

Academic Quality Services

A guide to Validation

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

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

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[Programme approval and management](#)

Introduction

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. This guidance document relates to programme and module content which may impact on information to applicants and students and includes advice about making such information easily accessible and transparent. Please refer to the Competition and Markets Authority [guidance to HE providers](#) on consumer rights legislation for more information if necessary.

DMU academic quality processes (such as: validation, curriculum modification, periodic review, annual monitoring, external examining, collaborative provision) ensure that the university's approach to quality management is embedded, with the focus on enhancing the learning opportunities made available to all students 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 students with learning differences and physical disabilities are able to gain access, it will enable them to receive an equivalent learning experience to their peers.

Further information on UDL can be found [here](#).

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Section 1: Seeking approval to take a proposal to validation

Approval by faculty and university committees

Before a validation event can be scheduled, a new 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 programme is due for revalidation, either due to Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements or because significant changes have been made, 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 validation of a new programme should be fully approved via the Faculty Executive Committee/Faculty Leadership Board to ensure the amended proposal fits within the university/faculty strategy and is still marketable and financially viable.

Most new programme proposals will start as ideas by one or more members of a Programme Management Board (PMB). Some however will arise from elsewhere, for example at Faculty Executive level, via a partner institution 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 a management board cannot refuse to proceed with a proposal which has explicit Faculty Executive support.
- Liaise with the Pro Vice-Chancellor/Dean (PVC/Dean) and Faculty Executive/Leadership Board to ensure that the proposal is compatible with the wider faculty strategic plan
- Consider when it would like the new programme to begin and who will be responsible for developing the proposal
- Decide who will be involved in the programme development team. This may include colleagues from other management boards or faculties, or from partner institutions.
- Consider resources
- Begin the process of market analysis
- Complete a financial viability exercise
- If the proposal is to be delivered by a collaborative partner, liaise with the UK Validation Services (EP) for partnerships in the UK or the Global Partnerships Unit (GPU) for partnerships overseas, in order to undertake a risk assessment

All new programme proposals must be presented to and approved by the Faculty Executive Committee/Faculty Leadership Board. Once this approval has been granted, the proposal must go through the rest of the committee structures.

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 programme proposals for consideration by the FAC should be presented on the [Programme Proposal Form](#). 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, for example De Montfort University International College (DMUIC), 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. Where appropriate, market demand information should be presented alongside the Programme Proposal form (see [Consultation](#), below).

Where a proposal includes partner institutions and delivery off DMU campus, it is important to liaise with EP or GPU, as appropriate, in the first instance, to ensure that relevant guidance is followed regarding partner and programme approval.

Development and Review Committee (DARC)

The Development and Review Committee (DARC) is a sub-committee of the Faculty Academic Committee (FAC). In the case of partnerships or programmes under the Validation Service model, the partner's management board or equivalent acts as the equivalent to DMU's DARC and is a sub-committee to DMU's Validation Service Board (VSB). The DARC's key role is to consider new programme developments and modifications to programmes and modules.

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

- Consider and approve, as appropriate, all new programme proposals, including the proposed start date, market analysis and relationship to other provision. This information is provided on the [Programme Proposal Form](#). 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 new 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 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 Head of 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 proposals to be delivered at DMU/by DMU staff, usually completed by the Associate Professor (Quality) or Head of Quality and the Servicing Officer
- Receive all validation reports related to the faculty, and ensure that conditions of validation for DMU-based proposals are met in a timely fashion, reporting to the FAC. The monitoring of conditions of validation for DMU-based and partnership proposals is the responsibility of the Academic Quality Committee, and is carried out on its behalf by AQS colleagues, together with UK VS or International.

Academic Portfolio Committee (APC)

APC reports to the Academic Board and has responsibility for the strategic development and oversight of the university's academic portfolio, including collaborative partnerships and non-standard provision. In terms of programme validation, its role is to approve new programme proposals. Once approval has been given, programme proposals can be advertised, marked as 'subject to validation'.

Strategic Portfolio and Investment Committee (SP&IC)

For a limited number of programmes that will require an investment of £100,000 or more, the Programme Proposal Form along with the academic programmes cover sheet must be submitted to SP&IC for approval of the funds after APC approval. For further details and to download the cover sheet, please visit the [Transformation Office SharePoint site](#).

Fast-track proposals

Normally a proposal should go through the above committee approval process in good time to allow the validation to take place a minimum of **three months prior** to the proposed programme start date. However, in some circumstances a faster turnaround time is required; in such cases a fast-track approval replaces some or all elements of committee consideration. This may be because a programme is required to be validated with the intention to start in the near future, or because a programme needs to be validated urgently for recruitment purposes, even if the start date is not imminent.

Fast-tracking allows a programme to be developed more rapidly in order to meet a university or faculty strategic requirement, or to respond to external body or employer needs. Fast-tracking means that a proposal does not require faculty and university committee consideration prior to the validation event, but is instead approved to go straight to development and validation. It can see a programme being developed and offered within a matter of weeks. Such rapid development can be seen as a higher risk, and therefore fast-tracking requires the explicit agreement of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor as Chair of the Academic Portfolio Committee. Requests should be made via the faculty Associate Dean (Academic) or Associate Professor Quality/Head of Quality on the [Fast Track request form](#) and sent to the [Quality Manager \(Taught Programmes\)](#), AQS. If there is any doubt about whether deadlines can be met and the programme validated and delivered to a suitable standard in a short timeframe, the faculty should not support a request to fast-track.

