university as a whole. It is recommended that the non-faculty representative has some knowledge/experience of apprenticeships

External panel member

The role of the external panel member is to give an independent and objective view of the quality of the apprenticeship proposal and to draw on wider experience of provision elsewhere.

It is highly recommended that the external panel member is an academic and has experience of the development and/or delivery of apprenticeship provision or involvement in a relevant Trailblazer group. Where the external panel member is a representative of a

professional practice or industry, with a proven background in apprenticeships, they will contribute knowledge of the features of apprenticeship programmes that lead to a valuable professional, creative or vocational preparation.

There are no restrictions on how many external panel members can be present at a validation event.

Employer representative

The employer representative will be able to provide a valuable insight on various areas of the apprenticeship proposal. They will be able to comment on the mapping of the knowledge, skills and behaviours to the programme/module outcomes and also provide their comments around on the job learning as well as things like future careers and the industry at large.

Department of Academic Quality (DAQ) representative

The DAQ representative's role is to ensure that the validation event takes place according to the validation framework and that the apprenticeship proposal sits appropriately to national and university requirements, e.g. the FHEQ, the HE Credit Framework, undergraduate and postgraduate regulations etc. The DAQ representative will advise the panel on apprenticeship validation protocols and outcomes.

The DAQ representative on the panel is available to provide help/advice on individual validations. General advice/support for those taking part in apprenticeship validation panels is available from DAQ as part of its programme of training/briefing sessions. DAQ training for validation chairs should be completed prior to undertaking the role of chair for the first time. It is also strongly suggested that prospective chairs/panel members seek an opportunity to observe at an event before taking part as a full panel member.

Central Apprenticeships Team (CAT) representative

A representative from the university's Central Apprenticeship Team should be invited to sit on the validation panel for a new apprenticeship. This role is to provide guidance on specific details about ESFA and IfATE as well as to highlight any potential issues of compliance.

Library and Learning Services representative

The Library and Learning Services (LLS) representative's role is to consider the learning resources as described in relation to the ability of the LLS to support the programme.

Apprentice/Learner representative

The Apprenticeship representative will be drawn from course representatives or from the DSU Executive Office. The apprenticeship representative's main focus will be the learner experience offered by the new apprenticeship programme and the information provided to learners, for example the Apprenticeship programme/student handbook.

Validation servicing officer

The main role of the servicing officer is to prepare the apprenticeship validation report and act as the key point of liaison between the panel and the apprenticeship programme team. The validation servicing officer may also find it useful to attend validation training sessions offered by DAQ.

Participants in a validation

Programme Team

- **Apprenticeship Programme leader (or nominee)**

The main role of the apprenticeship programme leader is to take the lead in preparing for the validation, overseeing the production of the relevant documentation and ensuring that all key colleagues within the faculty are suitably briefed for the event itself. In particular, the programme leader will:

- Consult with all relevant professional services departments, specifically the subject/faculty librarian and the Timetabling 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 apprenticeship programme team's preparations for the validation, co-ordinating development meetings, the production of documentation, attendance at DAQ briefings etc
- Draft the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO) template and develop an EPA delivery schedule plan
- 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 FLB
- Co-ordinate responses to the issues raised by panel members on the apprenticeship validation documentation in advance of the event, through liaison with the validation servicing officer
- Attend the apprenticeship validation event and give a short contextual presentation to the panel
- After the validation, take the lead in preparing the apprenticeship programme team's response to any conditions and/or recommendations set at the validation.

A checklist outlining actions to be taken and related timescales at each stage of the approval, development and validation process is provided as an appendix to this guide and on the DAQ webpages.

- **Apprenticeship Programme Team members**

The apprenticeship programme team will contribute to the development of the apprenticeship programme and take part in the validation event. The apprenticeship programme team may wish to include their subject librarian and programme administrator in the validation event.

