

Part 5

Approval and Validation of Award-Bearing Programmes (non-collaborative)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 All proposals for new programmes require Gate 1 and Gate 2 Initial approval by the relevant College, School and University Committees.
- 1.2 School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee approve all non-collaborative programmes. Part 11 of this manual outlines procedures for the approval of collaborative programmes.
- 1.3 All non-collaborative programmes are validated, after School approval, via the Validation & Review Sub-Committee of Learning & Teaching Quality Committee, on behalf of the Academic Board.

2 The Initial Approval Process via Gate 1 and Gate 2

- 2.1 Before a new programme is developed, Gate 1 and 2 approval must be obtained. The aim is to ensure that time is spent productively on developing proposals that are viable, accord with the UEL vision and strategic plans and are likely to succeed at approval and validation.
- 2.2 The Initial Approval process should be completed at least a year before the first intake of students and eighteen months is the suggested lead in time (see *fig 1*). Exceptions with tighter timescales may be approved if an appropriate rationale is received by Education and Student Success Committee (ESSC) (in this case the committee may also ask the programme proposer to proceed directly to Gate 2).

UG/PG on Campus or by DL										
	Intake Point	Sep-18	Jan-19	May-19	Sep-19	Jan-20	May-20	Sep-20	Jan-21	May-21
Stage										
Initial Approval Gate 1		Mar-17	Jul-17	Nov-17	Mar-18	Jul-18	Nov-18	Mar-19	Jul-19	Nov-19
Initial Approval Gate 2		Apr-17	Sep-17	Jan-18	Apr-18	Sep-18	Jan-19	Apr-19	Sep-19	Jan-20
SLTQC Approval		28th Feb 2018	31st May 2018	31st Oct 2018	28th Feb 2019	31st May 2019	31st Oct 2019	28th Feb 2020	31st May 2020	31st Oct 2020
VRSC Approval		Mar-18	Jul-18	Nov-18	Mar-19	Jul-19	Nov-19	Mar-20	Jul-20	Nov-20

Fig 1

2.3 As part of the development process, the programme proposer should contact staff in the following services at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss the proposal:

<i>Financial Services</i>	Advice on the financial viability of the proposal and the level of tuition fee that should be set.
<i>Strategic Planning</i>	Advice on external funding.
<i>Corporate Marketing</i>	Advice on the marketing of the proposed programme.
<i>Quality Assurance and Enhancement</i>	Advice on the validation process and compatibility of programmes with regulations. Completion of due diligence and MoC processes for Collaborative Partnerships.
<i>International Student Recruitment</i>	Advice on demand from international students, English language and IELTS requirements.
<i>Information Technology Services</i>	Advice on IT requirements and to assess the extent to which IT services will be able support the proposed programme.
<i>Library and Learning Services</i>	Advice on the ability of Library and Learning Services to support the proposed programme, including availability of funding to purchase learning resources.
<i>Facilities Services</i>	The availability of standard and specialist accommodation to support the proposed programme.
<i>Centre for Student Success</i>	Advice on structuring the programme to enable students to succeed, during and after their studies.
<i>Graduate School</i>	For proposals for professional doctorate programmes.

2.4 School Level - Gate 1 Approval

- 2.4.1 The programme proposer is required to complete the approval form, in collaboration with the services listed above, to confirm:
- Key high level information relating to the proposed programme.
 - A case for how the proposed programme aligns with School/College and Institutional strategy.
 - A summary of market strategy, viability of the proposed programme, the target market and main competitors.
 - Detailed financials covering income and expenditure for the first 3 years.
 - High level staffing strategy, high level facilities/space/technology/IT requirements.
 - Confirmation of any funding sources.
 - Timeline for approval.
- 2.4.2 The Gate 1 approval form will be submitted to the College Board in the first instance. The Board will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approval the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. The Board will complete the approval criteria section of the form. Where a proposal is approved with conditions, it is the responsibility of ESSC to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.
- 2.4.3 Once Gate 1 preliminary approval has been granted by the College, the proposal is forwarded to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure that relevant institutional approvals are requested.

2.5 Institutional Level - Gate 1 Approval

- 2.5.1 ESSC consider all Gate 1 proposals for new non-collaborative programmes after the relevant College has granted approval.
- 2.5.2 A decision by ESSC to grant Gate 1 approval is confirmation that, at an institutional level, it is considered that the proposal accords with UEL strategy and that the proposal may be developed further towards Gate 2 approval.
- 2.5.3 ESSC will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve with conditions to be met during the Gate 2 process, or reject the proposal with feedback. The committee will complete the approval criteria section of the form and note any items that should be taken into account during the Gate 2 approval process.
- 2.5.4 Rejected proposals may be resubmitted.

