

CHAPTER C – PROGRAMME DESIGN, APPROVAL AND VALIDATION

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C.1. UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Course Design and Development

Core Practices (Standards)

The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.

Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

Core Practices (Quality)

The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

Common Practices (Standards)

The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

Common Practices (Quality)

The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

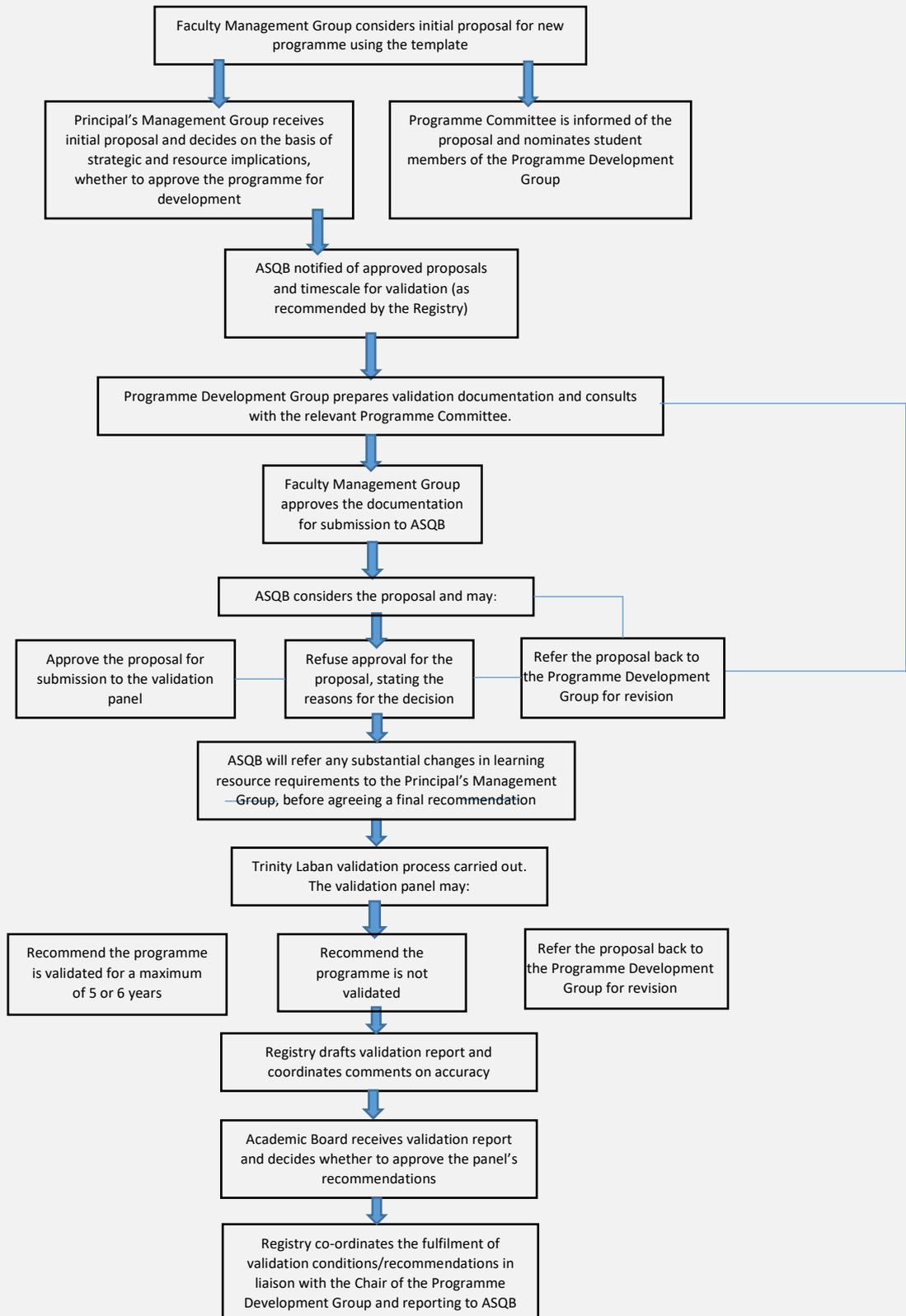
The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

Guiding Principles

- Strategic oversight ensures that course design, development and approval processes and outcomes remain consistent and transparent.
- Accessible and flexible processes for course design, development and approval facilitate continuous improvement of provision and are proportionate to risk.
- Internal guidance and external reference points are used in course design, development and approval.
- Feedback from internal and external stakeholders is used to inform course content.