Senior Management Team

- **PVC/Dean (or nominee)**

The PVC/Dean should be kept informed by the Associate Professor (Quality) about the status of the development, and must approve the external panel member nomination prior to its submission to the Head of Academic Quality, for Academic Quality Committee approval. The PVC/Dean may in some cases attend a senior staff meeting with the apprenticeship validation panel on the day of the event, where they will need to respond to the panel's questions regarding strategic plans, resourcing, etc.

- **Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality (also in programme team) (or nominee)**

The Associate Professor (Quality) is responsible for overseeing the preparations for the apprenticeship validation, through ongoing liaison with the validation servicing officer, the apprenticeship programme leader/team and, where appropriate, the validation panel chair. Once approval to proceed to validation is gained, the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality should liaise with DAQ and the apprenticeship programme leader designated to determine the appropriate approval process (see table in section 2). The faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality should also provide advice and guidance to the apprenticeship programme team in respect of documentary requirements, quality assurance protocols, good practice, etc. and jointly sign off the validation documentation (with the PVC/Dean). In addition, the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality is responsible for ensuring that the draft apprenticeship validation report is sent to the Chair within two weeks of the event. Depending on the level of risk involved in devolved validations the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality may/may not be required to attend the event (see table in section 2).

- **Associate Dean (Academic) (or nominee)**

The Associate Dean (Academic) (ADA) will provide the apprenticeship programme team with advice and guidance in respect of queries relating to the DMU undergraduate/postgraduate schemes and regulations and other such matters. The ADA may be required to attend the validation event as part of the senior staff team.

- **Faculty Apprenticeship Lead (or nominee)**

The Faculty Apprenticeship Lead can provide support and guidance on compliance matters relating to ESFA, OfSted and QA requirements to the apprenticeship programme leader/programme team when they are creating their proposal. The Faculty lead can also provide comments on improving the learner experience.

Section 4: Preparing for the apprenticeship validation event

Preparation of documentation

Documentary requirements for each type of apprenticeship validation are as outlined in the table in section 2. Documentation will be formally signed off by the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality on behalf of the faculty. Should you have any queries about the documentation you are required to prepare, you are encouraged to contact your faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality in the first instance.

Whilst preparing your apprenticeship programme, assessments and documentation you should consider the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and may wish to consult your faculty UDL champion. There are clear expectations placed upon the university by external organisations including IfATE about reasonable adjustments. "Employers, training providers and EPAOs must make reasonable adjustments to ensure apprentices with disabilities or physical or mental health conditions aren't substantially disadvantaged during training, assessment or when doing their jobs" (IfATE Website). Requirements for reasonable adjustments can be found in the apprenticeship assessment plan.

At the time of writing this guide, it is envisaged that training sessions/guides will be prepared which will aid successful apprenticeship course design. If you require any training, advice or guidance in respect of this then please contact DAQ or CAT for further information.

Subcontracting

DMU offers higher and degree level apprenticeships to employers covering a range of subject areas. The University undertakes subcontracting agreements as part of its apprenticeship offer where a subcontracting arrangement will add value to the quality of its apprenticeship delivery. Further details relating to subcontracting can be found at the university [webpages](#) and in the [Apprenticeship Subcontracting Policy](#).

Apprenticeship Programme (student) Handbook

A guide to writing a programme handbook is available via the [DAQ webpages](#). Please refer to the guidance for details on how to write your apprenticeship programme and module handbooks.

Apprenticeship validation document

The document should include information required specifically for apprenticeship validation purposes, i.e. over and above that contained in the apprenticeship programme handbook. The information required for each type of validation event is outlined in the Panel and Documentary Requirements table in section 2 of this guide; If you have any queries regarding the documentation you need to provide, you should contact your faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality or DAQ.

Common shortfalls and protocols for dealing with weak submissions

The university expects that faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality and PVC/Deans shall only sign off suitably prepared proposals. If any member of the validation panel, having read the documentation, either prior to the validation event or on the day of the validation event, believes that there are significant weaknesses in the proposal they should discuss this initially with the Chair and the DAQ representative. If the concerns warrant

postponing the validation event this must be done in conjunction with the Head of Academic Quality.