Where a proposal has been fast-tracked outside of the committee structure, this should be noted at the next meeting of the relevant committee(s).

Consultation

There are a number of areas of the university which can provide support during the programme development process and others which require early notification of new programme developments. These include, but may not be limited to (further details below):

- Faculty and university marketing teams
- UK Validation Services (EP) for programmes delivered at partner institutions within the UK, where they may operate as pathways, or are similar in design to existing DMUIC programmes.

- The International team for programmes delivered at partner institutions overseas
- Strategic Planning Service
- Library and Student Services
- The Timetable Office
- The Exams Office
- Admissions
- Careers and Employability
- Other faculties (revalidation – see [curriculum modification guidance](#))
- Students (revalidation – see [curriculum modification guidance](#))

Faculty and university marketing teams

Unless a new programme has been commissioned and clearly has a waiting student market, market research and analysis should be undertaken to support the new programme proposal. Programme developers should approach faculty marketing teams in the first instance for advice and support. It is also important to consider student information that will be advertised to prospective students and whether that information might change as a result of validation activity. Details of programmes that have not yet been validated that are advertised via the prospectus and website need to clearly advertise that they are still subject to validation and content may be changed.

UK Validation Services (UK VS) – for programmes delivered at partner institutions in the UK – and the International team – for programmes delivered at partner institutions overseas

UK Validation Services (UK VS) and the International team are responsible for managing the operation and quality assurance of DMU's UK and overseas based collaborative provision respectively, working with the Academic Quality Services (AQS). UK VS and International should be included in discussions pertaining to the development of new programme proposals or the enhancement of existing programmes as they will need to undertake a costings exercise for the proposed provision and implement the set processes relating to the delivery approval of programmes. It is important for the faculty and the partner to ensure that the proposed programme(s) for delivery are not advertised or promoted until approval in principle has been granted by the faculty Executive/Leadership Board. Section 1 in the [Guide to managing collaborative provision](#) gives more details on the role of UK VS and International.

Strategic Planning Service

The Strategic Planning Service (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 Student Services

Library and Student Services can provide help in developing your learning resource requirements for 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 Programme handbook. Library and Student 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 Student 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 Student Services). Representatives of Library and Student Services will participate in DMU-based validation events as panel members, and you should involve your subject librarian in the programme team at validation.

For provision based in partner institutions, the Librarian or Learning Resource Centre manager should be able to provide similar levels of support and assistance to those outlined above, and you should ensure that they are consulted at an early stage in the planning process. At validation you will be expected to have identified, costed and budgeted for any new resources to support the 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. For programmes delivered at partner institutions it is the responsibility of the partner institution to undertake the costing of new materials. De Montfort University recommends that start-up funding is made available by college libraries for new programmes, particularly in new subject areas, but this may vary from institution to institution.

Representatives from De Montfort University Library and Student Services will be asked for comments as part of partnership validation events.

[The Timetable Office, Registry Services](#)

The Timetable Office can help with modelling of new 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, 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 programmes to be delivered at DMU the Timetable Office is informed and consulted at the earliest opportunity.

[Exams Office, Registry Services](#)

The Exams Office should be consulted if you are planning to have formal scheduled exams as part of module assessment, particularly if the validation is taking place late in the academic year. Please take into consideration the timing of exams and reassessments, and what the exams planning approach with the Exams Office will be.

Other faculties and De Montfort University International College (DMUIC)

Where validation or revalidation is taking place which impacts on shared modules, other faculties as well as DMUIC – via UK Validation Services (EP) - must be consulted. This is also the case where a programme title is changing, if this affects a joint programme.

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

Admissions

The Admissions team will require early notification that a new programme is being planned and what the recruitment cycle will look like, such as first intake dates. It is important to have early discussions with your faculty admissions team to ensure the relevant information is collected for the new programme. This is particularly important for undergraduate new programme proposals which will recruit through UCAS. In such cases the validation event will need to be held early to ensure the programme is available to applicants for the start of the UCAS cycle. Please see the information on [timing and scheduling](#) for more information.

