

# Guidance for Validation and Periodic Programme Review

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Academic Registry



LIVERPOOL  
JOHN MOORES  
UNIVERSITY

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## Glossary

APP	Academic Planning Panel
CME	Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement
EPA	End Point Assessment
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
FMT	Faculty Management Team
FQAEC	Faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
ModCat	Module Catalogue
NSS	National Student Survey
PPP	Programme Proposal Proforma
ProdCat	Product Catalogue
PSRB	Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAEC	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
QEO	Quality Enhancement Officer
QSO	Quality Support Officer
SMT	School Management Team
TEF	Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework
UKES	United Kingdom Engagement Survey
VR0P	Validation and Review Oversight Panel

## Chapter 1: Introduction

1. This Guidance is intended to provide information about the University's validation and periodic programme review process, and the associated roles and responsibilities of all participants, for both internal and collaborative programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Framework Regulations and the Curriculum Design Guide.
2. **Validation** is the quality assurance process used to scrutinise a proposed new programme of study.
3. **Periodic programme review** is the quality assurance process used to scrutinise a validated programme of study.
4. Both **validation** and **periodic programme review** are processes of peer review. An informed and impartial panel considers a programme in order to confirm it meets (or continues to meet) the University's expectations of standards and quality, and offers (or continues to offer) high quality learning opportunities for students.
5. The **validation** process provides the programme team(s) with an opportunity to explain how the programme will operate in practice. The **periodic programme review** process provides the programme team(s) with an opportunity to explain the outcomes of their self-evaluation of their programme(s). Both processes provide the programme team(s) with an opportunity to share experiences and learning from the wider perspective and insight afforded by discussion with University colleagues and external peers.
6. Before the **validation** process can begin, strategic planning approval of a proposal is required. Successful completion of this stage, confirms support for a proposal from the School Management Team (SMT), Faculty Management Team (FMT) and the University's Academic Planning Panel (APP). Only when all three have approved a proposed programme can it proceed to validation. Guidance on obtaining strategic planning approval to develop a new programme can be found within the [Guidance for New Programme Approval and New Collaborative Programme Approval](#)
7. Development of the University's **validation/periodic programme review** process has taken account of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).
8. The University reserves the right to apply flexibility, when operationalising its **validation/periodic programme review** process, to allow agility where required. When doing so the University adopts a risk-based approach, and ensures continued compliance with relevant national and University policies and requirements. The Head of Quality and Standards must approve all such arrangements in the first instance.

### *Timescales for completing validation and periodic programme activity*

9. It should be possible to complete the **validation/periodic programme review** process within 3 – 4 months.
10. For **internal provision**, undergraduate programmes must normally be fully validated or reviewed no later than December of the year prior to their intended start date/next intake

date; for postgraduate programmes, with a start/intake date of September, the process must normally have been completed by the preceding May of that year.

11. For **collaborative provision**, timescales will be developed to meet the business needs of each individual proposal.
12. In instances where alternate versions of a programme (such as a “with Foundation” programme or a 240-credit Masters programme) are validated independently of their substantive programme, the validation dates should be aligned. Consequently, in these circumstances, the periods of approval confirmed by validation panels would need to be cognisant of this.
13. A successful **periodic programme review** will result in the ongoing approval of a programme of study. Any proposed changes will normally only apply to students entering the programme from the next intake date. Therefore, the timescales for **periodic programme review** must provide applicants with sufficient notice of forthcoming changes. Normally, it is expected that existing students will complete the extant version of the programme, as per the published programme specification. If this is not the case, the Programme Leader should speak to the assigned Event Officer as soon as possible.
14. Exceptionally, in parallel to considering a revised version of a programme(s), **periodic programme review** panels are empowered to approve a change(s) to the extant version of a programme(s), which will apply to existing students<sup>1</sup>. Where a **periodic programme review** panel approves a change(s) to an existing version of a programme(s), these will be reported to the next scheduled meeting of the applicable Faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (FQAEC). In addition, the approval of changes to existing programmes, through **periodic programme review**, will be monitored by the Validation and Review Oversight Panel (VROP).
15. Should programme teams wish to transfer existing students to a new version of a programme, following **periodic programme review**, then **written consent must be obtained from all affected students, including those who are currently not engaging or are on a Leave of Absence**. Prior to seeking to transfer existing students to a new version of a programme, the programme team/Programme Leader **must** obtain the approval of both the Director of School and Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor.
16. In instances where consent is required from students who are not engaging or who are on a Leave of Absence, arrangements must be in place to ensure that, when the student is re-engaged, their written consent is sought to transfer to the new version of a programme.
17. When seeking student consent, students must be made aware of the alternative options available to them, should they not consent to the proposed change, including the opportunity to withdraw from the programme, to move to another programme and, if required, to move to another institution.
18. In addition to the above options, in the event that **all** affected students<sup>2</sup> do not provide written consent to the proposed transfer, the Faculty may wish to consider offering those students the option to continue on the extant version of the programme. **Before** exploring this option with students, the programme team/Programme Leader **must** seek support and confirmation, from the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor that such an arrangement can be resourced.

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<sup>1</sup> For further details please see paragraph 55.

<sup>2</sup> Including those not engaging or on a Leave of Absence.