Details of the most common issues identified by panels are as follows. Apprenticeship programme developers are required to be mindful of these when preparing documentation to avoid/reduce the volume of follow-up work post validation.

Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistency/clarity in assessment strategy Mapping of assessment activities against learning outcomes, including the mapping of EPA to the apprenticeship standard, see assessment plan
Curriculum and programme design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity in programme description/title/structure Mapping of the academic programme/modules to the relevant apprenticeship standard Mapping of the module learning outcomes and assessment to the required Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours of the apprenticeship standard, the apprenticeship assessment plan and the End Point Assessment (EPA) Mapping of module outcomes to programme outcomes to ensure compliance with Subject Benchmark Statement, OFS sector recognised standards Revisiting programme structure with regard to mandatory modules Ensure that the programme structure is in-line with the assessment plan (e.g. duration of programme pre-gateway, duration of the EPA etc)
Learning and teaching issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship between learning outcomes and level of work required Mapping of learning outcomes for the apprenticeship programme to the KSBs Embedding personal development curriculum into the programme successfully Incorporation of e-learning (Enhancing Learning through Technology) Study skills support and access to study facilities, specifically support for learners with learning differences or disabilities. You should refer to the UDL principles and be making assessments accessible to all students How are work based assessments integrated into the academic programme Creating bespoke apprenticeships tailored to individual learners needs
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing plan, including visiting lecturers and technicians and administrative/compliance support Statement of commitment to provision of resources Work-based learning plan showing how the work-based learning is monitored and how apprentices will be supported in the workplace Plans for the training and support available for workplace mentors
Validation panel concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deficiencies in information which will leave the validation panel unable to draw a reliable conclusion Non-compliance with expected requirements/protocols, such as academic planning considerations, procedures set out in the Academic Quality Guides or non-adherence with relevant sections of the QAA Quality Code Presentation of information which is significantly unclear or contradictory

In the event of a weak or under prepared validation, the following protocols have been developed to provide guidance to validation panel chairs, faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality and programme proposers.

Protocols for situations where significant issues are identified prior to the apprenticeship validation event

Identify that the apprenticeship proposal is not yet ready

Any significant shortfalls in the proposal should be identified upon receipt of the documentation by:

- Validation panel chair, or
- Servicing officer, or
- Department of Academic Quality (DAQ) validation panel representative

A significant shortfall will normally fall within one or more of the following categories:

- Deficiencies in information which will leave the validation panel unable to draw a reliable conclusion
- Non-compliance with expected internal or external requirements/protocols, such as the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan, the university procedures for validation and the relevant sections of the QAA Quality Code
- Presentation of information which is significantly unclear or contradictory
- The academic challenge of the programme is not set at the correct level and is defined without engagement with national reference points

Record reasons and alert relevant parties with a recommendation for action

The Head of Academic Quality should be immediately advised of the reasons why the proposal is not yet ready with a recommendation of what action should be taken.

Where a proposal is not yet ready, if time allows the recommended action would normally be to make arrangements, for supplementary information to be circulated to the validation panel. All supplementary papers must be received by panel members at least 5 working days prior to the apprenticeship validation event.

If there is no time for a late circulation of papers it should be recommended that the event be postponed and a new date set.

Decide the appropriate course of action

A decision is then made whether to postpone the event or make a late circulation of supplementary papers. The PVC/Dean should be formally alerted by the Head of Academic Quality, stating the reasons, with a copy of the email to the panel chair, faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality and the apprenticeship programme leader/proposer.

The decision on the appropriate course of action should be arrived at swiftly and by consensus through discussion between the Chair, faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality and PVC/Dean, mediated by the Head of Academic Quality. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education 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 Academic Quality Committee to monitor trends and make recommendation to changes in practice.