2.5.5 ESSC, when confirming that a proposed programme has been granted Gate 1 approval, will inform the relevant stakeholders, including:

- The proposing College/School.
- Facilities Services
- Academic Registry
- Strategic Planning
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Library and Learning Services
- Centre for Student Success
- Student Money Advice and Rights Team

2.6 School Level - Gate 2 Approval

2.6.1 The 'Programme Proposer' is required to complete the Gate 2 approval form to confirm:

- Module level detail relating to the proposed programme.
- A case for how the proposed programme aligns with College/School and Institutional strategy. With additional student related information regarding programme set up.
- Detailed market analysis, viability of the proposed programme, the target market and main competitors. Including text suitable for advertising the programme.
- Detailed financials covering income and expenditure for the first 3 years. Including commentary from Financial Services and relevant finance codes.
- Detailed staffing strategy, high level facilities/space/technology/IT requirements.
- Confirmation of any funding sources.
- Timeline for approval.

2.6.2 The Gate 2 approval form will be submitted to the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee, who will consider the initial approval form from a quality assurance perspective. School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee committee will either unconditionally approve the proposal, approve the proposal with conditions or reject the proposal with feedback. The committee will complete the approval criteria section of the form. Where a proposal is approved with conditions, it is the responsibility of ESSC to confirm if these conditions have been appropriately met.

2.6.3 Once approval has been granted by the school the proposal is forwarded to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure that relevant institutional approvals are requested.

2.7 Institutional Level – Gate 2 Approval

2.7.1 ESSC consider all proposals for new programmes only after the relevant School has granted Gate 2 approval.

2.7.2 A decision by ESSC to grant Gate 2 approval is confirmation that, at an institutional level, it is considered that the proposal accords with the UEL strategic plan and that the proposal may be developed further towards approval through validation.

2.7.3 The ESSC grant unconditional Gate 2 approval or reject the proposal with feedback. The committee will complete the approval criteria section of the form and note any items that should be taken in to account during the planning and validation of the programme. Rejected proposals may be resubmitted. Completion of the Gate 2 process confirms Initial Approval and is valid for two years from the date of approval

2.7.4 Education and Student Success Committee, when confirming that a proposed programme has been granted Gate 2 approval, will inform the relevant stakeholders, including:

- The proposing College/School.
- Facilities Services
- Academic Registry
- Strategic Planning
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Library and Learning Services
- Centre for Student Success
- Student Money Advice and Rights Team

2.8 Proceeding to Approval and Validation

2.8.1 No proposal may proceed to approval and validation unless it has been granted Initial Approval.

2.8.2 Once approved, the proposal is added to the validation and review schedule and progress in terms of validation is monitored by the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee. The QAE Quality Assurance Officer associated with the School will be available to provide advice and guidance and assist in the development of the proposal.

3 Programme Development

- 3.1 Once a proposal has received Gate 1 and 2 preliminary and initial approval, the programme proposer establishes a development team to assist with the development of the programme.
- 3.2 Where a programme that has, or requires, recognition by a professional, regulatory or statutory body is the subject of the approval or re-approval, the professional, regulatory or statutory body should be informed of the proposals at the earliest opportunity, depending on the approval requirements of that body. Where appropriate, a representative of that body will be involved in the approval process.

3.3 Naming of Programmes Involving Multiple Subjects

- 3.3.1 Where a single honours degree combines two subjects within its programme title, the title should contain either the words 'and' or 'with':
- **And** - should be used where there is equal weighting at all levels between the two subjects, so that there are 60 credits per subject area per level.

If some modules contain aspects of both subjects there must be clear indications that there is an equal amount of content from both subject areas.

- **With** - should be used where there are a greater number of credits in one subject compared to the other, typically 90/30. The subject with the greatest credit weighting must appear first in the degree name.

Where the programme contains a dissertation, it would be assumed that the topic of this would reflect both subjects taught where the degree is 'and', with a greater bias on one rather than the other for 'with'.

4 External Advice

- 4.1 Prior to the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee meeting convened to consider the programme for approval, the Programme Proposer nominates appropriate external subject advisers to participate in the approval process. Two external advisers are required, but this number can be increased, if appropriate, at the discretion of the Chair of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee. Where approval of distance learning programmes is included, at least one of the external advisers should have experience of distance learning provision.
- 4.2 The suitability of the external advisers will be determined by the Chair of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee subject to the following criteria:
- 4.2.1 The depth of subject knowledge.