19. Written consent must be obtained by the relevant programme team/Programme Leader and evidence of consent must be retained by the programme team.
20. When a programme is undergoing **periodic programme review**, the following statement is added to the programme information on the University's website:

*"This course is currently undergoing its scheduled programme review, which may impact the advertised modules. Programme review is a standard part of the University's approach to quality assurance and enhancement, enabling us to ensure that our courses remain up to date and maintain their high standard and relevancy.*

*Once the review is completed, this course website page will be updated to reflect any approved changes to the advertised course. These approved changes will also be communicated to those who apply for the course to ensure they wish to proceed with their application.*

*Some of the new module content that is being considered, and is subject to approval, may include <<insert subject/topic>> and <<insert subject/topic>>".*

## Chapter 2: The Planning Process

### *Validation*

21. The Programme Proposal Proforma (PPP) that is presented to APP, to obtain strategic planning approval for a proposed programme(s), contains a **validation** planning section, which enables proposing teams to identify matters such as:
- Any anticipated variance from the Academic Framework.
  - Anticipated Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) involvement/requirements that need to be considered/accommodated as part of the **validation** process.
  - The optimum month in which the **validation** event should take place (aligned to University requirements)<sup>3</sup>.
  - The desired location of the **validation** event (principally determined by whether the programme will make use of specialist, discipline specific, resources)<sup>4 5</sup>.
22. Once a programme has received strategic planning approval from APP, this information is utilised by the assigned Event Officer to organise the **validation** process.

### *Initiating periodic programme review*

23. Academic Registry manages the University's schedule of **periodic programme review**. Programmes that are approved following periodic programme review are normally approved for a period of 5 years, and the next **periodic programme review** date is recorded on WebHub. Programme teams and collaborative partners will be notified that a programme is due for review in the year preceding the review year.
24. For **internal provision, periodic programme review** will normally take place in subject clusters rather than on a programme-by-programme basis. The composition of subject clusters will be agreed by Academic Registry in conjunction with Directors of School.
25. It is acknowledged that on occasion it may be necessary for programmes to undergo review outside of their assigned subject cluster, for example due to PSRB requirements, significant developments within the discipline, or for strategic reasons. In these circumstances, the Director of School is permitted to request a stand-alone review for an individual programme, which is known as "Elective Programme Review". To avoid subject-clusters becoming fragmented through the use of Elective Programme Reviews, in instances where a programme undergoes Elective Programme Review, the next date of review will be aligned to the date when their allocated subject cluster is next scheduled for review. The extent to which these programmes are considered as part of the review of their assigned subject cluster, will be determined by when the Elective Programme Review took place in relation to the review of the subject cluster.
26. In exceptional circumstances an extension to a programme approval period can be granted, normally for a maximum of one year only. The rationale for requesting an extension should be presented to VROP on the agreed [template](#). In considering the application, VROP will ensure that all appropriate quality assurance materials, such as External Examiner reports, have been submitted and are appropriate before approving

<sup>3</sup> Internal programmes only.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Applicable to 'face-to-face' events only.



an extension. Applications for an extension must be endorsed by the relevant Director of School prior to submission to the Secretary of VROP.

27. Arrangements for **validation** and **periodic programme review** will be agreed in a planning meeting arranged by the designated Event Officer from Academic Registry. Normally, this will be undertaken virtually. Once agreed, the Event Officer will confirm in writing, to all attendees, the agreed approach, the timeline of activity (including the completion of any convergent activities<sup>6</sup>), and documentary requirements, and will also provide the applicable templates. The timeline of activity will also be provided to the relevant Library Services representative, Faculty Marketing Manager, Faculty Recruitment and Admissions Manager and, for collaborative provision, the International Partnerships Manager (where relevant) for information.
28. For **collaborative programmes**, a planning meeting must include partner staff, and will not proceed without partner staff involvement.

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<sup>6</sup> An application for variance from the Academic Framework, arrangements for entry with Advanced Standing, and for Joint/Dual Awards, an Operational Framework.

## Chapter 3: Documentation

29. The University's core **validation** submission comprises:

- Design and Delivery Overview.
- Programme specification(s) (PDF version(s) taken from ProdCat).
- Module proformas (PDF versions taken from ModCat).
- CVs for relevant University or partner staff (academic and key technical staff as appropriate).

30. In addition to the documentation listed above, Academic Registry will provide the validation panel with a copy of the approved PPP for context.

31. The University's core **periodic programme review** submission comprises:

- Self-Evaluation Document.
- Programme specification(s) (PDF version(s) taken from ProdCat).
- Module proformas (PDF versions taken from ModCat).
- CVs for relevant University and partner institution staff, as appropriate.

32. Programme teams should consult the following evidence for the **periodic programme review**:

- Programme Document/Design and Delivery Overview from validation.
- Self-Evaluation Documents from previous periodic programme reviews.
- Programme Performance Summary Reports and related Enhancement and Development Plans for the periodic programme review period:
  - Progression.
  - Completion on time.
  - Achievement.
  - Module Performance.
  - Student survey outcomes.
- External Examiners' reports and responses.
- History of programme amendments.
- Subject Benchmark Statements.
- PSRB reports and requirements.
- Link Tutor reports (collaborative programmes only).

### *Design and Delivery Overview (validation only)*

33. The Design and Delivery Overview provides the **validation** panel with key information relating to the design, development and operation of the proposed programme(s) of study. It focusses principally upon the programme team's rationale for their proposed design and model of delivery, including the factors that have informed their decisions including consultation activities with students and other stakeholders, for example, employers.

