

# Requirements for academic approval of Validation Service collaborations

**This supplement should be read in conjunction with Quality Handbook (QH) Sections 10 and 10C.**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the academic approval process is to assure the University that the academic standards of its awards delivered as part of a Validation Service collaboration, and the quality of student learning opportunities will be comparable to those of its own provision.
- 1.2 Consideration is given to whether the planned provision is consonant with the University's regulations, policies and practices as set out in the NTU Quality Handbook.
- 1.3 This supplement sets out the requirements for the academic approval of Validation Service collaborations. The academic approval method is set out in QH Section 10C.

## 2. Documentation for approval

- 2.1 All documentation submitted for approval must first be agreed by the Validated Centre's Academic Board or equivalent.
- 2.2 The following documents are required for academic approval of Validation Service collaborative provision.

### Centre Document

- The Centre Document is intended to provide evidence to the University that the Centre is able to appropriately deliver the University's awards and has the necessary academic and administrative infrastructure.

- Further guidance on the structure and content of the Centre Document is available in Quality Handbook Supplement (QHS) VS2.

### **Course Documentation**

- The documentation required for the approval of the course is a course operational document, course rationale document, a course specification, module specification assessment schedule, and assessment and feedback plan.
- The Centre must use the NTU course specification template templates and may choose to use NTU module specification templates. Where a Centre uses its own module templates, these should contain comparable information.
- Guidance on preparing course documentation can be found in QH Section 5 and associated supplements.
- Validated centres are advised to take account of NTU's course design requirements set out in QH Section 12 but are not obliged to follow them.

## **3. Approval criteria**

3.1 The criteria for institutional approval of a new Validated Centre are as follows:

### **An appropriate educational infrastructure:**

- The Centre has an appropriate forum for planning, target setting and devising implementation strategies to enhance the quality of the learning environment and for providing adequate learning resources for the delivery of courses.
- The Centre has an appropriate resource base to support effective delivery of the course(s).
- The Centre has appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
- The Centre has an appropriate staff development and research policy.
- The Centre has appropriate support arrangements for students.
- The Centre has policies in place for handling extenuating circumstances, academic irregularities, complaints and appeals.

### **An effective organisational structure which:**

- is widely and clearly understood within the institution and assigns clear executive, administrative and academic responsibilities to individuals and groups, for the delivery of its NTU validated awards.

- is designed to support the quality management and enhancement of its provision.
- locates the responsibility for course design and delivery, student admission and assessment, as closely as possible, to the teaching team.

**A system to assure the academic standards and quality of its provision:**

- A system for the regular monitoring and evaluation of institutional and course performance and implementation of changes where appropriate.
- Mechanisms to involve students in quality management and decision making.
- Systems to ensure that information about courses for prospective and current students is fit for purpose, accessible and accurate (and is comparable across delivery sites, where applicable).
- A system for problem resolution.

**Incorporation of an external critical perspective:**

- The Centre is aware of and is responsive to, national and international standards in the subject(s) it offers and in the practice and delivery of higher education.
- The Centre utilises external inputs into its organisation and seeks wider educational and professional reference points.

3.2 Approval of courses will seek to establish:

- whether the University's requirements for course approval are being satisfied (as specified in QH Section 5).
- that the resources available at the Centre are appropriate for effective delivery of the course.
- whether the existing and planned policies, systems and procedures at the Centre, proposed at course level over the period of approval, are appropriate.
- that students will be offered learning opportunities comparable to NTU-based students.

## 4. Institutional approval process

- 4.1 **Tour of facilities:** The Centre should arrange a tour of the teaching, learning and support resources for the course(s). This takes place before the meetings with staff from the Centre. The purpose of this is to establish whether these are appropriate for the delivery of the course.

- 4.2 **Meeting with the Senior Management Team:** The Centre should arrange for the approval panel to meet with senior representatives. This session has a strategic focus and is intended to establish whether the University's criteria for institutional approval are satisfied.
- 4.3 The agenda for the meeting with the Senior Management Team is informed by the institutional approval criteria and key lines of enquiry identified by the panel following scrutiny of the Centre document.

## 5. Course approval process

- 5.1 **Meeting with the course team(s):** The Centre should arrange for the panel to meet with representatives from the course team(s). This session has an operational focus looking at the development, design and delivery of the course under consideration.
- 5.2 The agenda for the meeting with the course team(s) is informed by NTU course approval criteria (as set out in QH Section 5) and key lines of enquiry identified by the panel following scrutiny of the course documentation.

## 6. Approval panel constituency

- 6.1 The panel membership for a Validation Service approval event is as follows:
- Chair (a senior member of NTU academic staff);
  - two experienced members of NTU academic staff;
  - an external panel member;
  - a CADQ senior standards and quality officer.

## 7. Outcomes

- 7.1 Institutional and course approval are separate events and are discrete in terms of the approval decision and the subsequent reports.
- 7.2 The panel makes the following decisions about institutional approval:
- whether the Centre satisfies the institutional approval criteria;
  - the period for which approval is given (between one and three years, based on risk indicated by the business evaluation, and the findings of the approval event);
  - conditions of approval;
  - the timescale by which any conditions of approval should be satisfied;
  - recommendations;
  - commendations.
- 7.3 The panel makes the following decisions about course approval:
- whether the course meets NTU's course design requirements;

- b. the period for which approval is given (between one and three years, based on risk indicated by the business evaluation, and the findings of the approval event);
  - c. conditions of approval, including the signing of an Institutional Agreement between the Centre and the University;
  - d. the timescale by which any conditions of approval should be satisfied;
  - e. recommendations;
  - f. commendations.
- 7.4 Approval is subject to the University’s standard requirements which can be found in QH Supplement 5D.

<b>Policy owner</b>
CADQ

<b>Change history</b>			
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<b>Equality Analysis</b>		
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