

Section **10C**

Nottingham Trent University

Quality Handbook

**Part C: Assuring and
enhancing quality**

**Section 10C: Validation
Service collaborative
provision**

Section 10C

Contents

1.	Definition of Validation Service	2
2.	Academic approval.....	2
3.	Admissions	3
4.	Monitoring and reporting.....	3
5.	Risk assessment	5
6.	Changes to Validation Service collaborative provision	6
7.	Periodic collaborative review.....	6
8.	Appeals of approval /review decisions	7
9.	External examiners	8
10.	Board of Examiners.....	8
11.	Academic appeals and irregularities	9
12.	Certificates and transcripts.....	9
13.	Information for students and partners.....	10

Section 10C

1. Definition of Validation Service

Each collaborative arrangement is specified according to the set of University-defined categories of collaborative provision.

1.1 The University defines Validation Service collaborative provision as follows:

Category	Definition
Validation Service	The partner delivers its own courses to its own students at its own centre. The courses are validated and awarded by NTU.

2. Academic approval

Academic approval takes place separately from and only after due diligence and business approval has been agreed.

Validated Centres are only approved where the University has broad confidence that the partner has sufficiently robust systems for quality management that incorporate the principles of UK Higher Education.

Requirements

- 2.1 Validation Service collaborative provision is subject to approval processes which are comparable to and at least as rigorous as the University's own provision.
- 2.2 Initial approval takes the form of an approval panel. The approval event will take place at the partner's premises and will involve a tour of facilities.
- 2.3 Academic approval of new Validation Service collaborative partnerships is a two stage process:
 - a. Institutional approval;
 - b. Approval of the course(s).
- 2.4 An academic approval event may result in conditions (which have to be met before delivery commences), recommendations and commendations.
- 2.5 Each location of delivery is subject to separate approval.
- 2.6 Where an established Validated Centre proposes to add new courses to its portfolio then the form of event may vary.

Section 10C

Explanatory notes

- Quality Handbook Supplement (QHS) VS1 outlines the approval criteria and process for Validation Service collaborations.

Validation Service collaborative provision is initially approved for a period of between one and three years, and a review takes place before approval is renewed.

Requirements

- 2.7 The length of the initial approval period is based on the findings of the business evaluation, and academic approval process, and the associated risk of the collaboration.
- 2.8 Following satisfactory collaborative review, provision is re-approved for a period of between one and five years. The length of the re-approval period is based on the findings of the business evaluation, the review, and the associated risk of the collaboration.

3. Admissions

Ultimately, all decisions on the admission of students rest with the University in cases of disagreement between the University and its Validated Centres, or if concerns about partner processes are revealed through annual monitoring or review.

Requirements

- 3.1 Validated Centres always take operational responsibility for admissions and recruitment, but must function within the principles set out in the University's admissions policy, Quality Handbook (QH) Section 13.

4. Monitoring and reporting

Validation Service collaborative provision is subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure that NTU approved courses operate satisfactorily between periodic collaborative reviews.

Section 10C

Requirements

- 4.1 The principles of course monitoring at Validated Centres align to (QH) Section 6.
- 4.2 Monitoring ensures that:
 - a. academic standards continue to be appropriate for the award;
 - b. the quality of student learning opportunities is maintained;
 - c. that enhancements are made to the provision;
 - d. the health of the collaborative arrangement is upheld.

Annual reporting is the process by which the University is assured of the on-going currency and health of its provision at Validated Centres.

- 4.3 A Course Standards and Quality Report (CSQR) must be produced annually for each course operating at a Validated Centre, using the University template. An abbreviated CSQR is completed for courses in the final year of teach-out, using the University template.
- 4.4 CSQRs do not need to be produced for courses that have completed teach-out. Courses that have completed teach-out must complete a completion of teach-out template.
- 4.5 A Validated Centre Standards and Quality Report (VCSQR) must be compiled by a Validated Centre if the partner has several NTU approved courses or delivers courses at more than one location, using the University template.
- 4.6 CSQRs/VCSQR must be signed off by the Centre's Course Committees (or equivalent) and Academic Board (or equivalent) prior to submission to the University.
- 4.7 CSQRs/VCSQR are considered by the Validation Service Sub-Committee, supported by the academic liaison tutor and feedback is provided to the Centre.