34. In addition, the Design and Delivery Overview also addresses the programme's resource requirements and proposed student support mechanisms.

35. For **collaborative programmes**, the Design and Delivery Overview also addresses roles and responsibilities with regard to programme development, delivery and management.

36. For **Degree Apprenticeships** the Design and Delivery Overview also addresses the programme's alignment to the applicable Apprenticeship Standard, consideration of the End-Point Assessment (EPA), the operation of on and off-the-job learning and the appointment and operation of work-based mentors.
37. The Design and Delivery Overview is intended to supplement the other components within the University's core **validation** submission, and should therefore not repeat information that is contained within these other components

*Self-Evaluation Document (periodic programme review only)*

38. The Self-Evaluation Document must be completed using the standard template. It provides information for the panel about the ongoing management of the programme. It should be a reflective, critical, evidence-based appraisal of the programme's operation since it was initially validated or last underwent review.
39. The Self-Evaluation Document will consider the following themes:
- Admissions, retention and success.
  - Curricula and programme structure.
  - Teaching, learning and assessment.
  - Student support mechanisms.
  - Staffing and resource requirements.
  - Programme management and quality assurance.

40. The development of the self-evaluation should be a collegial exercise. Programme team members should be fully engaged in the review process, sharing the preparation and analysis.
41. It is expected that the self-evaluation will be informed by consultation activities with students, External Examiners and other stakeholders, for example, employers. The University's professional service teams may also be consulted regarding specific aspects of the evaluation, for example, the Teaching and Learning Academy, Marketing, Student Recruitment and Admissions and the Careers, Employability and Enterprise Service.
42. For **Articulation Arrangements** the Self-Evaluation Document should include consideration of the ongoing comparability of the programmes and the experience of students who enter the programme via this route.

*Programme specification (validation and periodic programme review)*

43. The programme specification is a definitive record of a programme and can be accessed by a range of stakeholders, including prospective and current students, employers, External Examiners and PSRBs.
44. Development of programme specifications is undertaken via ProdCat. The programme specification(s) will be reviewed and approved as part of the **validation/periodic programme review** process.
45. For **periodic programme review**, an updated programme specification(s) will be submitted as part of the documentation. Any programme specification updates should reflect outcomes that are documented in the Self-Evaluation Document. Updates will apply to students entering the programme from the next intake date. Normally, existing

students will complete the extant version of the programme(s) as per the published programme specification(s)<sup>7</sup>.

46. For **Franchise programmes** the programme specification will generally match the specification for the home programme but should include some specific details related to delivery by the partner.

*Module proformas (validation and periodic programme review)*

47. A module proforma for all modules within a programme(s) should be submitted as part of the core **validation/periodic programme review** submission.
48. Development/update of module proformas is undertaken via ModCat and a standard template is used across the University. The module proforma should normally be completed/updated by the relevant Module Leader (or nominated person if this varies according to School practice) in conjunction with the Programme Leader.
49. For **Degree Apprenticeships**, the “Notes” field within the module proforma must identify the Knowledge, Skills and/or Behaviours developed by a module.
50. In relation to **periodic programme review**, updated module proformas for all modules will apply to students entering the programme from the next intake date. Any module updates should reflect outcomes that are documented in the Self-Evaluation Document.
51. Existing students will complete the extant version of the programme as per existing module proformas<sup>8</sup>.
52. For **collaborative programmes**, completion of the module proformas will be facilitated by the applicable Liverpool John Moores University School on behalf of the partner.

*Staff CVs (validation and periodic programme review)*

53. Staff CVs should normally be provided on the agreed University template and submitted as a PDF file. CVs should not contain personal details such as dates of birth, home phone numbers/addresses etc.
54. The Self-Evaluation Document should highlight, through consideration of ongoing resources, any changes to the programme staff profile.

*Additional documentation*

55. If applicable to the proposed programme(s), the following should also be provided by the programme team alongside the core **validation/periodic programme review** submission:
- Off-site delivery approval template.
  - **Approved** application for variance.
  - **Approved** Operational Framework (Joint/Dual Awards).
  - Confirmation of approval of Advanced Standing.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See also chapter 1, paragraphs 14-18.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> If it is intended that the programme will permit progression, through Advanced Standing, then evidence this has been approved by the Faculty Recognition Group (FRG) **must** be provided as part

- **Approved** level learning outcome mapping, demonstrating comparability of the programme with a named Articulation Progression Route (Foundation Degrees)<sup>10</sup>.
- Factfile (for activity with PSRB involvement).
- Programme support materials and/or a tour of the Virtual Learning Environment (Distance Learning programmes).
- Draft Practice Assessment Records (Degree Apprenticeships).
- Learning Journey Plan (Degree Apprenticeships).
- Guidance materials for work-based mentors (Degree Apprenticeships).
- Draft Commitment Statement (Degree Apprenticeships).
- Resource Requirements Summary Template (collaborative programmes)<sup>11 12</sup>.

56. Where a **periodic programme review** panel is exceptionally asked to consider changes to the extant version of a programme(s), which will apply to existing students, the panel should receive the following:

- A written rationale for the proposed amendment(s).
- An updated programme specification(s)<sup>13</sup>.
- A revised module proforma(s)<sup>14</sup>.
- A new module proforma(s)<sup>15</sup>.
- A revised curriculum mapping(s)<sup>16</sup>.
- Confirmation as to how students have been consulted with regard to the proposed amendment(s).
- Evidence that all affected students have provided written consent to the change(s)<sup>17</sup>.
- Confirmation that the External Examiner(s) has been invited to comment upon the proposed amendment(s).
- Confirmation that the applicable PSRB has been consulted with regard to the proposed amendment(s)<sup>18</sup>.