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

Very exceptionally cases arise where it is evident to the panel that the validation should be terminated before the panel draws together conditions and recommendations. This is distinct from cases where the outcome is that the proposal is referred back with an invitation to resubmit.

The validation panel chair should seek agreement of the panel not to proceed with the validation. The panel should record its reasons for not proceeding with the event

This will be an issue which is so fundamentally wrong that the panel is not confident that quality and standards of the award can be assured, for example:

- Fundamental mismatch between programme outcomes and module outcomes and/or the standard
- No confidence that resources are in place to support the proposal including a lack of critical mass of staff to support the proposed apprenticeship programme
- Serious concerns about the strategic commitment to the proposal from the faculty or a partner institution
- Serious concerns relating to the overall viability and market demand for the apprenticeship

The panel chair should alert a senior staff member

The PVC/Dean, Head of School or Department or College Principal must be advised of the situation. The Chair should explain that issues have arisen which are of such a magnitude they are unlikely to be addressed through attaching conditions to the validation.

Identify a follow-up plan

Feedback should be given to the apprenticeship programme team on the reason for terminating the validation. If the occasion allows, it may be helpful to share with the programme team what actions for improvement are required. Alternatively, agreement may be reached to hold a second stage meeting at a later date to discuss an improvement plan. To help the apprenticeship programme team prepare for a fresh validation event the report of the validation event will specify an action plan, instead of conditions and recommendations.

Submission and circulation of documentation

The documentation should normally be received by validation panel members digitally five weeks before the validation event. Panel members should endeavour to return their comments on the documentation to the validation servicing officer three weeks before the apprenticeship validation to allow time for responses by the apprenticeship programme team.

If due to the nature of the apprenticeship validation event it is not possible to circulate the documents five weeks in advance it may not be possible for the panel to provide comments in advance of the validation day. If the validation documentation is submitted less than

three weeks before the apprenticeship validation event the validation panel Chair should discuss with the Head of Academic Quality whether the validation should go ahead on the intended date. The Chair of the panel and the faculty Head of Academic Quality/ Associate Professor (Quality) do have the right to delay an event if adequate time is not provided for the panel to review documents or as a result of significant issues identified prior to the event.

In the event of PSRB involvement, the servicing officer will need to ensure that documents are shared for review and comments in a timely manner. Please note that timeframes for PSRBs may be different to what DMU may request.

Section 5: The apprenticeship validation event

Apprenticeship validation process

Please review the apprenticeship event validation process flowchart which can be found in the [DAQ Shared Drive](#).

The flowchart sets out the key stages of the apprenticeship validation journey from the day of the apprenticeship validation event, right through to formal notification of approval of the new apprenticeship programme, once all conditions have been satisfied.

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

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

- The **rationale** for the new apprenticeship 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 **learner 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 all learners can maximise their potential, including considering the UDL principles within the Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The considerations below detail the issues on which the validation panel will focus, in order to assess the apprenticeship proposal; the resource base; and the learning environment in place for the delivery of the proposed provision. With apprenticeships a key area of focus at the validation/re-validation event will surround things like looking for changes to standards and KSBs; being satisfied that the KSBs have been effectively integrated into the curriculum; that the programme/module outcomes have been aligned accurately with the KSBs; and that adequate provisions have been set out for the EPA.

How judgements are made

Below is a non-exhaustive list of questions which both the apprenticeship programme team and the validation panel members can utilise when assessing the strength of the validation documentation submitted. The development team should be clear about how these issues are being addressed in their proposal and the validation panel should use these as discussion prompts when evaluating new apprenticeship programmes, but avoid a mechanistic 'tick-box' approach. If any of the following considerations have not been taken into account during the design process this would indicate a significant gap in the development of the apprenticeship programme.