Careers and Employability

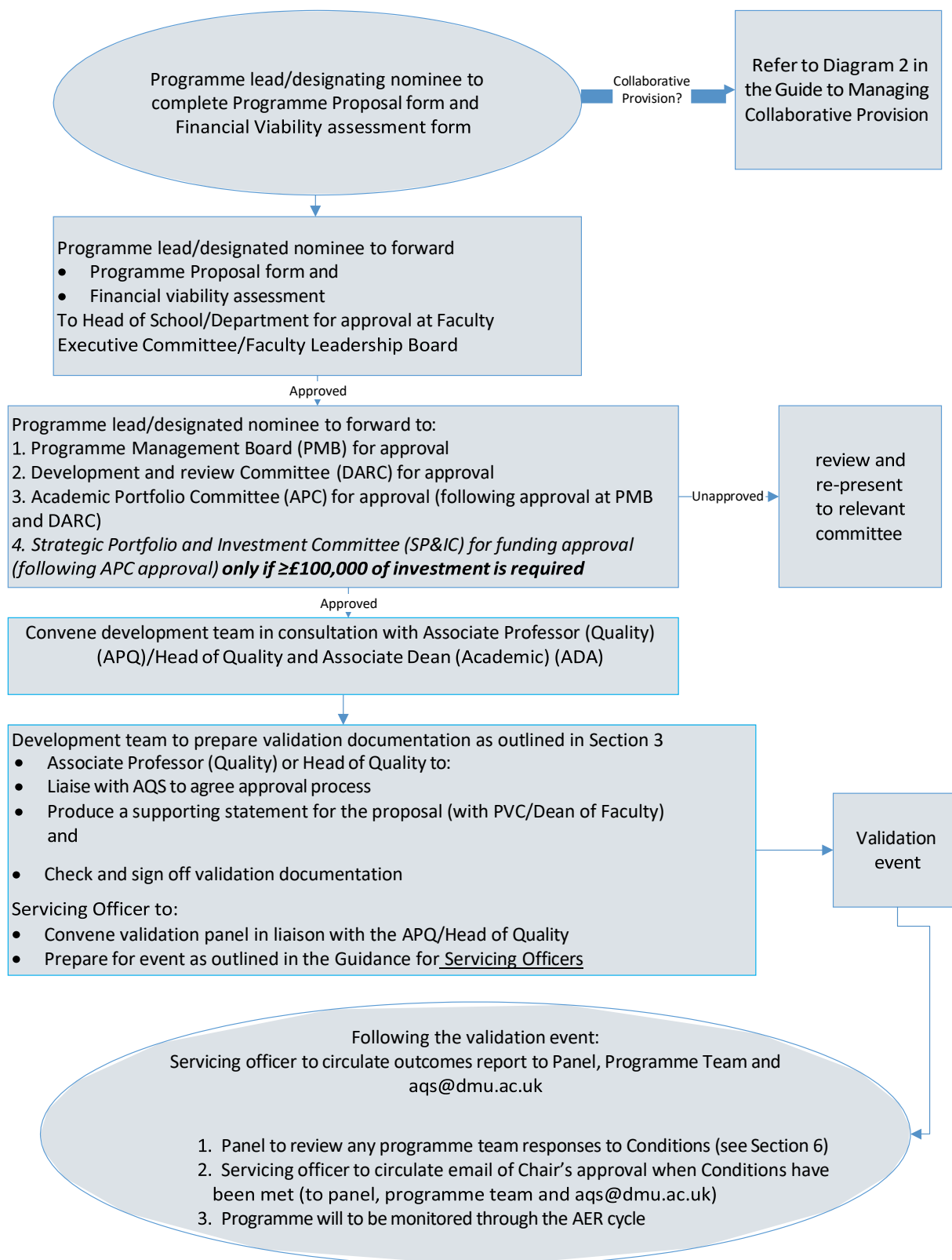
It is important to consult with the careers and employability team for your faculty at an early stage of development, particularly if there is planned placement activity for the students.

Students

Where revalidation is taking place, student views should be gathered and a consultation should take place with any future students 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 future students and applicants. Further guidance can be found in the [AQS Guide to Curriculum Modification](#).

Section 2: Development of proposal

Validation Process Flowchart



*standard academic planning cycle (fast-track proposals are planned on a case by case basis)

Support and advice

Support and advice for programme developers will exist within the faculty and also within AQS, the Learning and Development team in the People Services directorate and the Centre for Academic Innovation and Teaching Excellence (CAITE).

Timing and scheduling

AQS advises that new proposals for validation should be presented to the Academic Portfolio Committee at least six months prior to the planned start date. In the case of undergraduate UCAS-recruiting programmes, the faculty should have the validation event completed by the end of September in the academic session prior to the start date of the programme, eg. validated by September 2024 for an October 2025 start. In all cases programme developers should aim to seek approval as early as possible to allow adequate time for the subsequent period of programme development and preparation of documentation for validation (electronic submission to the validation panel is required three weeks prior to the validation event). The APC meets regularly during each academic session and proposals coming forward outside of this schedule may be handled by Chair's action if appropriate. Please consult the [Guide to managing collaborative provision](#) in the case of collaborative provision.

It is recommended that the latest date for a validation event to take place is three months prior to the planned start date of the programme. This is particularly important for student information when applicants will be looking at information relating to the programme. Any programmes advertised through the prospectus or website that has not been validated needs to be advertised as 'subject to validation'). There may be exceptions, particularly where proposals are approved via the fast-track process. However, whenever validation occurs the faculty needs to ensure that there will be sufficient time to address any issues arising from the validation event before the programme starts.

Please note that until all conditions have been met and approved, DMU student finance will not list a new programme with the Student Loans Company (SLC). This means that until a programme has been fully approved, potential students will not be able to apply for their loans, running the risk of applicants choosing to go elsewhere. **It is therefore critical in order to ensure compliance and a positive applicant experience, that sufficient time is given for the programme team to address any outstanding conditions following a validation event.**

If you need to develop your programme to shorter timescales, please contact your faculty Associate Dean (Academic) who will discuss the possibility of a fast-track approach. The processes described in this document will apply to fast-track proposals but on a quicker turnaround. Therefore, part of the consideration of whether something should be fast-tracked is whether the programme team and faculty have the necessary resources in place to support an accelerated validation.