57. It should be noted that if any of the required documentation, with the required approval status, is **not** submitted to the panel in line with the agreed timescales, the **validation/periodic programme review** event will **not** proceed as planned.

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of the full submission. This evidence should normally take the form of the minute from the FRG confirming approval.

<sup>10</sup> For further information please see [Guidance for Approval and Monitoring of Articulation Arrangements](#).

<sup>11</sup> Virtual and hybrid models of validation/periodic programme review only.

<sup>12</sup> This template should be utilised to detail discipline-specific resources required for each module as well as how these resources should be managed. Alongside the template, programme teams will also be asked to provide appropriate evidence (such as photographs or short videos) of the necessary resources and equipment in situ.

<sup>13</sup> As applicable.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> As applicable, and determined by the nature of the change(s) (see [Guidance for Programme and Module Amendments](#), Chapter 5)

<sup>18</sup> As applicable.

## Chapter 4: Student Engagement in the Process

58. Student consultation and engagement will take different forms during the **validation/periodic programme review** process as follows:

- By seeking students' views in order to inform the Self-Evaluation Document or Design and Delivery Overview document.
- By identifying a small group of students to meet/engage with the panel during the **validation/periodic programme review** process.
- By appointing a student to act as a full member of the **validation/review** panel.

59. Engagement with students is only one dimension of the process and should be considered in the context of interactions with the teaching team, External Examiners and other relevant stakeholders (employers, PSRBs etc.). The University has a number of formal mechanisms in place to seek student feedback, for example, the National Student Survey (NSS), the UK Engagement Survey (UKES), the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Liverpool John Moores University module appraisal, programme Boards of Study and Staff/Student Liaison Committees.

60. If information, that is relevant to the development/review of a programme(s), has been identified via these mechanisms, then programme teams should consider how this feedback can be used during the **validation/periodic programme review** process. In addition, programme teams should consider further means of involving students in developing/reviewing a programme(s), for example focus groups.

61. For **validation**, the student perspective should be used to inform discussions about the development of a new programme, and their input should be sought early in the planning and development phase of the **validation** process. Informal information gathering may take place as early as programme teams feel they are ready to share their plans with students. The focus will be concerned with actively engaging students, currently studying programmes in a cognate area (where available), on all aspects of the programme to be validated. This could include module content, programme aims, delivery, assessment, resources, academic and pastoral support, and professional accreditation opportunities. Possible questions could include, but are not limited to:

- Would students consider applying to the new programme currently being developed?
- What factors would influence their decision to study the programme (for example, title, module structure, syllabus content, course fees etc.)?
- What is good about this programme?
- Do they think the balance between different aspects of the programme is appropriate?
- Are there any particular topics/subject areas that students would expect to see incorporated within the programme not currently covered by the proposed modules?
- Are there any skills not included that they would expect to see on a programme in this subject discipline?
- What do they think about the assessment types and loading/balance on the programme, and the opportunities for formative and summative feedback?
- Do they think the proposed programme will prepare students for the job market?
- If it is a postgraduate programme, what do the students regard as the main benefits gained from studying for a postgraduate degree?

- Would they consider postgraduate study at the University following completion of their undergraduate degree?

62. For **periodic programme review**, the focus of student engagement will be concerned with requesting input from current students and, where possible, alumni, especially those who are employed in related areas. The development of the self-evaluation should prompt specific lines of enquiry. However, students should also be encouraged to provide less directed feedback. Possible questions could include, but are not limited to:

- What is good about the programme(s)?
- Do they think the balance between different aspects of the programme(s) is appropriate?
- Are there any particular topics/subject areas that students would expect to see incorporated within the programme(s) not currently covered by the modules?
- Are there any modules where it is not clear how these contribute to the programme(s)?
- Are there any skills not included that they would expect to see on a programme in this subject discipline?
- What do they think about the assessment types and loading/balance on the programme(s) and the opportunities for formative and summative feedback?
- How well do they think the programme(s) prepares students for the job market?
- Have the programme team(s) addressed student feedback?
- In what ways do they think that students contribute to the programme and its development?

63. It is acknowledged that **collaborative partners** will have their own mechanisms to receive feedback from students and these should be used to inform the **validation/periodic programme review** process.

#### *Evidencing student input*

64. Programme teams should outline the activities and outcomes of student involvement in the development phase within the Design and Delivery Overview (**validation**) or the Self-Evaluation Document (**periodic programme review**).

#### *Student involvement at the validation/periodic programme review event*

65. If the **validation/periodic programme review** is to be conducted face-to-face, virtually or via the hybrid model, then the panel will normally meet with a sample of students. This is a private meeting with the panel, so no members of the programme team can be present. Comments made by students during the meeting will not be attributed to any individuals. Usually, the panel would like to meet between 5-10 students from a variety of levels/modes of study (where applicable). Discussions in this meeting give the panel an opportunity to gain the perspective of students and may also provide an opportunity to triangulate with the discussions from the meetings with the programme team and senior management. Whilst it is desirable to include a meeting with students, the event may go ahead in the absence of a student meeting if it has not been possible to secure student attendance, and evidence of student engagement, during the development/evaluation phase, has been received by the panel.