1. Are the characteristics of the apprenticeship programme clearly defined?
2. Is the proposal in line with the faculty's learning and teaching strategy?
3. Is there Information on the employer(s) the university will deliver the apprenticeship with, including an indication of any plans for future expansion of the offer; if there is no confirmed employer on board just yet, are there supporting expressions of interest or details of a confident marketing plan?

4. Is there evidence to demonstrate and support market interest for the apprenticeship?
5. Will the apprenticeship programme provide a good learning experience for the likely learner intake?
6. Will the curriculum prepare learners for the opportunities potentially available on completion of the apprenticeship?
7. Is the apprenticeship programme designed to ensure that the overall experience of a learner has logic and an intellectual integrity that are related to clearly defined purposes?
8. Is the intellectual challenge and value of the programme defined at the correct level, and with reference to the OFS Sector-recognised standards? Ensure that the learning outcomes are relevant and set at the appropriate level of the programme/module
9. Has the programme team taken account, as appropriate, of external reference points, including any relevant QAA [Subject Benchmark Statements](#),) OFS Sector-recognised standards, the [Higher Education Credit Framework for England](#) and the requirements of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies and employers? Has the apprenticeship programme team considered the [Education Inspection Framework](#) (EIF) and contextualised it's principles within the validation documentation?
10. Ensure that during revalidations the QAA benchmarking statements and the occupational standard are checked to see if any new ones have been published and need to be referred to.
11. Have the programme team engaged with employers or external stakeholders in their programme development? This engagement is crucial when considering a new apprenticeship programme, both for when gaining market insight and when designing the actual apprenticeship.
12. Does the curriculum demonstrate an effective integration of the occupational standard and KSBs with programme/module outcomes?
13. Does the EPA meet the requirements of the IfATE assessment plan?
14. Does the curriculum impose an increasing level of demand on the learner during the course of the programme?
15. Is the programme balanced, for example in relation to academic and practical elements, personal development (safeguarding, Prevent and British Values) and academic outcomes, breadth and depth in the curriculum in accordance with the EIF?
16. Does the award title reflect the intended learning outcomes of the programme?
17. Is it clear how the intended learning outcomes of the programme will be promoted, demonstrated and assessed?
18. What has the team done to design and implement e-learning into the programme?
19. Are the identified resources necessary to support the programme (including workplace mentors) and are they in place or committed?
20. Is the programme designed so that learners are treated equally, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion?
21. Has the programme considered the UDL principles in the design and the type and volume of assessment?
22. Do programme learning outcomes feature career progression and career management skills development?
23. Do on the job learning placement outcomes contribute to the overall coherence and integrity of the apprenticeship?
24. Have the team included anonymous marking of assessments where possible? If this has not been included, faculty support must be sought and justification presented at validation?
25. Has the Equality Prompts checklist been completed and have you had sight of the comments, queries and commendations for good practice by the EDI team?

26. Has the programme design incorporated the following themes and did the programme team utilise the various toolkits? If not, what approach did the programme team use to ensure the key themes below have been embedded in the programme:

EDI
Employability
Decolonising DMU
Sustainability
Wellbeing

Has the programme incorporated some, or all of the themes? Which ones? How has the programme been designed flexibly to accommodate the additional themes in the future?
Over what timescale will this be achieved?

27. How has the ELF been considered in the development of the programme?
28. How will progress be monitored – tripartite reviews, how will this be resourced as the provision grows?
29. RPL – skills scans, what prior learning can be expected, mapping to standards, how will they look at individual holistically?

Additional consideration for different types of provision

The table below indicates the particular focus of scrutiny appropriate to different types of proposal. This should be read as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, the core range of topics to be explored during the validation process.