An annual schedule of validations is maintained by AQS. DMU-based validations are managed by the faculty Associate Professor (Quality) or Head of Quality in liaison with AQS. UK partnership validation schedules are also managed by AQS; however Validation Service programmes are managed by UK Validation Services (EP). International partnership

validations are managed by the Global Partnerships Unit (GPU) within Strategic and International Partnerships, with AQS involvement.

Indicative validation timelines

Type of proposal	Faculty committee approval	University committee approval	Validation	Conditions deadline
UCAS undergrad	Latest – 18 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 15 months prior to intended start date (e.g. June 2024 for Oct 2025 start)	Latest – 12 months prior to intended start date (eg. Sept 2024 for Oct 2025 start)	Latest 10 months prior to intended start date
Other undergrad	Latest – 9 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 6 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 3 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 2 months prior to intended start date
Postgraduate	Latest – 9 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 6 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 3 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 2 months prior to intended start date
Fast-track	Not applicable		Latest – 3 months prior to intended start date	Latest – 2 months prior to intended start date

Section 3: The risk-based approach to validation

Types of validation event (low-high risk)

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 the approval of a programme to run at a partner institution by staff not employed by the university.

The following table outlines indicative approaches to be taken depending on the type of 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) or Head of Quality and AQS regarding the nature of the validation event.

Type of validation	Indicative risk level	Validation event
Modifications to existing curriculum (see Guide to Curriculum Modification)	Low	N/A. Approval via Curriculum Modification process/form
Modifications to existing curriculum requiring revalidation (see Guide to Curriculum Modification) This will also apply to programmes already delivered at collaborative partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantive change to award title• Changes to programme outcomes• Addition of new mode of study, e.g. DL, where there is no existing experience in type of delivery• Addition of new pathway to programme or removal of an existing pathway• Re-using or revitalising a programme that has not had students enrolled for at least the last two years	Low-Medium	Event Type A
New programme in existing subject area	Medium	Event Type B
New professionally-accredited programme or amendment to existing professionally accredited programme*	Medium-High	Event Type C
Programme in entirely new subject area	High	Event Type C
New programmes delivered by UK or overseas collaborative partner Please refer to Section 1 in the Guide to Managing Collaborative Provision or contact the Partnerships Manager (Quality) or Quality Officer (Partnerships) in AQS	Medium-High	Event Type D (partnerships)

*may vary depending on individual PSRB requirements

Panel and documentary requirements for each type of event

Event Type	Panel constitution	Documentary requirements
<p>Type A – Revalidation of existing programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair (senior academic from outside faculty) • Academic member from outside faculty • Student representative (either in person or input via written comments) • Academic Quality Services representative • Servicing officer from faculty • External Panel Member (either in person or input via written comments) <p>It is also recommended to hold a short meeting (as part of the agenda) to meet with existing students to gather the student voice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • curriculum modification form • Short rationale/resources statement • critical appraisal of the programme • copies of external examiner reports and Annual Enhancement Review (AER) (previously programme appraisal and enhancement plans) (last 3 years) • programme and module specifications (template) (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) • Match with Office for Students sector-recognised standards level descriptors any new pathways or new versions of the QAA benchmark statements are available (mapping document) • Include a matrix to map modules to programme outcomes • Indicative student assessment timetable • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for new starting student • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for continuing students moving between levels of study • Information on how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are linked to within the programme and how sustainability education is embedded within the curriculum • Relevant minutes/extracts of communications with existing students on the proposal • Reference to how spelling, punctuation and grammar will be appropriately assessed on the course and to how students' technical proficiency in written English will be assessed

<p style="text-align: center;">Type B – Validation of a new programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair (senior academic from outside faculty) • Academic representative from outside the faculty • External panel member(s) (either in person or input via written comments) • Student representative (either in person or input via written comments) • Library and Student Services representative • Academic Quality Services representative <p>Servicing officer from faculty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme information/rationale document to include projected student numbers for first 3 cohorts; opportunities for graduates for employment or further study; commentary on personal tutoring arrangements, internationalisation and Universal Design for Learning • Programme Proposal form • Resources statement (physical; human and learning, including Library and Student Services requirements form for new programmes) • Fit with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) subject benchmark statement(s) if appropriate (mapping document) • Match with Office for Students sector-recognised standards level descriptors (mapping document) • Programme and module specifications (template), indicating which are new/existing (including for new modules any exemptions from the university's anonymous marking policy) • Matrix mapping modules to programme learning outcomes • Indicative student assessment timetable • Evidence of external consultation • Enhancing learning through technology (ELT) checklist • Equality prompts • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for new starting student • Information on any preparatory transitions activity for continuing students moving between levels of study • Information on how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are linked to within the programme and how sustainability education is embedded within the curriculum • Commentary on future study options and/or career prospects and employability • Reference to how spelling, punctuation and grammar will be appropriately assessed on the course and to how students' technical proficiency in written English will be assessed
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Type C – PSRB or new subject area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair (senior academic from outside the faculty) • Academic representative from outside the faculty • External panel member (in person) • Student representative (in person) • Library and Student Services representative • Academic Quality Services representative • Servicing officer from faculty 	<p>As B above and additionally: either Information about the PSRB and the way in which the programme meets its requirements or Faculty rationale for introduction of wholly new subject area as appropriate</p>
Type D – Partnership provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair (senior academic from outside the faculty – Executive Board member or designate if a new partner) • Academic Quality Services representative (or faculty Associate Professor (Quality) if AQS representative not available) - AQS to nominate • Academic representative from outside the faculty • External panel member(s) • Student representative • Library and Learning Services representative <p>Servicing Officer from UK Validation Services (for UK based), or Global Partnership Unit (for overseas)</p>	<p>Please refer to Section 1 in the Guide to Managing Collaborative Provision or contact the Partnerships Manager (Quality) or Senior Quality Officer (Partnerships) in AQS</p>