66. The panel will ask students questions about a wide range of areas, including their views on admission, induction, the learning experience, student support, the quality and usefulness of programme documents, assessment, feedback on work, student feedback

mechanisms, the accessibility of the curriculum for all students, and the availability and quality of learning resources and study space. Students will also be given the opportunity to raise and discuss other issues that they believe are relevant to the **validation/periodic programme review** process.

67. If the process is conducted as a desk-based activity, as part of their feedback, panel members are asked to identify, as applicable, questions for which a response from students is required. Should questions of this nature be raised, it is the responsibility of programme teams to obtain these responses. However, to support programme teams in undertaking this task, they are also permitted to confirm to the Event Officer a sample of students who would be willing to be contacted as part of the process. In these instances, the Event Officer will then liaise with the identified students in order to obtain responses to the panel's questions.
68. It is the programme team's responsibility to secure students to participate in the process of **validation/periodic programme review** and to ensure their engagement.

*Appointing a student to act as a full panel member*

69. The applicable programme team or partner will be asked to identify a student to join the panel as a full member. This student should normally be a programme representative or an Academic Interest Representative from a cognate area, but should not normally be affiliated to the programme area under consideration. In-line with other panel members, they will be provided with the documentation by the Event Officer. Their role is to offer a student perspective on the proposal and to assist the panel in identifying lines of enquiry that may directly impact upon the student experience. The Chair and Event Officer will brief the student panel member, at the start of the process, and support them during the course of the process to ensure their input is managed appropriately.



## Chapter 5: School Endorsement of Documentation

### *Purpose*

70. The School endorsement stage is a technical review of the draft submission. The purpose of this aspect of the process is to ensure the appropriateness of the submission prior to it being received by the panel.

### *Process*

71. Under the direction of the relevant Director of School<sup>19</sup> arrangements will be put in place to review and endorse draft documentation, at School-level, to proceed to institutional **validation** or **periodic programme review**. Specifically, how this review is operationalised is at the discretion of each Director of School<sup>20</sup>, but timescales for this activity must be determined by the agreed date the finalised documents are required to be submitted to the Event Officer.

72. The relevant Director of School<sup>21</sup> will identify who will undertake the review of the documentation within the School. To facilitate this review, the final draft of all required documentation should be submitted electronically by the programme team to the identified School reviewer(s), by the agreed deadline.

73. School endorsement confirms that:

- The proposal is in line with the expectations of the School, as agreed within the approved PPP (for programmes undergoing **validation**).
- The submission is aligned with the relevant University regulations and policies.
- A complete submission has been prepared and provided by the programme team.
- As applicable, any convergent activities (i.e., an application for variance, arrangements for entry with Advanced Standing, and, for Joint/Dual Awards, an Operational Framework) have been fully approved, and that appropriate evidence of approval is included within the submission.
- As required, the Assistant Academic Registrar has supported the School-level review and sign-off of the submission through the provision of advice and guidance to the Director of School, or nominee, particularly with regard to the Academic Framework and relevant Academic Policies.

74. If the **validation/periodic programme review** activity necessitates the involvement of a PSRB, the relevant Director of School should also approve all documentation, required by the PSRB, within the planned activities and deadlines for the **validation/periodic programme review** process.

75. The Director of School<sup>22</sup>, will complete a declaration, utilising the agreed [template](#), confirming that the submission has been reviewed, and is appropriate to proceed to

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<sup>19</sup> For collaborative programmes this must be the Liverpool John Moores University Director of School.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

institutional approval. The completed School declaration must be supplied to the Event Officer alongside the **validation/periodic programme review** documentation.

76. Following completion of the School endorsement stage, the programme team will provide the Event Officer with an electronic copy of the full submission (normally via email), including the completed School declaration.

## Chapter 6: The Validation/Periodic Programme Review Process

77. The process will be facilitated using one of the following approaches:

- A face-to-face event.
- A virtual event, via video conferencing software.
- Desk-based, via correspondence.
- A hybrid model, utilising a combination of both the desk-based approach and virtual event.

78. The approach selected will be determined by the nature and specific circumstances of the proposal. It is expected that most programmes undergoing either **validation** or **periodic programme review** will adopt the virtual approach. **Degree Apprenticeship** programmes will always adopt the face-to-face or virtual approach to facilitate the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. **Validations/periodic programme reviews of collaborative provision** will always take place via face-to-face event or an event utilising the hybrid model of validation/review. Regardless of which approach is decided upon, it should be agreed with all relevant stakeholders from the outset

79. Regardless of the model utilised, appropriate opportunities are facilitated for collegiate engagement, regarding the proposal, between the programme team, senior management from the School(s), partner, students, employers, PSRB and a panel of academic peers. To do this, the panel reads the full set of documentation, provided by the programme team, and submits advanced comments to the Event Officer.

80. Whichever approach is utilised to conduct the **validation** or **periodic programme review**, should the panel wish to see physical resources as part of their consideration of a programme, this can be facilitated through mechanisms such as photographs and/or videos of applicable resources. In addition, if required/requested, arrangements will be made for the panel to access/view learning resources, i.e., learning materials or recorded taught sessions uploaded to a Virtual Learning Environment and/or a demonstration of the Virtual Learning Environment.

81. For events facilitated face-to-face or via video conferencing software, the panel will be asked to provide advanced comments on their review of the submission. These comments will be collated by the Event Officer, and will be used to inform the agenda for the meetings. Comments will be shared with the programme team, in advance of the event, in order to promote transparency and aid preparation.

