

Part 4

Quality Criteria

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In order for a course to be approved and validated, it must meet the criteria defined in this part of the Quality Manual. During Academic Review (see: Part 8) each course will once again be measured against these criteria and approval may be withdrawn if the criteria are not found to be satisfied. Any proposed departures from, or extension to, these criteria should be justified at the planning stage of the approval process and, if necessary, referred to the Education and Experience Committee for agreement.

2. Academic climate and resources

- 2.1. The relevant School(s) provide evidence of relevant academic, scholarly and professional activity and can demonstrate that this is adequate and appropriate to support the course.
- 2.2. The course team has adequate numbers of staff with appropriate expertise at all levels to sustainably deliver and support the course.
- 2.3. The University has sufficient physical accommodation for teaching and learning to take place within an environment that is conducive to learning.
- 2.4. The University has appropriate and up-to-date specialist equipment to support learning where necessary.
- 2.5. The University has sufficient library materials, digital resources and other educational resources available to support students' learning needs.

3. Course philosophy and principles

- 3.1. Courses have clearly articulated aims and learning outcomes which meet the needs of students and equip them with skills, knowledge and behaviours relevant to the needs of employers and the wider economy.
- 3.2. Courses have aims and learning outcomes which are consistent with [Vision 2028](#).
- 3.3. Courses comply with the [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) and actively encourage participation from groups previously underrepresented in higher education by treating student backgrounds with respect and understanding, as reflected in the course curriculum and teaching methods.

- 3.4. Courses provide subject content, teaching, and learning materials at standards which match the national standing of the award and the expectations of employers and other external partners and peers, such as those articulated in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)'s [Subject Benchmark Statements](#), [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#), [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), and in statements articulating [professional body accreditation requirements](#).
- 3.5. In the case of apprenticeships, courses reflect the specifications of the QAA [Characteristics Statement for Higher Education in Apprenticeships](#) and the relevant [apprenticeship standard](#) produced by the IfATE.
- 3.6. In the case of research degrees, courses reflect the standards outlined in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity 2019](#) and the University's [Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research \(PGR\) Degrees](#) and [Regulations for Research Degrees](#).
- 3.7. Courses provide opportunities for progression onto further lifelong study, career or professional development.

4. Admissions

- 4.1. Admissions provide equal opportunities to applicants and do not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender identity, or sexual orientation, consistent with the [Regulations for Admissions](#).
- 4.2. Admissions conform to the [Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning \(APEL\) Policy](#).
- 4.3. Admissions clearly specify and justify any required threshold competencies.
- 4.4. Applicants are only admitted onto courses where course teams believe the applicant is likely to be successful in gaining the award.
- 4.5. For additional admissions requirements for apprenticeship courses, refer to Appendix C.

5. Modules and course structure

- 5.1. Course structures are clearly defined and consistent with the aims and learning outcomes of the course.
- 5.2. Modules clearly specify their learning outcomes.
- 5.3. Modules have a credit tariff specified in accordance with the [Academic Regulations](#) with courses having clearly defined methods for awarding credit where students leave the course at intermediate stages.
- 5.4. Course structures permit flexibility of movement between courses both within the University and at other providers.

- 5.5. For additional structural requirements for apprenticeship courses, refer to Appendix C.

6. Content and curriculum

- 6.1. Course content is consistent with course aims and learning outcomes.
- 6.2. Course content is current and comparable with that of similar courses at other providers.
- 6.3. Course content is inclusive and diverse.
- 6.4. Course content actively fosters the following general skills and competencies within all students through both teaching and assessment:

6.4.1. Content for all courses

- use of subject-specific English* and mathematics pertinent to the demands of the course;
- intellectual and imaginative skills;
- understanding and competence;
- the ability to solve problems;
- an enquiring, analytical and creative approach;
- independent judgment and critical self-awareness;
- skills of clear communication and logical argument;
- the ability to see relationships within what they have learned and to relate what they have learned to actual situations;
- an appreciation of attitudes, modes of thought, practices and disciplines other than those of their main studies.