Type of provision	Focus of scrutiny
Enhanced Learning through Technology (ELT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to open learning centres • Provision of learning support including study skills • Arrangements for tutorial support • Assessment methods and procedures • Arrangements for the submission of assignments • Monitoring and feedback on academic progress • Opportunities for peer group interaction • Procedures for ensuring the students' needs and capabilities are appropriate for entry to the programme • Information to students about the programme and clear communication of expectations • Use of technology and study material is appropriate to the subject and enables students to meet the programme outcomes • Provision for updating material • Programme material is designed and structured to support individual study
Work-based learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of all parties including provision of a learner agreement • Provision of training for work-based mentors and assessors, as appropriate • Staff profiles and staff development • Learning resources • Personal tutorial support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, teaching and assessment strategies • Quality assurance and enhancement procedures • Market research and characteristics of the student intake • If the proposal is for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, the Central Apprenticeship Team must be contacted as early as possible
Foundation Degree	<p>Employer involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the design and regular review of programmes • To achieve recognition from employer and professional bodies • With both local organisations and national sectoral bodies, to establish demand for Foundation Degree programmes <p>The development of skills and knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and work specific skills, relevant to the sector • Underpinned by rigorous and broad-based academic learning • Key skills in communication, team working, problem solving, application of number, use of information technology and improving own learning and performance • Generic skills, for instance, reasoning and work process management • Should be recorded by a transcript, validated by the awarding HEI and underpinned by a personal development plan <p>Application of skills in the workplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must demonstrate (as appropriate) their skills in work relevant to the area of study • Work experience should be sufficient to develop an understanding of the world of work and be validated, assessed and recorded • The awarding HEIs should award credits, with exemptions for students with relevant work experience <p>Credit accumulation and transfer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation Degrees will attract a minimum of 240 credits – see approved university framework • Appropriate prior and work-based learning through the award of credits <p>Progression - within work and/or to an honours degree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be guaranteed articulation arrangements with at least one honours degree programme

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
DipHE/CertHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration should be given to the opportunities available to top up to an honours degree • Normally at DMU HNC/D programmes are written by the university rather than using off the shelf Pearson/EdExcel units. It is a requirement that where the university develops its own Higher National award which is closely related in title and/or content to an existing BTEC Higher National award, a mapping exercise is undertaken at the point of validation. For further information please contact Sally Lloyd or Louise Newell in DAQ, or visit the Pearson website and search for the relevant guidance, entitled Licenced HEIs Guide to Mapping Core Content
Higher and Degree Apprenticeship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All proposals for apprenticeships should first be referred to the Central Apprenticeship Team for guidance and requirements. • All programme proposals must align to a national apprenticeship standard • Funding must be secured from the Education and Skills Funding Agency in order to run a degree apprenticeship, which might impact on proposed start dates and student numbers • Arrangements must be in place for an assessment organisation to conduct the End Point Assessment (EPA) • Detail must be provided as to the employer(s) the university will be delivering the apprenticeship with, including an indication of any plans for future expansion of the offer to other employers • Should be aligned to QAA characteristic statements for apprenticeships

Outcome of the validation

At the end of the apprenticeship validation, the panel must decide whether it wishes to approve the proposal. The panel's recommendation will fall into one of the following categories:

- **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, and subject to change in occupational standards
- **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 to programmes.

Given the nature of apprenticeships with changes to occupational standards and those with PSRB involvement it is crucial that the apprenticeships are reviewed regularly. Where a validated apprenticeship programme is modified it may require revalidation depending on the nature and extent of the changes. Guidance on this is provided in the [Guide to Curriculum Modification](#).

Conditions

These serious issues must be addressed to the satisfaction of the panel, **before** delivery of the apprenticeship programme can commence or, in the case of a revalidation, to allow the apprenticeship programme to continue in operation after a specified date. When setting conditions, the panel must specify clearly what is to be done, by whom and by when, and what the arrangements will be for ensuring that the given conditions have been satisfied.

Issues not discussed during the day will not be included as conditions unless the panel discusses them with the apprenticeship programme team at the time they report back.

Apprenticeship programme teams should be aware that any requirements to update learner resources, such as module specifications and programme handbooks are considered as conditions and these resources will need to be fully updated prior to the start of the apprenticeship programme.

All conditions need to be met a minimum of three to six months prior to programme start date.