82. The desk-based correspondence model mitigates against the lack of face-to-face discussions, and ensures the rigour of the process is not affected, by using enhanced paperwork, which has been developed to facilitate clear and robust dialogue between the **validation/periodic programme review** panel and the programme team, and vice versa. All panel members are required to comment on a range of themes, including the programme's alignment with the University's and national expectations of standards and quality, alignment to appropriate University policies and external frameworks/benchmarks, the quality and appropriateness of students' learning opportunities, and identified features of innovative/ good practice. This approach is also utilised by the hybrid model of validation/review.

83. For **collaborative programmes**, there may be instances where the situation is more complex, for example, the programme will be delivered over a number of different sites.

In these instances, the University will wish to consider the site(s) of delivery before delivery of the University's programme(s) commences there. The [Additional or New Site process](#) should be used to establish the site approval mechanism, using a risk based approach.

84. When an existing programme(s) reaches the end of its approval period and requires **periodic programme review**, consideration should be given to the number of sites where the programme(s) is being delivered and the approval mechanism to continue approval of all required sites.
85. If a programme(s) is moving from an existing site to a new site, the site approval activity **must** always be completed before teaching at the new site begins.

*The validation/periodic programme review panel*

86. Panels will be secured by Academic Registry, with the exception of external and student panel members, who should be nominated by the programme team. With the exception of the student panel member, all panel members will normally hold academic positions. The University's panels have delegated authority to make decisions regarding the (re)-approval of programmes on behalf of Academic Board.
87. A panel should normally comprise:
- Chair from a different School than the programme(s) under consideration.
  - One University representative from a different School than the programme(s) under consideration.
  - One student representative.
  - One external panel member (a second external can be nominated depending on the size, complexity or level of expertise required for the proposal, for example to ensure appropriate practice expertise is represented where the panel is considering a **Degree Apprenticeship**).
  - One Event Officer.
88. All University panel members will be invited to a briefing session organised by Academic Registry. This briefing session provides an introduction for those that are new to the process, and for experienced panel members to share their experiences and for their own updating. Academic Registry will maintain a record of all staff who have attended a briefing session.

*Role of panel members*

89. Further information on the role of each panel member can be found [here](#).

*The responsibilities of the panel*

90. **Validation** and **periodic programme review** panels are responsible for:
- Ensuring that appropriate evidence has been used to evaluate the programme(s).
  - Considering the effectiveness of methods used to evaluate the programme(s).
  - Ensuring that programme teams have completed a thorough self-evaluation.
  - Ensuring that the conclusions of the self-evaluation are appropriately addressed through proposed amendments.

- Assessing that the programme(s) meets/continues to meet the University's and national expectations of standards and quality.
- Ensuring that students will be/are provided with the learning opportunities to achieve identified and agreed intended learning outcomes.
- Assessing that the programme(s) will/does facilitate opportunities for students to achieve beyond threshold standards.
- Ensuring that the programme is in line/remains in line with national expectations and national benchmarks.
- Exploring issues relating to the development of the discipline, the (ongoing) validity and appropriateness of the structure and content of the programme.
- Ensuring adherence to University policies.
- Identifying evidence of good practice in the design and delivery overview/self-evaluation document that is worthy of dissemination and recommending methods of dissemination.
- Ensuring that resources, staffing and facilities are appropriate and adequate to deliver the programme(s).
- Assessing the appropriateness of student support mechanisms.
- Ensuring that the programme(s) is effectively managed (or will be) and is appropriately aligned to applicable external requirements and reference points, for example the FHEQ.
- Identifying good and innovative practice in design and delivery.

91. In addition, for **Degree Apprenticeships only**, panels will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the programme, including the training provision, constitutes an appropriate preparation to enable apprentices to meet the nationally approved Apprenticeship Standard of occupational competence.
- Ensuring the 'behaviours' required as an outcome of an apprenticeship are reflected in the programme and module learning outcomes.
- Ensuring that there are clear arrangements for how the apprentice will be supported in the workplace to develop the duties, knowledge, skills and behaviours specified in the Apprenticeship Standard.
- Considering how the University will work with employers to ensure that the working environment within which apprentices are operating is appropriate to enable them to develop the required duties, knowledge, skills and behaviours for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.
- Ensuring there are opportunities to assess apprentices' progress against the required Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.
- Ensuring that the programme meets the requirements of the relevant Assessment Plan and, where appropriate, the University demonstrates independence of the process for EPA (if it is an integrated Degree Apprenticeship).
- Ensuring that an End-Point Assessment Organisation has been appointed in a timely manner (where applicable).

### *Documentation for the panel*

92. Academic Registry will prepare the documentation for the panel, which will comprise a briefing pack and the documentation set out in Chapter 3.

93. The briefing pack will contain:

- The itinerary for the event<sup>23</sup> and a list of panel members.
- Briefing paper (for collaborative events and events involving a PSRB only).
- Advance comments template for panel members.
- Guidance for Validation and Periodic Programme Review.
- Overview of roles and responsibilities of participants.
- Programme Proposal Proforma (validation only).
- Completed School declaration.
- Fee/expense claim form (external panel members only).

94. The programme team and Director of School will receive details of the agenda for the day<sup>24</sup> and details of panel membership from the Event Officer. For programmes that include cross-School or Faculty staff, the Programme Leader should ensure representation from all areas.