- 4.2.2 The relevance of subject knowledge.
 - 4.2.3 Prior experience of teaching on programmes at the same level or above; for distance learning, experience of distance learning provision
 - 4.2.4 Impartiality (the nominee should not have any formal links with the UEL during the last five years as a former member of staff or the last three years as an external examiner).
 - 4.2.5 Professional expertise (for vocational programmes, at least one of the advisers should be a 'practitioner' drawn from a relevant business or professional background).
- 4.3** It is unlikely that any single nominee will meet all the above requirements. In making judgments about the suitability of the proposed external subject advisers, the Chair will need to take into account the overall balance of expertise presented by the external advisers. The Chair may reject a nominee or require the Programme Proposer to nominate additional external subject advisers in order to ensure a balance of expert advice.
- 4.4** The external adviser should receive a copy of all documentation detailed in section 5 below and be asked to comment on the extent to which the documentation meets the UEL Quality Criteria.
- 4.5** Normally, comments from external advisers will be sought by correspondence and presented to a full meeting of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee. There is no requirement that external advisers attend a committee meeting but, at the discretion of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee, external advisers may be invited to attend a meeting in order to contribute to the discussion. Where an external adviser has not attended the meeting, the Programme Proposer will formally notify the external adviser of the outcome of the process.

5 Documentation

- 5.1** The following documentation is required for the approval of a new programme. The Programme Proposer is responsible for ensuring that sufficient copies of all the documentation are provided for the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee's attention in advance of the meeting. It is recommended that documentation is circulated a minimum of 5 days in advance of the meeting.
- 5.1.1 Programme Specification (using the standard UEL template, available at <https://uelac.sharepoint.com/LearningandTeaching/Pages/forms-and-guidance-notes.aspx> and from Quality Assurance and Enhancement); a programme specification is required for each programme, including instances where there are a number of similar routes through the programme. This ensures that learning outcomes are aligned with each programme.

- 5.1.2 Module Specifications (using the standard UEL template, available at <https://uelac.sharepoint.com/LearningandTeaching/Pages/forms-and-guidance-notes.aspx> and from Quality Assurance and Enhancement).
- 5.1.3 For distance learning proposals and proposals that involve a blend of both distance and on-campus learning:
- Learning materials for 2 modules on the programme for undergraduate programmes, or learning materials for 1 module on the programme for postgraduate programmes.
 - A detailed schedule for completion of all distance or blended learning materials for the programme.
- Via the external adviser's report, that assessment design, materials and support have been considered against any quality assurance requirements for distance learning.
- 5.1.4 For approval of programmes to be delivered as Higher and Degree Apprenticeships the documentation and approval requirements are outlined at the end of this document in Part 5 Annex 1.
- 5.1.5 A validation document to include:
- The context of the proposed programme: This will include how the proposal meets the objectives of UEL's Strategic Plan and the College/School plan; the academic profile of the School and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on that profile; and any relationship of the proposal to programmes run by other Schools within UEL.
 - The rationale for the proposal this will include: evidence of the regional and national demand for the proposal; details of consultation with relevant employers and relevant professional bodies; the relationship of the proposal to similar provision offered elsewhere; if the programme replaces one currently offered by the School, an explanation of why this is and details of consultation with students on the existing programme; the target student group/expected student profile; and expected career destinations for graduates/diplomates.
 - Details of the means by which learning materials for distance learning delivery have been quality assured for content and learning design (for distance and blended learning proposals only).
 - The professional context of the proposal (if relevant): This will include the influence of professional body requirements on the design of the programme. (If necessary, the relevant guidelines of the professional body(s) should be provided as an appendix).
 - Programme structure diagram.
 - Arrangements for the supervision and assessment of any placement element.

- School based academic and other counselling/student support arrangements.
- A statement detailing the programme team's evaluation of their proposal with regard to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) (where applicable), the QAA Quality Code, and any professional accreditation requirements (i.e.: how have they been used in the development of the programme).
- A curriculum vitae for each member of staff associated with teaching on the Programme.
- Resources: This should include a statement making it clear what physical resources are available to support the programme (e.g. library, computer hardware and software, specialist accommodation, other specialist equipment), and how distance learning students will access the resources.
- The academic and administrative staff support infrastructure for distance learning students (for distance and blended learning proposals only).
- In the case of a programme reapproval, confirmation of student consultation to the proposed changes and evidence of such consultation along with transitional arrangements.

5.1.6 Where a programme incorporates modules 'owned' by another School, the programme leader will obtain written agreement from the School relating to the use of the modules, and this should be presented to the approval meeting. This will facilitate subsequent notifications of changes made to these modules.