In accordance with the Apprenticeship Validation process flowchart, the Chair will normally provide confirmation to the servicing officer that all conditions have been met. Once this has been done the servicing officer will send out the Notification of Outcome electronically. Upon receipt of this DAQ will send out the Formal Notification of Approval of New Apprenticeship Programme document to relevant stakeholders and the Central University Tracker will be updated accordingly.

Required actions

These are also serious issues that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the panel; however, they may have a longer completion date. In certain instances, it may be appropriate to set deadlines for some conditions that fall after the planned start of delivery. Examples of required actions are not limited to but could include the below:

- Submission of External Examiner (and EQA External Assessor) Nomination Form
- Completion and submission (by CAT) of the RoEPAO application form
- Creation of a risk register
- EPA support materials for apprentices, employers, Independent Assessors and EQA External Assessors (where applicable)
- Post approval checklist

External examiner

Following approval at validation, the programme team will need to nominate an external examiner to be appointed to the programme, according to the processes in the [Guide to External Examining](#) at DMU.

The timescales of seeking appointments should be carefully considered in order to have an external examiner approved by the External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee for the start of the programme.

Recommendations

These should be addressed by the apprenticeship programme team and the programme management board(s) as part of subsequent review and development activities. The apprenticeship 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. **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 dissemination for adoption/adaptation.

At the final feedback session, the Chair should feed this all back to the programme team.

The apprenticeship programme team, the panel and the Quality Officer (Taught Programmes) should receive a copy of the initial outcome report within two working days of the event taking place.

Not approved

Where the panel decide that they cannot approve a programme, they must confirm to the apprenticeship programme team if the proposal should be reviewed and re-submitted for consideration at a second event. In discussion with the apprenticeship programme team, the Chair should set a timeframe for when the proposal will be re-submitted. Where possible, the panel will aim to retain the same panel members, for consistency. If the apprenticeship programme team decide not to proceed with a follow up or second event, this should be confirmed to the faculty and the panel Chair.

Section 6: After the apprenticeship validation event

Please refer to the DAQ webpages to review the Apprenticeship Validation Process flowchart for details of what happens after the apprenticeship validation event.

Preparation of report and validation follow-up

The report

The outcome of the apprenticeship validation will be fully documented in a report, written by the validation servicing officer. However, within two days of the validation event the servicing officer sends out the Outcomes Report in draft form to the Chair for approval. This report provides basic details of the validation outcome and any associated conditions and recommendations, commendations and observations. Once it has been approved by the Chair it is then circulated by the servicing officer to the Panel, DAQ and the apprenticeship programme team so that work can commence in response to the issues raised. At this stage DAQ will send out an Initial Notification of Programme Approval (subject to conditions) to key individuals via email.

The initial draft of the full Validation Report should be sent to the Chair no later than two weeks after the validation event, with a week to submit any comments and/or amendments. The draft should then be revised, as required, and circulated promptly to the remaining panel members for comment/amendment, also giving them a week to respond. Once approved by the panel, the draft validation report should then be circulated to the programme leader, for comment in terms of factual accuracy, again giving a week to consider and submit comments.

Circulation of final report

The final, approved validation report should be circulated by the servicing officer to a number of key individuals. These include the programme team, the relevant programme management board, the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality, the PVC/Dean, the Faculty Academic Committee (FAC), the DAQ panel member and the Quality Officer, Taught Programmes for onward transmission to the Academic Quality Committee. The programme management board receives the report for formal consideration, and the PVC/Dean and the FAC, for note.