### *Involvement of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)*

95. Where possible, the timing of **validation/periodic programme review** activity should be aligned to the timing of any accreditation/re-accreditation/monitoring activity required by a PSRB.

96. Professional body input into the process will have been confirmed at the planning stage. If the purpose of the **validation/periodic programme review** is also to obtain professional recognition, the PSRB may require representation on the panel, and this must be discussed with the PSRB to ensure compliance. It is normally appropriate for the PSRB representative(s) to act as the external panel member. This should be discussed with the Event Officer.

97. When planning conjoint **validation/periodic programme review** and accreditation/re-accreditation/monitoring activity, it will be assessed if it will be possible to waive some of the requirements of the University's **validation/periodic programme review** process, should there be identified cross-over/duplication with the PSRB's process. Requests to waive aspects of the University's standard processes should be made to the Head of Quality and Standards, and approval will **only** be granted in instances where the PSRB's process is judged to be at least as rigorous and robust as the University's.

98. For further information on engaging with PSRBs, during the **validation/periodic programme review process**, please see the University's [Guidance for Engagement with PSRBs](#).

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<sup>23</sup> Event-based validations only (face-to-face, virtual or hybrid).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

### *Validation of programmes using shared modules*

99. If applicable, the programme team will have included information about the programme's use of shared modules in its Design and Delivery Overview (**validation**) or Self-Evaluation Document (**periodic programme review**). The panel will be alerted to this by the Event Officer, and advised that these are existing, validated modules. However, should the panel identify any actions for consideration by the team that affect these modules, and these actions are more fundamental than simple typographical corrections, then these should normally be expressed within the outcomes as recommendations rather than conditions of approval. This provides an opportunity for all affected programmes to consider the recommendation and discuss the most appropriate response. This may, or may not, lead to the module(s) in question being updated for all programmes they contribute to, using the University's process for programme and module amendments (as described in Chapter 9).

## Chapter 7: Outcomes of Validation or Periodic Programme Review

100. For event-based **validations** or **periodic programme reviews**<sup>25</sup>, the panel will formulate its decision and the Chair will communicate this to the programme team at the end of the event. This will include a summary of any conditions, and associated deadlines, recommendations and identified good practice. The standard period of approval that the panel can agree is five years. For programmes with **new collaborative partners** the standard period of approval is three years.
101. For a **validation** or **periodic programme review** conducted by correspondence, panel members are required to identify specific questions that they wish to explore with the programme team in order to make a decision on approval. The totality of this feedback is shared with the Chair for consideration in advance of it being shared with the programme team. The questions to be explored with the programme team are then collated into a single template by the Event Officer. The template contains provision for:
- The programme team to provide a response to each of the panel's questions.
  - Panel members to confirm their satisfaction with each of the programme team's responses.
  - Panel members to confirm their view on whether the programme should be approved/re-approved, and whether approval/re-approval should be subject to conditions.
  - Once the final outcomes have been shared with the programme team, the agreed post-event activities are undertaken in line with the guidance provided in Chapter 8.
102. There are three possible outcomes of **validation** or **periodic programme review**:
- Approval/re-approval, with/without conditions and/or recommendations for five years (three years if the programme is with a new collaborative partner).
  - Approval/re-approval for a fixed period less than five (three) years, with detailed reasons; with/without conditions and/or recommendations.
  - Rejection, with detailed reasons.
103. A positive approval decision confirms that:
- The threshold academic standards of the programme(s) are consistent with the relevant national qualifications framework, and the programme(s) will provide students with the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level.
  - The value of qualifications awarded to students is in line with sector-recognised standards.
  - Where applicable, the programme(s) aligns with relevant subject benchmark statements, PSRB requirements and degree level Apprenticeship Standards.
  - The programme(s) is current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline and developments in teaching and learning. It/they will provide a high quality academic experience for all students and enable students' achievements to be reliably assessed.
  - The programme(s) has been designed in line with the University's Academic Framework Regulations and relevant University policies. Where applicable,

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



any variances to the Academic Framework have been clearly articulated and these have been approved according to University procedures.

- The programme(s) contains appropriate assessment opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the award(s).
  - There is sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources, student support services and appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
104. Any conditions arising from **validation** or **periodic programme review** will be detailed points of action that must be fulfilled satisfactorily by an agreed date. The panel and the Chair will agree how responses to conditions will be considered, whether by the whole panel or by approval of the Chair only.
105. Any recommendations are not requirements, but should be suggestions that the panel believe would improve the proposal.
106. Innovative practice should relate to processes or ways of working that make a positive contribution to the assurance of academic standards, the quality of the learning opportunities for students, the quality of resources, and the quality of the information produced about the programme(s).
107. Commendations may relate to the quality of documentation, and staff/student involvement in the **validation** or **periodic programme review** process.
108. Panel members and the programme team will be asked to provide feedback after the **validation/periodic programme review** process has concluded, in order to identify any suggested enhancements and/or any features of good practice arising from the process.

## Chapter 8: Post-Validation or Periodic Programme Review Activity

109. **Post-validation/periodic programme review** sign-off will be co-ordinated between the Event Officer, the Chair of the panel and the Assistant Academic Registrar. The Event Officer will liaise with the panel Chair and confirm to the Assistant Academic Registrar when the conditions of **validation** or **periodic programme review** have been signed-off.