5.2 In addition to the documentation provided by the programme proposer, the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee will be provided with a copy of the following information to assist with their deliberations:

- The UEL Quality Criteria.
- The relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s).
- An extract from Part 1 of the Manual of General Regulations, providing the full description of the award to which the proposed programme will lead.
- The external advisers' written comments.
- A copy of the relevant professional body(s) requirements, where appropriate.
- A copy of the Initial Approval or Re-approval form.
- Any other information relevant to the proposal.

6 Programme Approval

6.1 All proposals for new programmes will be considered by a full meeting of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee. Proposals cannot be

considered by correspondence. Schools are encouraged to set schedules for approval business and monitor these through their School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee. Where deadlines shown in fig 1 (second page of this chapter) cannot be met, validation can only proceed with the agreement of the Chair of the Validation and Review Sub-Committee.

- 6.2** Where a professional, statutory or regulatory body requires it, a joint validation/accreditation event may be held, either by participation of the body in the UEL process as part of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee, or by a separate bespoke event that satisfies both UEL and the accrediting body needs.
- 6.3** In order for new programmes to be approved, the Quality Assurance Officer and a member of staff from another College (normally a School Quality Leader, but may be a Deputy Quality Leader, Head of School, or College Leader in Learning and Teaching), must be present at the meeting, as specified in the standard terms of reference and constitution of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee. For the approval of professional doctorate programmes a representative of the Graduate School will also be invited to attend.
- 6.4** The School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee will evaluate the proposal against the Quality Criteria and other external reference points, as appropriate, as set out in section 5.2 above.
- 6.5** In the case of distance and blended learning provision, the approval event will consider additionally:
- The schedule of availability and readiness of any print or online learning materials.
 - The system of delivery of the programme.
 - Support infrastructure, roles and responsibilities of academic and Support staff.
 - Student access to UEL systems, support and guidance services.
- 6.6** For approval of programmes to be delivered as Higher and Degree Apprenticeships the documentation and approval requirements are outlined at the end of this document in Part 5 Annex 1.
- 6.7** A School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee may not consider a programme for approval unless the comments of all external advisers are available to the meeting.
- 6.8** The School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee can either: (a) approve the proposal and forward it to the Validation & Review Sub-Committee for formal validation or; (b) reject the proposal and require that it be revised and re-

submitted for further consideration at a future meeting. The School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee may not impose conditions of approval.

- 6.9** The minutes of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee will record details of the discussion with regard to the proposal and the outcome agreed by the Committee. They will also indicate clearly the action taken in respect of recommendations of external advisers. The minutes will be forwarded to the Validation & Review Sub-Committee for consideration.
- 6.10** Once a programme has been approved by the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee, it can be delivered, subject to formal validation by the Validation & Review Sub-Committee. The Servicing Officer of Validation & Review Sub-Committee will write to each School, via the minutes and action plan, following the meeting of the sub-Committee to notify them of formal programme validation.
- 6.11** All programmes are validated for a maximum period of six years, unless a shorter period is determined by the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee and / or a professional body(s). Programmes may be re-validated at any time during this period or via the periodic Academic Review process for a further six years.

7 Validation

- 7.1** The Validation & Review Sub-Committee (VRSC) will formally validate all programmes, on behalf of the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee, for the Academic Board.
- 7.2** The Validation & Review Sub-Committee will judge whether due process has been followed and all relevant actions have been completed. It will not 'second guess' the academic judgement of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee nor of the external advisers.
- 7.3** To facilitate its role, the Validation & Review Sub-Committee will receive: copies of the minutes of the meeting of the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee; a copy of the programme specification; and the external advisers' comments.
- 7.4** Where Validation & Review Sub-Committee has concerns about the completion of the process by the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee, it may seek further information or refer the proposal back to the School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee for further consideration.
- 7.5** The Validation & Review Sub-Committee will note issues of institutional significance that emerge from all validation activity and report these to the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee.

Manuals, Forms and Guidance notes relevant to Part 5

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/LearningandTeaching/Pages/forms-and-guidance-notes.aspx>

- Initial Approval Form Gate 1 & 2
- UG and PG Costing Template (contact finance)
- Module Specification Template
- Programme Specification Template
- Professional Doctorate Programmes Specifications Template
- School Validation Document
- Nomination of an External Adviser for a validation/review event
- Approval pro-forma, for external advisers to complete
- External Advisor's Claim Form
- Standard Template for Staff CVs

ANNEX 1

Approval of Delivery of Educational Training for Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Standards linked to an UEL Award.