Responding to conditions and recommendations

It is the responsibility of the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality to oversee the process of meeting conditions of approval. The faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality should ensure that:

- The documentation submitted in response to conditions is received by the date specified in the validation report
- A copy of the response to conditions is forwarded by the validation servicing officer to the panel members for approval, as appropriate
- The Chair of the validation panel formally and in writing approves the responses to conditions, if appropriate, submitting this to the validation servicing officer
- If the conditions of approval have been fully met, confirmation in writing must be sent to the programme team and full panel

- If the conditions of approval are deemed not to have been fully met, a further response is requested from the programme team, again to be endorsed by the relevant panel member(s).
- Corrected and complete programme/module specification templates (showing tracked changes) should be forwarded to the programme administrator to update SAP. This is extremely important to provide accurate and correct student information. These documents should also be provided to CAT so they can ensure the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is accurate and further so that they can notify the BDMs of any changes so that the BDMs can correctly market the apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship programme leader is responsible for submitting the appropriate documentation into the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality. The validation servicing officer is responsible for ensuring that the finalised versions of the programme and module specification are provided to the relevant faculty professional services team at the conclusion of the validation process so that any updates can be made to the Academic Database. In the case of non-devolved/ collaborative provision events, the main validation event is followed by a 6-month review where the conditions and recommendations are discussed in more detail – please refer to Section 1 in the [Guide to managing collaborative provision](#).

The relevant programme management board will monitor progress and seek reports of action taken to address the issues therein, in line with the deadlines set by the validation panel. The validation servicing officer will be the conduit for the follow-up action and should provide notification/updates on responses to conditions as appropriate.

Formal notification of outcome of validation

Once the Chair has provided written confirmation that all of the outstanding conditions and recommendations have been addressed the servicing officer will circulate a Notification of Outcome to faculty colleagues and DAQ. DAQ will then circulate a Formal Notification of the Validation Outcomes to key faculty and central professional services staff.

Section 7: Further information

Forms and useful publications

Internal resources

Document	Available from
Apprenticeship pre-validation process map	Link to follow
Apprenticeship validation event process map	Link to follow
Development Timeline template	Link to follow
Apprenticeships Options Evaluation Tool	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Costing and Viability Form Template	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Mapping document Template	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Programme Planning Form template	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Programme Planning Form guidance	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Programme Specifications Template	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Programme Specifications guidance	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Module Specifications Template	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Module Specifications guidance	Link to follow
EPA guide and documents	Link to follow
Apprenticeship programme handbook template	Available here
Enhancing Learning through Technology (ELT) programme development tool	Available here
Equality prompts checklist	Available here
Library and Learning Services Requirements for New Apprenticeship Programme(s)	Available here
Apprenticeship Panel Members guidance	Link to follow
Curriculum modification guide	Available here
Curriculum modification form	Available here
Safeguarding	Link to follow
DMU Counter-Extremism Strategy (PREVENT)	Link to follow
Apprenticeship External Panel members application forms	Link to follow
RPL Guide	Available here
Subcontracting Policy	Available here

External resources

Document	Available from
QAA Revised Quality Code	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) website
Characteristic statements for Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/characteristics-statements/higher-education-in-apprenticeships-characteristics-statement
OFSTED Education Inspection Framework (EIF)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework
OFSTED Handbook for FE and Skills	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-further-education-and-skills-providers
OFSTED Code of Conduct for providers	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conduct-during-ofsted-inspections#expectations-of-providers
Inspecting further education and skills: guide for providers	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inspecting-further-education-and-skills-guide-for-providers#introduction
IFATE Website – Standard and EPA Plans	https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/
ESFA Apprenticeship Funding rules	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules
ESFA Apprenticeship accountability statement	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-accountability-statement
Off the Job Training guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training
Apprenticeship Masterclass "apprenticeship curriculum design- SDN webinar"	Link to follow
Apprenticeship Data Insights	https://apprenticeshipdata.co.uk/
OFS Advice for providers	https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/skills-and-employment/degree-apprenticeships/degree-apprenticeships-for-providers/how-to-develop-and-deliver-degree-apprenticeships/
Further education and skills inspection handbook	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif
Apprenticeship checklist for training providers	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provider-guide-to-delivering-high-quality-apprenticeships
QAA Revised Quality Code	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) website