Where Validation Service courses are delivered in a language other than English, appropriate arrangements must be made by the University for the moderation of assessment.

Requirements

- 4.8 Wherever possible moderation is undertaken by speakers of the language of assessment, who are subject specialists working at the University or in UK higher education.

The University identifies an academic liaison tutor to take responsibility for monitoring the ongoing quality of Validation Service collaborative provision.

Section 10C

Requirements

- 4.9 An academic liaison tutor is appointed by the University for each course at a Validated Centre.
- 4.10 The academic liaison tutor is from the same discipline area within the appropriate University link School, and where possible, a native speaker of the language of assessment.
- 4.11 Where there is an approved progression route to a University course, the academic liaison tutor role also includes a requirement to support student progression.
- 4.12 Where appropriate, Validation Service arrangements will have a separate exam board academic liaison tutor who monitors the exam board processes at the Centre.

Explanatory note

- QHS VS8 details the role of the academic liaison tutor.

5. Risk assessment

Validation Service provision must have an up-to-date risk assessment in place to ensure that academic risks are identified and actively managed.

Requirements

- 5.1 Risk assessments for Validation Service provision are drawn up by CADQ as part of the approval process for a new partnership.
- 5.2 The risk assessment must remain up to date and should be reviewed at least one per year as part of annual monitoring following receipt of external examiner and academic liaison tutor reports, and annual monitoring reports from partners. Risk assessments must be reviewed as part of periodic collaborative review.
- 5.3 Oversight of risk assessments is the responsibility of the Validation Service Sub-Committee.
- 5.4 Individual risks with a score of 8 or more must be escalated to the Collaborations and Partnerships risk register which is managed by CADQ and overseen by CPSC and VSSC on behalf of Academic Board.
- 5.5 Where risk assessment identifies significant risks with a partnership, a mitigation plan is written and a sub-group of VSSC established to monitor and manage the risks.

Section 10C

6. Changes to Validation Service collaborative provision

Changes to approved collaborative provision may be proposed at any time in the academic year. The formal mechanisms for approving such changes depend on the scale and type of change proposed.

Requirements

- 6.1 Routine changes to modules as part of regular updating to ensure that currency is maintained are the responsibility of the Validated Centre's course committee. Routine changes are notified to the Validation Service Sub-Committee (VSSC). If these changes amount to significant or substantive change across modules, there may be a need for formal approval by the University.
- 6.2 There are two main categories of course change that require approval from the University.
 - a. **Major change** (requiring approval by the Centre's Academic Board or equivalent and VSSC or an approval panel as appropriate);
 - b. **Modification** (requiring approval by the Centre's Academic Board or equivalent and VSSC).
- 6.3 All proposals for changes to courses (major changes and modifications) must be recorded on a Course Change Form and submitted to CADQ.
- 6.4 External examiners and the University academic liaison tutor must be consulted in relation to all changes to modules (major changes and modifications). Other key stakeholders should also be consulted as appropriate.

Explanatory notes

- The types of changes to courses align to the principles set out in QHS 5B.

7. Periodic collaborative review

Validation Service collaborative provision is periodically reviewed by the University.

Requirements

- 7.1 Periodic collaborative review aims to satisfy the University that the arrangement continues to fulfil the requirements for quality, that the academic standards of the awards are appropriate, and that there are comparable student learning

Section 10C

opportunities to those students studying at the University. The review process is both developmental and judgemental.

- 7.2 Periodic collaborative review is a two stage process:
 - a. Institutional review;
 - b. Review of the course.
- 7.3 Periodic collaborative review of Validation Service provision takes the form of a review panel and the review will take place at the Centre. A review is held prior to the end of the initial academic approval period, and prior to the end of each approval period, thereafter.
- 7.4 After a successful review outcome, the academic approval period is extended for a period of between one and five years.
- 7.5 The ongoing length of the approval period is determined at each periodic collaborative review and is based on evidence about the business evaluation, and the quality and standards of the provision.
- 7.6 NTU reserves the right to bring a review date forward if there are significant concerns about the standards and quality of provision at a Validated Centre.

Explanatory notes

- QHS VS10 sets out the requirements for Validation Service periodic collaborative review.

8. Appeals of approval /review decisions

An Appeal of a decision relating to Validation Service approval or review must be presented by the collaborative partner to the Chair of ASQC within 14 days of receipt of the confirmed report or minute of the meeting, depending on the approval procedure.