Some validation panels, for example for programmes delivered for the NHS, may have additional panel members such as PSRB representatives and service users. It may be helpful to invite other colleagues either to participate in the panel or as part of the programme team, for example technicians.

If the programme will be substantially or wholly delivered via distance learning (DL) a proportion of the teaching materials will need to be available for the validation panel to view either before or at the validation event. The volume of material required will be determined by the faculty Associate Professor (Quality) in liaison with AQS and will reflect the programme team's existing experience of DL delivery.

Validation of provision at a partner institution

Validation of provision to run at a UK (including Validation Service provision) or overseas partner institution sometimes occurs alongside approval of the partnership itself. Where this is the case reference should also be made to the [AQS Guide to Managing Collaborative Provision](#), section one: Approval of new collaborative partnerships and programmes.

Validation event indicative programmes

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

For DMU-based programmes, the default will be a virtual event. For collaborative provision it is expected that the event will normally be held in person. Where a virtual event is conducted, this should take place via MS Teams and the Servicing Officer should ensure all relevant meeting invites are sent out to required attendees with joining instructions.

Event Type A

10:00 – 10:15	Arrival, introductions and private meeting of the panel
10:15 – 10:30	Presentation by programme team
10:30 – 11:00	Private meeting of the panel
11:00 – 12:00	Discussion between the panel and the programme team
12:00 – 12:15	Break
12:15 – 12:45	Meeting with existing students (or consideration of written submission)
12:45 – 13:30	Private meeting of the panel (and lunch, if in person)
13:30 – 13:45	Feedback to the programme team on validation outcomes

Event Type B

10:00 – 10:15	Arrival and introductions
10:15 – 10:30	Presentation from the programme leader to the panel
10:30 – 11:00	Private meeting of the panel
11:00 – 12:00	Discussion between the panel and the Faculty Executive
12:00 – 12:15	Break
12:15 – 13:15	Discussion between the panel and the programme team
13:15 – 14:00	Private meeting of the panel (and lunch, if in person)
14:00 – 14:15	Feedback to the programme team on validation outcomes

Event Type C

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 – 11:00	Discussion between the panel and members of the Faculty Executive
11:00 – 11:15	Break
11:15 – 11:45	Private meeting of the panel
11:45 – 13:15	Discussion between the panel and the programme team
13:15 – 14:15	Private meeting of the panel (and lunch, if in person)

14:15 – 14:30

Feedback to the programme team on validation outcomes

Event Type D

Partnership provision

As this may be part of a larger event, the times are subject to other factors. It is also more likely than standard events to be an in-person event. Please contact the Partnerships Manager (Quality) or Senior Quality Officer (Partnerships) in [AQS](#) for advice.

Section 4: The validation panel and participants

The validation panel – authority and constitution

For new programmes to be delivered by DMU staff/at DMU, the validation panel is convened by the faculty Associate Professor Quality/Head of Quality and the faculty professional services quality assurance team. The faculty QA team will circulate the documentation and support the validation event. For UK collaborative provision this function is provided by UK Validation Services, on behalf of AQS, while overseas collaborative validations are supported by the partnerships team within AQS.

Validation panel terms of reference

The validation panel will:

- Receive proposals for the validation of new programmes or the revalidation of existing 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 programme to ensure that it meets/satisfies quality criteria and threshold academic standards appropriate to the type and level of award
- Report to the Academic Quality Committee on the outcome of the programme validation/revalidation exercise and make recommendations as appropriate.
- Review the programme against university standards and initiatives such as UDL, anonymous marking, #DMUglobal, Education for Sustainable Development and the universities commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Decolonising DMU

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 AQS). (See table in section 3).

Criteria for appointing external panel members (EPM)

External scrutiny is required for all validation types. Please see the table in section 3 to determine whether this is achieved via correspondence or attendance at the validation event.

An external panel member 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 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
- Experience of collaborative partnership approval and programme validation at their

own or another HEI (for partnership events only)

The external member on the validation panel should not be a current external examiner for the parent programme management board of the 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 external panel member. In the case of collaborative partnership events the external panel member must be completely independent from the partner institution they are asked to comment on and not have taken part in other approval, validation or revalidation events for that partner institution. External panel members can only be appointed a maximum of three times.