Approval Stages

1. Initial Approval
Initial Approval must be obtained via the Gate 1 and Gate 2 Initial Approval process.
2. Validation or Approval event via School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee.
 - a. **If the approval involves the validation of a new programme or revalidation of an existing programme – see section A.**
or
 - b. **If the approval is linked to a currently validated UEL programme (without modifications that would prompt a revalidation) – see section B.**
3. Final Approval by Validation and Review Sub-Committee (on behalf of Learning and Teaching Quality Committee and Academic Board).

Section A – If the approval involves the validation of a new programme or revalidation of an existing programme.

External Advice

Two external advisors must be appointed as detailed in section 4 above. At least one of these advisors must have substantive practical expertise.

Internal Advice

A member of the Academic Partnerships office and a Senior Member of Registry Staff (Assistant Registrar) should be invited to attend the approval event.

Documentation

The documentation requirements are the same as in section 5 above.

The following additional documentation will be required:

- A mapping of modules against the Key Skills and Behaviours within the higher apprenticeship standard.
- A schedule for completion of the programme and the associated apprenticeship standard, for a typical apprentice.
- Arrangements for all staff who teach and manage/enable learning, including those staff who are not employees of UEL and/or are not based at the UEL, to be appropriately qualified, supported and developed.
- Specific detail on the programme specification aimed at helping apprentices understand the structure of their programme and/or any additional requirements/non-applicable sections as compared to standard students.
- Confirmation of how any gateway requirements for the Apprenticeship will be met (e.g., mandatory qualifications, practice portfolios, formal reviews).
- Confirmation that registrations have been completed (e.g., RoTAP, RoEPAO) where relevant.

In addition to the information provided to SLTQC in section 5.2 above the following documentation will be provided to assist with deliberations:

- The associated Higher Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan
- QAA – Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships
- The SFA Conditions of Grant Funding Rules

Approval

The approval process will be as outlined in section 6 above. The approval event will consider additionally:

- The system of delivery of the programme and apprenticeship.
- Support infrastructure, roles and responsibilities of academic and support staff.

- Apprentice access to UEL systems, support and guidance services.

Validation

The approval process will be as outlined in section 7 above. VRSC will additionally receive a copy of the mapping document.

Appointing an External Examiner

Within the team of External Examiners appointed to review Degree Apprenticeship Modules there must be substantive practice expertise.

Section B – If the approval is linked to a currently validated UEL programme (without modifications that would prompt a revalidation)

External Advice

A minimum of one External Advisor with substantive practice expertise must be appointed. Modifications to the programme can also be sought under the 25% rule (see Part 6 of the Quality Manual)

Internal Advice

A member of the Academic Partnerships office and a Senior Member of Registry Staff (Assistant Registrar) should be invited to attend the approval event.

Documentation

The following documentation will be required:

- A brief approval document to include:
 - The context and rationale for the Higher Apprenticeship
 - A mapping of the modules of the programme against the Key Skills and Behaviours within the Higher Apprenticeship Standard.
 - All module specifications including any amendments.
 - A schedule for completion of the programme and the associated apprenticeship standard for a typical apprentice.
 - Arrangements for all staff who teach and manage/enable learning, including those staff who are not employees of UEL and/or are not based at the UEL, to be appropriately qualified, supported and developed.
 - Resources: This should include a statement making it clear what physical resources are available to support the programme (e.g. library, computer hardware and software, specialist accommodation, other specialist equipment), and how higher apprentices will access the resources.
 - Confirmation of how any gateway requirements for the Apprenticeship will be met (e.g., mandatory qualifications, practice portfolios, formal reviews).

- Confirmation that registrations have been completed (e.g., RoTAP, RoEPAO) where relevant.
- An amended programme specification aimed at clarifying the structure of the programme and/or any additional requirements/non-applicable sections for apprentices and non-apprentice students.
- If there are modifications to curriculum content - Via the external adviser's report, confirmation that; assessment design, materials, and support, have been considered against quality assurance requirements, the Higher Apprenticeship Standard, and the associated Assessment Plan.

In addition to the information provided by the programme proposer, the following documentation will be provided to assist SLTQC with their deliberations:

- The associated Higher Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan.
- QAA – Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships
- The SFA Conditions of Grant Funding Rules
- If there are modifications to curriculum content - The external advisors written comments.

Approval

The approval process will be as outlined in section 6 above.

The approval event will consider additionally:

- The system of delivery of the programme and apprenticeship.
- Support infrastructure, roles and responsibilities of academic and support staff.
- Apprentice access to UEL systems, support and guidance services.

Final Approval

The approval process will be as outlined in section 7 above. VRSC will additionally receive a copy of the mapping document.

Appointing an External Examiner

Within the team of External Examiners appointed to review Degree Apprenticeship Modules there must be substantive practice expertise.