Academic Quality Services (AQS)

Validation Service Operational Guide

A guide for Partners, Examiners and External Subject Advisors.

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Introduction

This guide has been produced for university and collaborative partner staff who are involved in the operation and administration of programmes delivered at partner institutions which are validated and managed under the auspices of the De Montfort University (DMU) Validation Service.

Collaborative educational activity commenced at De Montfort University in the late 1980s. Until the introduction of the Validation Service model in 2009, the University's primary method of engagement in collaborative activity was through franchise arrangements.

The introduction of the Validation Service allows the University to validate an award where it has no cognate academic expertise or where a Faculty do not wish to collaborate. This approach has allowed broader developments in academic disciplines which either do not exist at the University or, do exist, but would preclude the exact duplication of an existing award.

Responsibility for the oversight of management and monitoring of provision validated by the Validation Service belongs to UK Validation Services (UKVS). The DMU Academic Quality Services (AQS) maintain overall oversight of all validation and collaborative review activity. This model offers partner institutions the opportunity to develop awards outside of the DMU academic portfolio whilst retaining partnership arrangements. It also allows for quality provision to be delivered to those who may not have otherwise had access to such opportunity.

This guide offers an overview of the various administrative and operational procedures required of DMU as the awarding body and of the partner(s) as the delivering institution in order to successfully operate a Validation Service programme. It outlines the key areas of responsibility for both Partner and University staff and whilst is not intended as an exhaustive guide it does outline key roles and areas of responsibility across all areas of administration.

This guide is intended to be used by key staff in the university and partner institutions, including:

- Partner HE Managers & Directors
- Partner Programme Coordinators
- Partner central department staff

Educational Partnerships at DMU takes responsibility for revising this guide to ensure accuracy of information. Each session a new guide is produced and will be available from our website. For further information or if you have a query about a Validation Service Process please contact Fay Kelham, UK Validation Services Officer at faymkelham@dmu.ac.uk

Information specifically related to the overall quality management of all collaborative provision can be found on the Academic Quality Services website www.dmu.ac.uk/AQS

Student Applications

It is the responsibility of each partner institution to effectively market their collaborative provision. As part of this process partners are responsible for the admission process. Educational Partnerships, as owners of the student data, will provide operational support during this time in the academic cycle. As Educational Partnerships have responsibility for student data relating to programmes validated under the Validation Service Model it is their responsibility to input, amend and delete student data where necessary.

Below is a table outlining the main areas of responsibility and who they relate to.

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Application	To request monthly application for Full Time and Part Time Students	PO	To e-mail monthly application updates to UKVS	AC
Application	PO responsible for liaising with partner to ensure that all applications are logged onto the University's central student records database, and for sending on copies of UCAS or other application forms to Partners. SESD will also provide documentation for Partner staff to indicate decisions, as well as determining fee status of applicants and offering advice on the equivalence of EU qualifications.	PO	Process application within the guidelines set out by DMU	AC

PO	Partnerships Officer	**HEC**	Higher Education Coordinator	**ALT**	Academic Link Tutor
SPO	Senior Partnerships Officer	**SMT**	Senior Management Team	**HOQ**	Head of Quality
AC	Administrative Coordinator	**PT**	Programme Team		

Student Admissions

To enable student admission onto courses delivered in the UK it is essential that Partner HE staff work closely with their UK Validation Services contact to ensure timely and accurate allocation of UCAS codes as part of the admission process. For courses delivered outside the UK a UCAS code is not necessary.

Below the table outlines the areas of responsibility for this activity.

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
New programme UCAS Codes	PO to allocate a UCAS code, once the programme is validated and where necessary.	PO		
New Partner UCAS Code	To work with SESD and UCAS to organise Partner UCAS codes.	PO	Partner to request code through HE Co-Ordinator who in turn must liaise with UKVS	HEC
UKVI Compliance Checks	To ensure that all Partners are aware of the current DMU policy on student visas and to update them of any changes which may affect them	SPO	To fully align with DMU UKVI compliance policy and to ensure that relevant safeguards are put in place throughout the admissions process to mitigate perceived risks	SMT
Partner application process	Ensure the form meets DMU data requirement needs Ensure partner complies with all DMU admission policies and procedures	PO PO	Follow DMU admissions process and practice Provide DMU with decisions on applicants within agreed timeframes.	SMT