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 AQS website, should then be sent to the Head of Academic Quality, for approval on behalf of the Academic Quality Committee. In the case of external panel members for collaborative provision, the process is slightly different. Please refer to the [External panel member nomination form](#) for collaborative provision.

Please note that for each external panel member (EPM), 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). Where the event is being held in-person, 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 six months prior to the validation event, but it is recognised that sometimes this will have to be done on a quicker turnaround, e.g. fast-tracks.

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

Roles and responsibilities

Panel members

The roles and responsibilities of panel members are outlined briefly below. If you are to participate as a panel member at a validation event, more detailed guidance is available within the AQS Guide to Validation for Panel Members.

Validation panel chair

The role of the validation panel chair is to ensure that a fair judgement about the proposed 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.

External panel member

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

If an external panel member is a representative of professional practice or industry they will contribute knowledge of the features of HE programmes that lead to a valuable professional, creative or vocational preparation.

For partnership provision, DMU programmes that have already been validated internally but

are also delivered at a partner institution require the focus of scrutiny to be on the calibre of the teaching team and the appropriateness of resources to support delivery. Where validation takes place alongside partner approval, external panel members should ideally have experience of collaborative activities. The servicing officer will advise accordingly.

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 proposal and to draw on experience of provision within their own faculty and across the university as a whole.

Student representative

The student representative will be drawn from the De Montfort Students' Union (DSU) Executive or from amongst the elected school/department or course representatives. The student representative's main focus will be the student experience offered by the new programme and the information provided to students, for example the programme/student handbook.

Library and Student Services representative

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

Academic Quality Services (AQS) representative (AQS representative or faculty Associate Professor (Quality) for partnership validations where a AQS representative is not available)

The AQS representative's role is to ensure that the validation event takes place according to the validation framework and that the proposal sits appropriately to national and university requirements, e.g. the the Office for Students sector-recognised standards, undergraduate and postgraduate regulations etc. The AQS representative will advise the panel on validation protocols and outcomes.

The AQS representative on the panel is available to provide help/advice on individual validations. General advice/support for those taking part in validation panels is available from AQS as part of its programme of training/briefing sessions. AQS training for validation chairs is mandatory and must 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.

Validation servicing officer

The main role of the servicing officer is to prepare the validation report and act as the key point of liaison between the panel and the programme team. A [guidance booklet](#) is available from AQS outlining in full the responsibilities of the servicing officer. The validation servicing officer may also find it useful to attend validation training sessions offered by AQS.

Participants in validation

Programme leader

The main role of the 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 your subject/faculty librarian and the Timetable 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 programme team's preparations for the validation, co-ordinating development meetings, the production of documentation, attendance at AQS briefings etc
- 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 Faculty Executive/Leadership Board
- Co-ordinate responses to the issues raised by panel members on the validation documentation in advance of the event, through liaison with the validation servicing officer
- Attend the validation event and give a short contextual presentation to the panel as well as participating in discussion with the panel
- After the validation, take the lead in preparing the 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 AQS [web pages](#).

For partnership programme validations these responsibilities will be undertaken by the partner programme coordinator in consultation with the DMU programme leader/link tutor, or the external subject adviser for programmes approved under the Validation Service.

Programme team members

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

PVC/Dean

The PVC/Dean should be kept informed by the Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of 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 approval. The PVC/Dean may in some cases attend a senior staff meeting with the 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

The Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality is responsible for overseeing the preparations for DMU-based validations, through ongoing liaison with the validation servicing officer, the 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 AQS and the programme leader designate to

determine the appropriate approval process (see table in section 3). The faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality should also provide advice and guidance to the 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 validation report is sent to the chair within two weeks of the event. Depending on the level of risk involved in DMU-based validations the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality may/may not be required to be in attendance at the event (see table in section 3).

Associate Dean (Academic)

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

Section 5: Preparing for the validation event

Preparation of documentation

Documentary requirements for each type of validation are as outlined in the table in section 3. 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 programme, assessments and documentation you should consider the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and may wish to consult your faculty UDL champion. All student information should also be considered against the Consumer Rights Act guidance and be clear and transparent to prospective students. This includes ensuring all costs are listed and the level of assessment is clear. There is a link to CRA guidance at the beginning of this guide.

Validation document

The information required for each type of validation event is outlined in the Panel and Documentary Requirements table in section 3 of this guide; there is also a [checklist available on the AQS web pages](#). If you have any queries regarding the documentation you need to provide, you should contact your faculty Associate Professor (Quality/Head of Academic Quality) or AQS.

Common shortfalls and protocols for dealing with weak submissions

Very occasionally the outcome of a validation event is to refer the proposal back to the faculty for further work. Whilst there must be a provision for this outcome at a validation event, it should be an exceptional course of action. The university expects that faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality and PVC/Deans shall only sign off suitably prepared proposals.