### *Validation/periodic programme review outcomes*

110. The outcomes of the process will normally be written immediately by the Event Officer for approval by the Chair and/or the full panel, and sent to the programme team for completion of any necessary action(s).
111. The **validation/periodic programme review** report will be circulated to the panel for approval, and final sign-off will be confirmed by the Chair to the Event Officer. Once approved by the panel, the report will then be sent to the programme team, Director of School, Head of Operations, Faculty Marketing Manager, Faculty Student Recruitment and Admissions Manager, Library Services, Assistant Academic Registrar, and filed electronically by Academic Registry.

### *Responses to conditions and sign-off*

112. All responses to conditions should be returned to the Event Officer, by the programme team, who will ensure they are approved through the process agreed by the panel. If further action is identified, this will be relayed to the programme team with a new timescale for the production of the further information. If a response to the conditions is not received by the relevant deadline, this will be reported to VROP for consideration. Failure to comply with conditions means that the programme details are not updated on the student database and that the programme is not in approval and cannot run or have students enrolled on it.
113. In exceptional circumstances, in the absence of the Chair, the response to the conditions can be approved by the Academic Registrar. Where there are discipline specific elements to the conditions, approval by the Academic Registrar will be subject to confirmation from the external panel member that the applicable conditions have been addressed appropriately.

### *Programme specification and module proformas*

114. Following confirmation that any identified conditions have been addressed appropriately, the applicable module proformas and programme specification(s) should be submitted, via ModCat and ProdCat, for approval by the Programme Leader and/or relevant Module Leaders. For **collaborative programmes**, submission of the programme specification(s) and module proformas will be facilitated by the applicable Liverpool John Moores University School on behalf of the partner. Approval of module proformas and programme specification(s), within ModCat and ProdCat, is undertaken by the relevant Assistant Academic Registrar.
115. Publication of the programme specification on ProdCat will be confirmed by Academic Registry.

116. Once the programme specification has been published by Academic Registry, the programme is regarded as 'live' and the Admissions Team or partner is able to make offers to applicants.

*Responses to recommendations*

117. Recommendations are not requirements, but they are suggestions that may necessitate action by the programme team. After the programme's first year of operation, it is expected that programme teams address recommendations through the Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement process (please refer to the [Guidance for Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement](#) for further details). It is expected that the programme team will indicate how the recommendations have been considered and whether (or not) any action is being taken to incorporate them in the programme.

*Production of definitive documentation*

118. One of the outcomes of the **validation/periodic programme review** process will be the production of definitive documentation, and this will include all the documentation considered by the panel in forming its conclusions.
119. For **internal provision**, the definitive documentation will be compiled by the Event Officer.
120. For **collaborative programmes**, the programme team should provide the Event Officer with a complete set of the definitive documentation, electronically, by the date specified in the event report.
121. The definitive documentation will be stored by Academic Registry.

*Validation Report and Event Completion Form*

122. In order to confirm completion of the **validation/periodic programme review** process, post-event activity will be summarised and reported to VROP via receipt of the **validation/periodic programme review** report (or Event Completion Form for collaborative programmes), which is completed by the Event Officer. The report is regarded as the formal record of the process and it will be filed by the Event Officer alongside the definitive documentation.
123. Academic Registry will update the University's WebHub tool with the date of approval/re-approval and next periodic programme review date.

For **collaborative programmes**, the Event Completion Form will be sent to the programme team, partner, Faculty Head of Operations, Assistant Academic Registrar, Director of School and International Partnerships Manager (where appropriate).

*Factfile*

124. For internal programmes, the Factfile will be finalised, post-**validation/periodic programme review**, by the Faculty Marketing Manager and Programme Leader utilising the programme information contained within the definitive programme documentation, which will be made available by Academic Registry.

### *The Contract*

125. For **collaborative programmes**, the contract with the partner institution will only be signed once the Event Completion Form has been signed off.

## Chapter 9: Changes to the Programme Between Validation and Review

126. Any subsequent changes required to the programme between the **validation** and next **periodic programme review**, will require approval by the appropriate University/Faculty committee (please see [Guidance for Programme and Module Amendments](#) for a summary of the procedure for making changes).
127. For **Articulation Agreements**, if a change is made to the partner or home award between events, this will require consideration through the appropriate FQAEC, to confirm whether the changes impact on the appropriateness of the articulation/recognition agreement. The Quality Enhancement Officer (QEO)/Quality Support Officer (QSO)/Collaborative Provision Team will advise if a re-mapping is required as part of the approval.
128. For **Franchise programmes**, when the internal University **periodic programme review** takes place, mid-approval cycle, for the partner programme, the Collaborative Provision Team will be informed by the QEO/QSO of any changes made to the programme, and will evaluate what quality assurance activity needs to take place with the partner institution to ensure that they can continue to run the programme.

## Chapter 10: Institutional Oversight

### *Validation and Review Oversight Panel*

129. A copy of the **validation/periodic programme review** report/Event Completion Form should be circulated to the Secretary of VROP as soon as possible after it has been confirmed. The panel is a sub-group of the University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC), is chaired by the Head of Quality and Standards, and normally meets three times per year in order to monitor **validation** and **periodic programme review** activity across the University and its collaborative partners. Its terms of reference can be found [here](#).

### *Institutional overview report*

130. The Head of Quality and Standards will produce an institutional overview report of validation and review activity. This will include the key issues and recommendations arising from VROP's scrutiny of validation and review activity.