* or other language of delivery

6.4.2. Content for all undergraduate courses

- ability to take initiative and work independently;
- ability to work effectively as a member of a team;
- ability to use written communication and oral presentation effectively in a variety of contexts
- ability to search for information and carry out appropriate data-analysis;
- ability to make effective use of information technology.

6.4.3. Content for all postgraduate/post-experience courses

- research appropriate to the subject, including data searching and retrieval at the research level;
- management/leadership skills, including decision-making skills;
- independent critical analysis of the conceptual and theoretical basis of a piece of argument within the field being studied;
- awareness of new developments in the subject area.

- 6.5. For additional content requirements for apprenticeship courses, refer to Appendix C.

7. Learning and teaching methods

- 7.1. Learning and teaching methods are consistent with the aims and learning outcomes of the course and address the needs of students.
- 7.2. Learning and teaching methods are varied to provide students with a range of learning opportunities and experiences.
- 7.3. Learning and teaching methods respond to diversity and promote equality of opportunity and inclusivity.
- 7.4. Learning and teaching methods encourage students to be active in the learning process and to take responsibility for much of their own learning.
- 7.5. Learning and teaching methods complement the [Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#).
- 7.6. For additional learning and teaching method requirements for apprenticeship courses, refer to Appendix C.

8. Assessment

- 8.1. Assessments are fair, reliable and valid, with assessment at the appropriate level.
- 8.2. Assessments use an appropriate variety of methods of assessing students' learning.
- 8.3. Assessments measure the stated learning outcomes for each module, including skills development.
- 8.4. Assessment methods and marking criteria are published and made available to students in advance of their undertaking.
- 8.5. Assessments demonstrate technical proficiency in the English language* in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the course

* for courses taught in English and with due regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010)
- 8.6. Assessments are subject to [external examination](#).
- 8.7. Assessments are in compliance with the [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) and [Regulations for Assessment of Students](#), and complement the [Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#).
- 8.8. For additional assessment requirements for apprenticeship courses, refer to Appendix C.

9. Guidance and support

- 9.1. Guidance and support for induction are provided at the point of admission to the course and is consistent with the [Student Induction Policy](#).
- 9.2. Guidance and support for academic study are in place to provide support for students which facilitates the planning, monitoring, reviewing, and recording of their learning.
- 9.3. Guidance and support are available to help students acquire core skills and competencies.
- 9.4. Guidance and support are available for students' personal support needs.
- 9.5. Guidance and support are available to provide information to students on employability and careers, including guidance and support for apprentices who face redundancy during their course ([P275.5](#)).

10. Progression and Completion

- 10.1. Progression and completion rates are kept under review and appropriate actions are taken where problems are identified.
- 10.2. For additional progression and completion requirements for apprenticeship courses, refer to Appendix C.

11. Information

- 11.1. Detailed and useful information on the philosophy, aims, learning outcomes, structure, content, admissions, operation and assessment of the course is readily available to all staff and students involved with the course through the provision of student handbooks, course specifications and module study guides as appropriate.

12. Course costs

- 12.1. Any additional course costs outside of tuition fees, in compliance with the [Consumer Rights Act 2015](#), must be provided in course specification. Examples of some common additional course costs include but are not limited to fields trips, equipment, materials, bench fees, and studio hire.
- 12.2. Any additional course costs must also provide the following information:
 - Whether any additional costs are mandatory or optional.
 - When any additional costs will be required to be paid by.
 - How much any additional costs will be expected to be. Note that where the value is unknown or uncertain, information must be provided for how the exact values will be calculated as this information becomes available.
 - For apprenticeship courses, that apprentices will not be liable to fund any aspect of their training including additional course costs in compliance with the ESFA funding rules ([P214](#)).

13. Feedback from students and employers

- 13.1. Feedback from students and employers are actively sought and taken into account in the design, delivery and outcomes of the course.
- 13.2. For course revalidations, feedback from any impacted students and employers are sought on the proposed changes and taken into account.
- 13.3. For course revalidations, feedback from any offer-holder applicants must be sought on the proposed changes and taken into account.

14. Regulations of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

- 14.1. For courses accredited or validated by an external PSRB, regulations of the relevant PSRB(s) are considered. A list of accreditation bodies the University works with are [available on the website](#).