Details of the most common issues identified by panels are as follows. 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
Curriculum and programme design <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarity in programme description/title/structure• Mapping of modules onto programme outcomes to ensure compliance with Subject Benchmark Statement and the Office for Students sector-recognised standards• Revisiting of programme structure with regard to mandatory modules
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 programme, including key skills• Incorporation of e-learning (Enhancing Learning through Technology)

- Study skills support and access to study facilities, specifically support for students with learning differences or disabilities. You should refer to the UDL principles and be making assessments accessible to all students

Resources

- Staffing plan, including visiting lecturers and technicians
- Statement of commitment to provision of resources

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) or equivalent and programme proposers.

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

Identify that the 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
- Academic Quality Services (AQS) 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 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 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 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 Chair of the Academic Quality Committee 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 Quality Sub-Committee to monitor trends and make recommendation to changes in practice.

Protocols for situations where significant issues are identified during the 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
- No confidence that resources are in place to support the proposal including a lack of critical mass of staff to support the proposed programme
- Serious concerns about the strategic commitment to the proposal from the faculty or a partner institution

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 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 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 (hard copy requests should be made to the servicing officer in advance) three weeks before the validation event (four weeks for a collaborative partnership event). Panel members should endeavour to return their comments on the documentation to the validation servicing officer by the deadline specified to allow time for consideration by the programme team. The process is different for collaborative provision validation events whereby the panel's comments to the servicing officer must be submitted two weeks before the validation event date to allow the panel to hold a pre-event meeting and agree the lines of enquiry for the partner. Unlike DMU-based events, the panel's comments are not shared with the programme team but the panel provide key lines of enquiry derived at the end of the pre-event meeting. Please refer to Section 1 in the [Guide to managing collaborative provision](#) for more information.

If due to the nature of the validation event (eg fast-track) it is not possible to circulate the documents three weeks in advance it may not be possible for the panel to provide comments in advance of the validation event. If the validation documentation is submitted less than two weeks before the 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, the Head of Academic Quality and the Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality (or the Partnerships Manager (Quality) in the case of collaborative provision) 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.

For 'fast-tracked' programmes delivered at DMU, you need to provide the Timetable Office with detailed timetabling data, as a matter of urgency, before validation.

If any member of the validation panel, having read the documentation, believes that there are significant weaknesses in the proposal as outlined above (LINK) they should discuss this initially with the validation panel chair and the AQS representative. If the concerns warrant postponing the validation event this must be done in conjunction with the Head of Academic Quality.

Section 6: The validation event

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

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

- The **rationale** for the new 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 **student 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 students can maximise their potential, including considering the UDL principles within the Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

The considerations below detail the issues on which the panel will focus, in order to assess the proposal and the resource base and learning environment in place for the delivery of the proposed provision.

How judgements are made

Development teams should be clear about how these issues are being addressed in their proposal. Validation panels should use these as discussion prompts when evaluating new 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 programme.

1. Are the characteristics of the programme clearly defined?
2. Is the proposal in line with the faculty's learning and teaching strategy?
3. Will the programme provide a good learning experience for the likely student intake?
4. Will the curriculum prepare students for the opportunities potentially available on completion of a programme?
5. Is the programme designed to ensure that the overall experience of a student has logic and an intellectual integrity that are related to clearly defined purposes?
6. Is the intellectual challenge and value of the programme defined at the correct level, and with reference to the Office for Students sector-recognised standards. Ensure that the learning outcomes are relevant and set at the appropriate level of the programme/module
7. Has the programme team taken account, as appropriate, of external reference points, including any relevant [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement\(s\)](#), [Office for Students sector-recognised standards](#) and the requirements of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies and employers? Ensure that during revalidations the QAA benchmark statements are checked to see if any new ones have been published and need to be referred to
8. Is spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately assessed on the course and is students' technical proficiency in written English assessed?
9. Have the programme team engaged with employers or external stakeholders in their programme development?

10. Does the curriculum impose an increasing level of demand on the learner during the course of the programme?
11. Is the programme balanced, for example in relation to academic and practical elements, personal development and academic outcomes, breadth and depth in the curriculum?
12. Does the award title reflect the intended learning outcomes of the programme?
13. Is it clear how the intended learning outcomes of the programme will be promoted, demonstrated and assessed?
14. What has the team done to design and implement e-learning into the programme?
15. Are the identified resources necessary to support the programme and are they in place or committed?
16. Is the programme designed so that students are treated equally, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion?
17. Has the programme considered the UDL principles in the design and the type and volume of assessment?
18. Do programme learning outcomes feature employability and career management skills development?
19. Do placement learning outcomes contribute to the overall coherence and integrity of the programmes, where applicable?
20. 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
21. Have the team embedded elements of sustainable education into the curriculum?

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
Distance learning and 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
- 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 a Higher or Degree Apprenticeships, the Degree Apprenticeships Unit must be contacted as early as possible.

Foundation Degree

(please contact UK Validation Services as part of the consultation as it may have an impact on DMUIC courses)

Employer involvement

- 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

The development of skills and knowledge

- 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

Application of skills in the workplace

- 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

Credit accumulation and transfer

- Foundation Degrees will attract a minimum of 240 credits – see approved university framework
- Appropriate prior and work-based learning through the award of credits

Progression - within work and/or to an honours degree

- There must be guaranteed articulation arrangements with at least one honours degree programme

- 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.