Student enrolment and Induction

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Enrolment Session Coordination	PO to book rooms where necessary and ensure that staff are available to advise and guide students where necessary. Check that both the partner student lists and DMU student lists are the same.	PO PO	All enrolment forms to be pre filled (where possible) and enrolment sessions to be attended by partner staff. Ensure that students have correct information in order to enrol including time and date of session and requirement for two photographs.	AC
Enrolment Training	SPO support partner staff with helping students to complete the online enrolment process	SPO	Partner staff to attend enrolment training session at DMU	PT
Enrolment Form Input	All enrolment forms to be input by PO Enrolment data checking to be carried out by PO and SPO to ensure information held is accurate	PO PO SPO	To assist in contacting students to clarify information accuracy where necessary.	PT/AC
Access to DMU systems	Access to systems to be triggered by enrolment with a request for student cards to be created.	PO	Where necessary, to ensure timely distribution of cards (unless done at induction)	PT/AC
Student Induction Event	To contribute appropriately to partner induction events including but not limited to an introduction to DMU systems, enrolment processes and regulations.	SPO	To book rooms and aid in the coordination of the induction event. To ensure that students recognise the importance of induction and are encouraged to attend.	AC PT

	SPO to liaise with the DMU Library and Learning Services Staff to include essential and relevant information as part of the wider DMU induction.	SPO	Attend relevant meetings to ensure partner staff can advise students of the full complement of DMU services available to them.	HEC / PT
	To provide training for partner staff on the range of support students are entitled to.	SPO		

Student Record Management

As the awarding body, De Montfort University remain the owners of all student data relating to programmes approved via the Validation Service Model. Whilst we can share data with partners for business intelligence and other appropriate purposes we do not give partner staff access to our student records management systems directly.

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Student personal data input	All student data input and amendment remains the responsibility of UKVS throughout the partnership who act in the capacity of Faculty Data Manager.	SPO PO	To inform UKVS of any information surrounding change of student details	AC
Assessment data input and management	All assessment data input remains the responsibility of UKVS throughout the partnership including data related to resits and deferrals.	PO		
Withdrawal / termination	Should a student wish to withdraw from their studies or if it is decided to terminate their registration it will be the responsibility of UKVS to ensure that the system is updated to reflect this.	PO	To inform UKVS of any students who wish to withdraw from their studies as early as is reasonably possible.	PT AC

Funding and Payments

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Student Fee collection	To ensure timely and accurate invoices are sent as agreed in the collaborative contract	SPO	To liaise with students and Students Loans Company to collect the student fees for each student studying at a partner.	AC

Graduation

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Graduation coordination	UKVS to provide information to partner regarding DMU Graduation including information on processes surrounding this SPO/ALT DMU Senior Staff to attend celebration and graduation events organised by the partner	PO SPO	Organise and implement celebration or graduation events following DMU regulations as appropriate Invite senior member(s) of DMU staff to attend celebration or graduation events	HEC SMT

Information Technology

All partners who have provision validated under the Validation Service model have automatic access to the use of DMU IT systems, as appropriate for their identified requirements.

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who
Access to Internal DMU ICT systems and software	PO To liaise with ITMS to ensure technical and operational aspects of securing ICT access are carried out Administer and oversee registration to services including the issuing of passwords	PO PO	To oversee ICT access at a local level.	AC HEC

Marketing

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Marketing activity relating to Validation Service collaborative provision	Periodic review of partner publicity for accuracy purposes. To provide timely information as to when a course can be marketed based on validation outcomes. To liaise with DMU Marketing colleagues to provide logo and branding guidelines and ensure final internal DMU sign off of all marketing collateral prior to publishing, to include website and other online promotional activity.	SPO SPO SPO	Promote the course across appropriate publicity channels at its own expense ensuring prospective applicants are fully aware that DMU are the awarding body, as stipulated in the Collaborative Agreement. To ensure that marketing materials displaying the DMU logo have been seen by the DMU marketing team prior to wider circulation and that formal written permission has been granted for the logo to be used in such a way. Provide English translations of materials produced to market the courses. Organise and host marketing events as necessary.	HEC SMT HEC HEC HEC

