

Guideline to Validation (for Panel Chair)

1. Before the Validation Event

- 1.1. Take time to read the documentation in advance and ask for any supplementary documentation or seek clarification on any points of ambiguity via the Secretary to the Validation Panel well before the event.

2. At the Validation Event

- 2.1. It is helpful to consider your role as a panel member as that of a 'critical friend' who is there to discuss the proposal in detail and offer helpful suggestions to the course team, as well as pointing out potential pitfalls and problems arising from your scrutiny of the validation documentation.
- 2.2. Aim to foster an atmosphere of constructive critical dialogue with the team rather than one of confrontation, for example by avoiding aggressive questioning styles that put the course team on the defensive and by endeavoring to highlight any positive aspects of the proposal rather than focusing exclusively on areas of concern.
- 2.3. Do not leave major concerns unvoiced - it is much harder to address these after a validation event than before or during it.
- 2.4. External panel members should be prepared to challenge assumptions held by the course team or the University/partner institution, and offer a fresh critical but constructive perspective.
- 2.5. Industry professional or employer representatives should offer a view on the value and relevance of the proposed course in relation to industry, the profession and/or employer needs, and give close consideration to any work placement, work-based learning or employment related aspects of the proposed course.
- 2.6. A meeting with students is arranged wherever possible, as this helps you to form a more holistic view of the provision and allows you to ask about course delivery arrangements and learning and teaching from a student's perspective. The student experience should be a key focus of the panel's considerations.

3. Notes for Validation Panel Chair

- 3.1. Open the event by welcoming validation panel members and asking everyone to introduce themselves. Outline the purpose of the event, the structure of the day, the role of the validation panel and the range of possible outcomes of the event. Ensure that all panel members are clear about their own and others' roles.
- 3.2. Set a constructive tone to encourage productive dialogue with the course team. Encourage all panel members to participate and do not allow an individual panel member to dominate the discussion.

- 3.3. When you open the initial closed panel discussion, invite the external academic representative(s) to offer their views first, as they have been asked to join the panel because of their subject expertise.
- 3.4. An appropriate 'batting order' might be:
- 3.5. External academic experts, internal academic experts, employer/professional body representative(s), partner institution panel member(s), other panel members.
- 3.6. At the end of the panel's initial discussion, summarize the main points raised and add any issues or questions of your own. This summary will form a framework for the panel's meeting with the course team. You may find it helpful to structure the discussion by grouping issues under the headings on the following pages (Aspects to be explored during Validation).
- 3.7. Plan the discussion with the course team by agreeing which panel member will lead questioning in specific areas, ensuring that the amount of time allotted for discussion of each topic aligns with its importance.
- 3.8. It can be helpful to ask the team (in advance of the event) if they wish to offer an initial short presentation of their proposal as a preliminary to the discussion with panel members.
- 3.9. At the start of the meeting with the course team, ask all present to introduce themselves again (including course team members) and set a positive tone by thanking the team for attending and giving some positive feedback from the panel before commencing discussion of the issues.
- 3.10. Ensure that all issues that might lead to conditions or recommendations are covered in the meeting with the course team, so that any conditions or recommendations attached to a validation decision do not come as a surprise at the end of the event.
- 3.11. Discuss the outcomes of the course team meetings with panel members at the next closed panel session, summarizing those issues where a satisfactory response was given, noting any queries that were not fully resolved and agreeing any points of good practice that emerged during discussion.
- 3.12. Agree beforehand with the panel Secretary how you wish to structure the discussion with students, i.e. formal/informal, whole- or small-group, making a note of any specific topics to be covered.
- 3.13. Allow panel members sometime after meeting students to feed back any fresh issues raised, queries resolved, or points of good practice mentioned. It may be necessary to seek clarification from the partner institution panel representative or course team members on any new queries raised before you can move on to the concluding panel discussion.
- 3.14. At the conclusion of the event, state clearly the panel's decision and any conditions and recommendations and associated deadlines, but remind teams that the validation report will be the definitive record of conclusions reached and any conditions and/or recommendations set.
- 3.15. After the event, agree the draft validation report with the Panel Secretary.