- Development of staff, students and other participants enables effective engagement with the course design, development and approval processes.
- Course design, development and approval processes result in definitive course documents.
- Design, development and approval processes are reviewed and enhanced.

C.2 Programme Validation



2.1 Aims of the Approval and Validation Process

- To safeguard academic standards and to maintain and enhance academic quality.
- To take into account the UK Quality Code and other national and European reference points as appropriate; subject benchmarks; and the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Research Training Frameworks.
- To ensure that programmes meet the strategic needs of the Institution.
- To ensure that the introduction of programmes is based on a sound business case, supported by financial planning, market research and taking into account the implications for the provision of learning resources at an early stage of the planning process.
- To ensure sound educational rationale and curriculum design and the constructive alignment of curriculum, with delivery and assessment.

2.2 Timeline for validation activities

Draft validation documents must be submitted to either:

- The summer term meeting of ASQB for (re)validation events in the autumn term
- The autumn term meeting of ASQB for (re)validation events in the spring term

An extraordinary meeting may be called where the volume of (re)validation work in a given term is high.

Deadline	Activity
October (academic year before validation event)	Deadline for submission of new programme proposal to PMG
December (AY before validation event)	Deadline for PMG to approve new programme development
Mid-December (AY before validation event)	Final deadline for print prospectus
End of spring term (AY before validation event)	Faculties to submit a list of programmes for validation in the following academic year to the Registry
June (AY before validation event) or November (AY of validation event)	Draft validation submissions to ASQB
28 February	Latest date for (re)validation event
March (AY of validation event)	Academic Board approves opening of programme
End of summer term (AY of validation event)	Deadline for fulfilment of conditions
September (AY after validation event)	Programme commences (earliest date)

2.3 First Stage Approval: Initial Proposal for Development

- a) The first stage of the process allows an early opportunity to ensure that proposals fit with the Institutional strategy, are supported by a sound business case and meet the requirements of the appropriate academic award.

- b) The Faculty Management Group will oversee the preparation of the initial proposal, establishing a Programme Development Group to carry out the work (see appendix C.1) for standard membership and terms of reference). The relevant Programme Committee(s) will be informed of the proposal and where appropriate, may nominate student members of the Programme Development Group. The Programme Development Group will be responsible for:
- meeting the required timeline for decisions and submission of documentation for all stages of the validation process
 - setting up internal and external consultation groups, to include internal subject specialists; student groups; external examiners; external subject specialists from academia and the music/dance-related professions and industries
 - proposing to the Faculty Management Group the external subject specialists to be invited for the formal consultation process
 - Preparing the programme proposal reflecting initial consultation and market research activities

The proposal will be submitted on a standard template (see appendix C.3).

- c) The Faculty Management Group will submit the initial proposal to the Principal's Management Group.
- d) The Principal's Management Group will decide whether to give approval for the development of the proposed programme, through an assessment of the strategic and resource implications of the initial proposal.
- e) The Registry will agree the timeline for validation with the Programme Development Group and the Director of Faculty, in accordance with the institutional deadlines (see C.2.6).

2.4 Publicity for Programmes Subject to Validation

The Principal and the Registrar have authority to approve publicity for a programme with the clause 'subject to validation'. They will decide whether to grant approval for publicity following the approval of the initial proposal, including a full business case, by the Principal's Management Group.

Permission to advertise 'subject to validation' will not include permission to make offers to applicants. Offers may only be made following the authorisation of programme validation by Academic Board (see 2.8 below).

2.5 Validation and Accreditation

Validation is the process whereby a programme leading to an award is examined to ensure that it meets the criteria of the validating institution.

A programme may also be submitted for accreditation, a process to ensure that it meets the requirements of the accrediting organisation, usually a body associated with the music/dance industry. Proposals will be prepared for validation/accreditation using the process set out below.

2.6 Preparation of Proposal for Validation

- a) The Programme Development Group will co-ordinate the preparation of the proposal for validation with the approval of the Director of Faculty, in consultation with the relevant

programme committee(s) and other stakeholders within the Faculty. The validation submission should be compiled using the template in appendix C.3 and consist of a detailed rationale for the programme, the programme and module specification and supporting documents (such as assessment maps, handbooks, faculty-specific policies etc.).