Library and Learning Resources

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Library - on site and electronic learning resources	To advise partner on the extent of physical and electronic resources available for staff and students based at partner organisations.	SPO	To provide all local and all electronic learning resources as agreed at validation.	SMT
	To conduct, in conjunction with the Library, periodic monitoring of the learning resources available through Annual Monitoring Review and Partnership Review processes	SPO		
	SPO to provide a link to a subject specific Librarian where necessary	SPO		
ICT provision	To oversee the registration and issuing of login and password details where agreed	PO	To maintain primary responsibility for local ICT provision	HEC
	To link in to central IT support to solve individual issues and provide generic IT support where necessary	PO		
Physical learning space	To approve and monitor through standard validation and collaborative provision review processes	SPO	Senior Management Team have responsibility for provision of teaching spaces and resources at partner	SMT

Student Information

The access to, accuracy and availability of student information is an important area which can often be overlooked or neglected. Educational Partnerships are happy to support their partners in ensuring that the information they have available meets DMU regulations and satisfies the indicators set out in chapter B10 of the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Student information	UKVS will quality assure all handbooks in line with DMU guidance and provide templates for consistency across DMU HE provision	SPO	Prepare and produce course and module handbooks using DMU templates	PT
	Provide students and partner staff with accurate and timely guidance regarding student and staff entitlements, regulation, complaints and appeals procedures and ensure that any updates to this information are communicated to the appropriate staff members.	SPO	To send copies of handbooks to DMU for checking 6 weeks prior to circulation amongst students	PT
	To ensure where possible that hyperlinked information is used to avoid version control issues and inaccurate information.	PO	Handbooks should be made available to students prior to the start of the course or module either electronically or in hard copy.	PT HEC
			For late enrollers partners should email a copy of the handbook and module materials prior to their commencement of study	PT HEC

Assessment

As with all DMU programmes, all provision validated by the Validation Service model is subject to DMU standard assessment procedures and regulations and more information on these can be found in the student regulation handbook which is available from the Department of Academic Quality or here.

For further guidance on the specific details of assessment within the Validation Service please do see the Validation Service Governance Structure.

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Assessment Setting	Support Partner with application of DMU assessment principles and procedures as required.	SPO	To set all assessments with the criteria established at validation for the course and to ensure that this is clearly defined and explained in the course and module handbooks	PT
	DMU to agree with partner and record assessment points and hand in dates on the Annual (Assessment) Quality Calendar.	PO	Partner to agree hand in dates with DMU for assessments	PT
	SPO to liaise with Student Services to advise partner staff on alternative assessment arrangements for disabled learners.	SPO	Partner to work with External Subject Advisor to ensure assessment setting is appropriate for the intended outcomes and level of award.	PT

Marking and Moderation	Send out all Annual Quality (Assessment) calendars at the start of each academic year.	SPO	Module leaders to complete initial marking and send scripts to Partnerships Officer by the agreed deadline.	PT
	To facilitate the moderation of work by the External Examiners	PO	Partner will present information to DMU in agreed standardised format	PT
	UKVS will ensure that partner is aware of the requirements surrounding the format of information submitted.	PO		
Programme Boards	UKVS to service all management and assessment boards.	PO	Partner to administer the assessment board in accordance with agreed procedures	HEC AC
	UKVS will provide support and advice on the regulations surrounding programme management and assessment boards	PO	Membership of all programme boards will be as per the Validation Service governance structure	SMT PT
	SPO will assist with identifying an appropriate senior member of DMU to chair the assessment board	SPO		
Assessment Administration	Provide guidelines and link to academic handbooks	PO	Partner to administer assessment processes in line with DMU regulations including the setting of exam timetables in line with agreed assessment strategies and boards, distribution of scripts, stationary and transcripts.	PT AC

Assessment Offences	SPO will provide guidance and support and if necessary will seek the guidance of an Academic Practice officer where necessary	SPO	Investigate all suspected assessment offences in line with DMU processes and policies.	SMT
Appeals and Complaints	Advise partner on the process for dealing with complaints and appeals and support them with following the process outlined in the DMU regulations	SPO	Investigate complaints at initial stage and where possible resolve these	SMT
			Follow the appeals process outlined in the DMU regulations	SMT
	Lead discussions on all unresolved complaints	SPO		
	Senior Partnerships Officer to support enquiry where complaint is about service.	SPO		