HNC/D provision

- 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 AQS, or visit the Pearson website and search for the relevant guidance, entitled [Licenced HEIs Guide to Mapping Core Content](#)

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

- All proposals for apprenticeships should first be referred to the Degree Apprenticeships Unit 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

There is an additional set of documentation requirements for Apprenticeship proposals. See the supplementary requirements, available on the AQS webpage. For more information on Higher and Degree Apprenticeship proposals, please contact the Degree Apprenticeships Unit or AQS@dmu.ac.uk in the first instance.

Outcome of the validation

At the end of the 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
- **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.

Normally programmes which are successfully validated do not require revalidation at fixed periods. However, some programmes which also require professional accreditation may require revalidation on a regular basis. Where a validated 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](#). For partnership validations, programmes are validated indefinitely, subject to successful review at the next collaborative review of the partner and programmes.

Conditions

These serious issues must be addressed to the satisfaction of the panel, **before** delivery of the programme can commence or, in the case of a revalidation, to allow the 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. Please note that until conditions of validation are met, the programme is only provisionally approved and applicants are unable to access student finance.

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

Programme teams should be aware that any requirements to update student 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 programme..

No condition deadline should exceed 31 July, where a programme has an Autumn start date. Earlier deadlines will be required where an undergraduate programme recruits through UCAS – see the [Timing and Scheduling](#) section

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. An example of this would be for the programme team to submit the learning materials for year two of a distance learning programme in the latter stages of the first year of delivery or for the programme team to provide evidence of resources that are not required in the first year of teaching.

Recommendations

These should be addressed by the programme team and the programme management board(s) as part of subsequent review and development activities. The 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; the recommendations can feed through into the programme Annual Enhancement Review (AER) if appropriate. **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 programme team, the panel and AQS@dmu.ac.uk 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 programme team if the proposal should be reviewed and re-submitted for consideration at a second event. In discussion with the 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 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 7: After the validation

Formal notification of outcome of validation

The Academic Quality Services (AQS) will circulate an initial notification of the validation outcomes following the validation event to key faculty and central professional services staff.

Preparation of report and validation follow-up

The report

The outcome of the validation will be fully documented in a report, written by the validation servicing officer. A [proforma](#) is available from the AQS website for this purpose. Details of the validation outcome and any associated conditions and recommendations should be outlined in Section A of the report (Executive Summary) and circulated to the programme team in draft format within two working days of the validation event, so that work can commence in response to the issues raised. The initial draft of the full report should be sent to the panel chair no later than two weeks after the 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 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 report should be circulated by the servicing officer to a number of key individuals, as detailed on the validation report template. 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 AQS panel member and AQS@dmu.ac.uk 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 formal endorsement.

Responding to conditions, required actions and recommendations

It is the responsibility of the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality to oversee the process of meeting conditions of approval, unless the programme is delivered by a collaborative partner, in which case UK Validation Services oversees the process for UK based validations or GPU for overseas based validations. The faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality, EP or GPU 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 Chair for approval, and other panel members if specified at the validation event
- 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 specifications (showing tracked changes) should be forwarded to the programme administrator to update SAP. This is extremely important to provide accurate and correct student information.

In submitting the response to conditions, please ensure that the panel Chair is able to easily see the changes made since the initial submission of the documentation for the validation event. Please use the 'tracked changes' function in Microsoft Word to show where amendments have been made. If the documentation submitted for the validation included any tracked changes, please accept these and begin to track again for the submission in response to the conditions. It is also helpful to provide a brief summary (a covering email is sufficient) to indicate how each condition has been met and directing the Chair to the relevant documents or sections of documents for review.

The programme leader is responsible for submitting the appropriate documentation into the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality, EP or GPU. The programme leader is also responsible for ensuring that the finalised versions of the programme and module specification (template) are provided to the relevant faculty professional services team at the conclusion of the validation process so that any updates can be made to SAP. In the case of 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.

Once the conditions have been met, AQS will issue a final notification of approval to key faculty and central professional services staff.

[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.

Section 7: Further information

Forms and useful publications

Internal documents

Document	Available from
A Guide for Validation Panel Members	Academic Quality Services web pages
A Guide for Validation Servicing Officers	Academic Quality Services web pages
A Guide to writing Programme Specifications	Academic Quality Services web pages
A Guide to writing Module Specifications	Academic Quality Services web pages
A Guide to Curriculum Modification	Academic Quality Services web pages
A Guide to External Examining at DMU	Academic Quality Services web pages
Validation external panel member nomination form	Academic Quality Services web pages
Academic Regulations	Academic Quality Services web pages
General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students	Academic Support Office web pages
A Guide to Managing Collaborative Provision	Academic Quality Services web pages
Validation Service Operational Guide	Academic Quality Services web pages
UDL	Centre for Academic Innovation and Teaching Excellence web page
Education for Sustainable Development	DMU website

External publications

QAA Quality Code (including subject benchmark statements and characteristics statements)	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) website
Office for Students sector-recognised standards	Office for Students website
Licenced HEIs Guide to Mapping Core Content (for DMU-devised Higher National provision)	Pearson website