Requirements

- 8.1 If a matter of dispute is not resolved by ASQC, the partner may make a direct submission to the University's Academic Board through the Vice-Chancellor. Academic Board will consider the matter itself or by means of a working party, which would not include any member of staff involved in the earlier decision.
- 8.2 Once representation is received from both parties, a decision will be made which would either:
 - a. confirm the decision of the validation or review panel;
 - b. refer the case back to the validation or review panel with instructions to consider the proposals *de novo*;

Section 10C

- c. rescind the decision and make recommendations for action towards further progress;
- d. make such other arrangements for the determination of the issues as it deems appropriate.

8.3 The decision of the appeal body is final.

9. External examiners

External examiners are appointed for all award-bearing courses at Validated Centres.

Requirements

- 9.1 External examiner nominations for Validation Service collaborative provision are considered and approved by the University's External Examiner Appointments Panel. Appointments are subject to the same requirements as external examiners appointed to NTU's provision, as detailed in QH Section 9.
- 9.2 External examiners are contracted to the University and responsibility for the induction and payment of external examiners is retained by the University.
- 9.3 The Validated Centre is responsible for arranging travel and visas for external examiners and for the payment of expenses.
- 9.4 Where the same course is delivered at more than one location, the same external examiner should consider the provision at all locations, wherever possible, to ensure comparability of standards.

10. Board of Examiners

Validation Service collaborative provision is required to have a formally constituted Board of Examiners. The conduct of the board is specified at approval and aligns to the terms of reference, membership and procedures set out in QHS 15B and QHS 15E.

Requirements

- 10.1 The Board of Examiners is arranged by the Validated Centre.
- 10.2 The academic liaison tutor represents the University at the board, either in person or via video conferencing and will report to the University on the fitness of the process. The exception to this is where a separate exam board liaison is appointed.

Section 10C

11. Academic appeals and irregularities

Students on courses at Validated Centres have right of appeal to the University when they make a complaint or appeal about academic matters only when the Centre has failed to follow or correctly apply its own procedures.

Requirements

- 11.1 Validated Centres are required to develop their own policies and procedures for dealing with academic appeals and irregularities. These policies and procedures are reviewed by the University's Academic Registry prior to academic approval.
- 11.2 The policies and processes for appeals and irregularities are considered and agreed at approval.
- 11.3 Should a student believe that the Centre has materially failed to follow or correctly apply its own procedures, the University will investigate this. It will consider the accuracy with which the Validated Centre has followed its procedures to establish whether there has been any material error or failing in the application of the procedures and if so, whether the outcome to the student may have been adversely affected. Should this appeal be upheld, the University may request that the Validated Centre discards the original outcome and revisits the matter or reconsiders the procedure afresh to ensure that the procedure is correctly applied.
- 11.4 Students on Validation Service collaborative provision have the right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator following completion of the University procedure.

12. Certificates and transcripts

Award certificates are produced by the University and transcripts are produced by the Validated Centre.

Requirements

- 12.1 The certificate and / or transcript states the location of delivery and language of study where this is not English.
- 12.2 The certificate always contains the partner's name and will be signed by the University's Vice-Chancellor. Inclusion of the Centre's logo and a signature from the Head of the Centre is optional.
- 12.3 Transcripts produced by the Centre align to minimum requirements prescribed by NTU and are approved by the University.

Section 10C

12.4 In some contexts, it may be inappropriate for the location and language of study to be included on the certificate; in such cases, the transcript will contain this information and the certificate will refer to the existence of the transcript.

13. Information for students and partners

The Validated Centre is responsible for the provision of information to students.

Requirements

13.1 The Validated Centre is responsible for ensuring that information provided to students studying on courses delivered by them is accurate and fit for purpose.

13.2 Information provided to students includes:

- a. Entitlements to University services, if any;
- b. The student's relationship with the University;
- c. Membership of representative bodies;
- d. Processes for academic appeals and irregularities.

The University ensures that Validated Centres have current and appropriate information about any policies and process by which they may be affected.

Requirements

13.3 Any changes to University policies and procedures that impact upon a Validated Centre are communicated to the partner by CADQ, on behalf of ASQC.

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
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Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	Change of title from verifier to academic liaison tutor
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	None
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Equality Analysis		
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