Curriculum Modifications

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Changes to curriculum	Advise partner on process for requesting course modifications and the forms required for this. Hold responsibility for approval of any programme or module modifications including the new addition of pathways to existing programmes.	SPO SPO	Module Evaluations are to be provided for consideration to the University by the agreed deadline. Submit documentation to course board of any modifications requested Liaise with External Examiner and External Subject Advisor prior to submission of course modifications via the Link Tutor	PT PT PT

Course learning Infrastructure

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Management and Appointment of Staff	Educational Partnerships Account Manager to be assigned to support partner with development and Strategic discussions	SPO PO	Have responsibility for appointments and management of staff and ensure copies of all CV's are provided to the Partnerships Officer Advise DMU of any changes in programme team staff and send a copy of all new staff CV's to the Educational Partnerships Senior Partnership Officer for circulation with the Head of Quality and Link Tutor prior to approval. New tutors cannot commence teaching DMU programmes until approval is given.	SMT SMT
Staff Induction	Senior Partnerships Officer will liaise with staff at the Partner to provide a DMU Induction	SPO	Senior Management Team to facilitate staff to attend any induction or training sessions at DMU for new staff.	SMT

Staff Development	Senior partnerships Officer to ensure that relevant staff development opportunities are communicated to partner staff Senior Partnerships Officer to facilitate Academic Professional Development as needs are identified through bespoke staff development sessions.	SPO SPO	Senior Management Team to allow time and provide resources for staff development in line with procedures at partner.	SMT PT
Performance Review			Carry out performance reviews in accordance with current procedures at partner	SMT
Peer Review	SPO to ensure Academic Link tutor provides information on DMU Peer Review process and ensures that this is carried out in line with DMU procedures.	SPO	Operate Peer Review in accordance with local procedures Senior Management Team to allow time and provide resources for Peer Review (this may be allied to staff development)	PT SMT

Quality Assurance

Activity	UKVS Responsibility	Who?	Partner Responsibility	Who?
Monitoring	Senior Partnership Officer to provide guidance on and monitor the module evaluation and consultative processes via the Validation Service Governance Structure	SPO	Programme team to organise, implement and relay appropriate module and course level evaluation feedback in accordance with relevant DMU guidelines	PT
	Senior Partnerships Officer to arrange Academic Link Tutor visits to the partner (a minimum of once per academic session) via the Course Leader	SPO ALT	Course Leader to liaise with the Academic Link Tutor to arrange a date and time for Staff Student Consultative forums to take place bi annually.	PT
	Senior Partnership Officer to produce a report prior to the production of the Annual Monitoring review (AMR) and by the agreed deadline. Once approved SPO to forward to CL at partner	SPO	Course Leader to produce an AMR by the agreed deadline in accordance with DMU procedures and deadlines	PT
	ALT/SPO to provide an induction into the Institutional and Course AMR process	ALT SPO	SMT to ensure that all staff engage with the AMR process.	SMT

Assurance of Teaching Quality	ALT and SPO to Monitor Module Evaluation and consultative processes SPO or ALT to attend Quality Board at partner	ALT SPO SPO ALT	CL to identify and facilitate student representation onto student – staff consultative forums and boards CL or representative to attend all course boards held at DMU CL or SMT to invite appropriate DMU representation onto boards	PT PT CL SMT
Periodic Review and Revalidation	ALT and SPO to provide support and guidance to ensure partner complies and engages with the processes and procedures involved with the review/revalidation	ALT SPO	Module Coordinators and SMT provide the information relevant to periodic review and revalidation as requested by DMU	PT SMT
External Examining	HoQ at DMU to approve all External Examiners ALT and PO to liaise with partner and External Examiner to provide necessary information. ALT and PO to monitor all processes connected with external examining as necessary PO to respond to annual report with input from partner	HoQ PO ALT	MC and PL to nominate appropriate External Examiner(s) for each programme MC and PL to respond to the External Examiner and include report discussions at Programme Boards. External Examiner reports to be shared with students CL to work with DMU ALT to respond formally to the academic annual report	PT PT

| Partnership Programme Boards | PO to organise three management boards per year including arrangement of location, agenda setting and servicing.

PMB to review the operation and effectiveness of the partnership alongside a review of programme performance and activities | PO | Relevant staff as set out in the Validation Service Governance Structure to agree dates with DMU PO, attend PMB meetings where relevant and add items to the agenda for discussion.

Partner HE manager to chair PMB | SMT
PT

SMT |