4. Aspects to be explored during Validation

4.1. Rationale and Market Demand

- 4.1.1. Procedures fair and transparent?

4.2.Course Design

- 4.2.1. Is the proposed award title appropriate?
- 4.2.2. Are the aims of the course clearly defined?
- 4.2.3. Are there clear learning outcomes that appropriately reflect published benchmarks (where appropriate), and any relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements?
- 4.2.4. Does the design of the course include assessment of the extent to which the course is inclusive of disabled students?
- 4.2.5. Do learning outcomes adequately demonstrate the integration of work-based learning and the academic program of study?
- 4.2.6. How have employers been involved in course development? What arrangements are in place for their continuing involvement?

4.3.Curriculum

- 4.3.1. Is each learning outcome (subject-specific or skills-related) supported by appropriate elements within the curriculum?
- 4.3.2. Is the curriculum content appropriate to each stage of the course, and to the level of the award?
- 4.3.3. Is the course balanced, for example in terms of academic and practical elements and the breadth and depth of the curriculum?
- 4.3.4. Does the design of the curriculum enable academic and intellectual progression by imposing increasing demands on the learner in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the capacity for conceptualization, and increasing autonomy in learning?
- 4.3.5. Is there a balance and integration between employment related skills and broad-based academic study?
- 4.3.6. Is work-based learning embedded in the program of learning, and does work based learning contribute to the overall coherence and integrity of the course?

4.4.Delivery

- 4.4.1. Are the modes of delivery proposed appropriate to the course?
- 4.4.2. Is there a suitable variety of teaching and learning methods to meet the needs of a diverse range of students, including those with disabilities?
- 4.4.3. Are the arrangements for the management and supervision of workplace learning systematic and clear?
- 4.4.4. Are there systems in place for the continuous briefing of employers?

4.5.Assessment

- 4.5.1. Is assessment designed to measure the achievement of the learning outcomes?
- 4.5.2. Is achievement of every learning outcome assessed?
- 4.5.3. Are individual assessments appropriately weighted?
- 4.5.4. Are the assessment methods appropriate and sufficiently varied and inclusive?
- 4.5.5. Are there adequate opportunities for formative assessment, in order to support the development of students' abilities?
- 4.5.6. If employers are involved in the assessment of students, are there systematic arrangements for coordinating such activity involving academic staff?

4.6.Student Support

- 4.6.1. Are there well-designed arrangements for student induction?
- 4.6.2. Are students provided with an appropriate level of academic support?
- 4.6.3. Are arrangements in place to ensure that any additional needs of students are identified and reasonable adjustments are put in place to meet them?
- 4.6.4. Are arrangements for tutorial support clear and generally understood by staff and students?
- 4.6.5. Are Student and Course Handbooks and other information for students clear and complete?
- 4.6.6. Are Learning Agreements in place to define the specific outcomes intended for workplace learning, the responsibilities of employers, students, mentors and academic tutors?

4.7.Learning Resources

- 4.7.1. Are subject-specific learning resources appropriate to the proposed course?
- 4.7.2. Is adequate teaching and learning accommodation available?
- 4.7.3. Are learners supported by appropriate and accessible library resources?
- 4.7.4. Do students have access to adequate equipment including ICT?

4.8.Staffing

- 4.8.1. Is the existing staff proposed for teaching on the course appropriately qualified and experienced?
- 4.8.2. Is appropriate technical and administrative support available?
- 4.8.3. Are any additional staff appointments required to enable the course to be delivered effectively?
- 4.8.4. Is any staff development arrangements proposed to support existing staff in acquiring particular new expertise?
- 4.8.5. Do the overall staffing arrangements suggest that sufficient expertise will be available for the effective delivery of the intended curriculum, for the overall teaching, learning and assessment strategy, and for the achievement of the learning outcomes?
- 4.8.6. Where employers are contributing to the delivery of the course, how are these contributions designed and integrated?