- b) The Programme Development Group will submit the full documentation for validation to the Faculty Management Group for approval prior to submission to ASQB for inclusion in the validation process (detailed in appendix C.2). ASQB will consider the documentation, taking into account the academic rationale, the fit of the programme within the FHEQ, and the expertise and resources required to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- c) ASQB may:
 - decide to refer the proposal to a validation panel for consideration
 - refuse approval for the proposal, stating the reasons for the decision
 - refer the proposal back to the Programme Development Group for revision
 - ASQB will refer any substantial changes in learning resources requirements since approval of the initial proposal, to the Principal's Management Group.

The documents may be revised after presentation to the relevant committees, taking account of members' feedback, prior to submission to the panel.

2.7 Nomination of the validation panel

- a) ASQB will appoint a validation panel to consider the proposal. Members of the Panel should not otherwise have been directly involved in the drafting of the proposal. The membership will normally include:
 - Director of Music or Dance or another senior member of staff nominated by ASQB (in the chair) (from outside the faculty sponsoring the proposal)
 - Registrar or nominee (Secretary)
 - An Assistant Director/Head of Programmes or a Programme Leader from outside the academic team sponsoring the proposal
 - One other member of academic staff from outside the Faculty sponsoring the proposal
 - An external adviser
 - A student representative, nominated by the President of the Students' Union
- b) Information about the scope of the validation is available at appendix C.2.
- c) The Registry will make operational arrangements for the validation process, including liaison with the Programme Development Group; the setting of dates for the submission of documentation; the final validation event and the preparation of the validation report. The timetable for the validation event will be planned to take account of the schedule of recruitment for the programme, in accordance with the institutional deadlines

2.8 Validation Event

- 2.8.1 The validation event will be conducted as outlined in appendix C.2.

Following the validation event, the Panel will give the proposers of the validation verbal feedback on the likely overall recommendations.

- a) The panel may:
 - recommend a period of validation up to a maximum of six academic years (or 5 academic years for programmes with a full time length of less than 2 years).
 - recommend any conditions for validation, to support the maintenance of the quality and standards of the programme
 - require the resubmission of documentation with substantial amendments – this will trigger resubmission of the documentation to ASQB and a further validation event
 - refuse approval for the proposal, stating the reasons for the decision
 - recommend action by the programme team to enhance the development of the programme
- b) Following the provision of verbal feedback, the Panel Secretary will produce a written report on the validation event. The Panel Chair will approve the report and the Panel Secretary will then send the document to the proposers of the validation for any comments on factual accuracy. The Panel Chair/Secretary will submit the final version of the report to the Academic Board.
- c) The Academic Board will consider the report of the validation panel, deciding whether to authorize the validation of the new programme and approving any conditions or recommendations for validation.
- d) The Registry will co-ordinate the fulfilment of validation conditions, reporting through ASQB to the Academic Board.

2.8.2 Follow-up actions

The Chair of the validation panel will be asked to confirm that conditions have been met prior to commencement of the programme. A written response to the revalidation report from the Programme Development Group, including details of the action taken to meet any conditions, will be presented to the next meeting of ASQB.

Amendments to the programme documents submitted to the validation panel may result from the conditions or recommendations emerging from the validation event. All such changes should be submitted to the Registry for approval by the Chair of the Validation Panel and submitted to ASQB alongside a response to any conditions or recommendations set out in the validation report.

Following final confirmation by ASQB that conditions and recommendations have been addressed and programme delivery may commence, definitive versions of programme and module specifications will be added to institutional directories and made available to prospective students. Any further amendments to the programme must be made through the programme amendment process outlined in Chapter D.

The Director of Faculty will be responsible for ensuring that all resource requirements identified during the validation process and approved by PMG are incorporated into relevant budgets.

2.9 External Accreditation

Following a recommendation from ASQB, the Academic Board may approve the submission of a proposal for validation to the designated accreditation authority. The Programme Development Group will then prepare the proposal for presentation to the accreditation authority, supported by the Deputy Registrar.

Following the completion of the procedure, the Academic Board will receive an application from ASQB for final approval for the operation of the accredited programme, and a report on any accreditation conditions. ASQB will be responsible for overseeing the fulfilment of accreditation conditions, reporting to the Academic Board.