

**Student Learning & Experience Committee**

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| **Guidance for Panel Members for the Validation of Courses** |

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**GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS**

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| **AAA** | Additional Assessment Attempt |
| **AEF** | Academic Enhancement Framework |
| **AFP** | Assessment & Feedback Policy |
| **AIW** | Advanced Independent Work |
| **AWMF** | Academic Workload Management Framework |
| **BAME** | Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic |
| **CAD** | Course Approval Document |
| **CAMS** | Credit Accumulation & Modular Scheme |
| **CDE** | Course Design Event |
| **CEN** | Course Evaluation Narrative |
| **CMA** | Competition and Marketing Authority |
| **CME** | Continuous Monitoring & Enhancement |
| **DBS** | Disclosure and Barring Service |
| **EE** | External Examining |
| **EESC** | External Examiner Sub-Committee |
| **EFSA** | Education & Skills Funding Agency |
| **EPA** | End Point Assessment |
| **FHEQ** | Framework for Higher Education Qualifications |
| **GL** | Guided Learning |
| **PAs** | Professional Apprenticeships |
| **HE** | Higher Education |
| **IfATE** | Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education |
| **KSBs** | Knowledge, Skills & Behaviours |
| **LAD** | Location Approval Document |
| **LTAS** | Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy |
| **LTSP** | Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan |
| **OL** | Online Learning |
| **PASS** | Peer Assisted Study Scheme |
| **PD** | Portfolio Development |
| **PDP** | Portfolio Development Planning |
| **PSRB** | Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body |
| **QAA** | Quality Assurance Agency |
| **RLO** | Reading List Online |
| **RoEPAO** | Register of End Point Assessment Organisations |
| **RPL** | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| **RPCL** | Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning |
| **RPEL** | Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning |
| **SLAR (QAV)** | Student Learning & Academic Registry (Quality Assurance and Validation) |
| **SLEC** | Student Learning & Experience Committee |
| **SSLESC** | School Student Learning & Experience Sub-Committee |
| **SLS** | Student & Library Services |
| **TEF** | Teaching Excellence & Student Outcomes Framework |
| **TQT** | Total Qualification Time |
| **TU** | Teesside University |
| **USP** | Unique Selling Point |
| **VLE** | Virtual Learning Environment |
| **WPL** | **Workplace Learning** |

# PREFACE

# Brief Overview - QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education

The QAA UK Quality Code provides a set of guiding principles, expectations and practices, which Higher Education Institutions must consider when designing, and approving courses.

The Quality Code includes the following components:

* **Setting and maintaining threshold academic standards** describes the various aspects of how academic standards are set and maintained for HE qualifications awarded by degree-awarding bodies.
* **Advice and Guidance on the following aspects:**
* Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access;
* Assessment;
* Course Design and Development;
* Enabling Student Achievement;
* Learning and Teaching;
* Work-based Learning;
* Enabling Student Achievement;
* Student Engagement;
* Monitoring and Evaluation and
* Partnerships.

Teesside University has mapped its practices against the UK Quality Code, ensuring alignment, and has reflected these within the University’s policies and procedures. Staff members need to be aware of the general expectations of all the various elements of the Quality Code, and they should be familiar with the relevant University policies and procedures which have been informed by the code and ensure that these have been referred to and/or incorporated into course design as detailed below.

* University Level Descriptors (2022), which are based on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
* University Credit Accumulation & Modular Scheme (CAMS) Framework (see[**Credit Accumulation & Modular Scheme Framework**](https://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/DocRepo/Quality%20framework/CAMS.doc)of the Quality Framework).
* Relevant University Regulations.
* Assessment & Feedback Policy (see [**Assessment & Feedback Policy**](https://extra.tees.ac.uk/sites/publicdocuments/Legal%20and%20Governance%20Services/Assessment%20and%20Feedback%20Policy.pdf)).
* Academic Enhancement Framework (AEF).
* Principles for Academic Delivery (Undergraduate and TU London)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This Guide is relevant for the validation of new courses and the review of all Teesside University (TU) awards, including those with Partners to assure academic quality and standards, with approved UK public sector institutions, employers and international providers.

The University has specific processes for the validation of both new courses and course reviews. Courses normally run on a 6 yearly cycle as detailed in the Quality Framework, [**Chapter C: Course Design, Development and Validation**](https://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/DocRepo/Quality%20framework/C-Course%20Design,%20Development%20and%20Approval.doc)

The process consists initially of:

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| **A Course First Critical Read Event** |

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| **A formal Course Approval/Periodic Review Event** |

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| **Consideration of Course Documentation** |

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| **Production of a Validation Event Report which:**   * **Confirms that the University’s Validation process has been followed appropriately and will formally approve the course.** * **Includes the response to conditions and recommendations to inform the University Academic Registrar who will confirm approval.** |

The purpose is to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning and teaching. During the Course First Critical Read provisional approval of modules and course documentation is considered, prior to progression to the formal Validation Event for Course Approval/Periodic Review.

This guidance initially considers **two aspects of the process** the Course First Critical Read Panel members should focus on**:**

1. The **Course First** **Critical Read**.
2. The **Provisional Approval of** **the Module Diet**.

The guidance provided has been developed from good practice derived from both internal and sector practice, to support and ensure the oversight of quality and academic standards during this stage.

**Module Diet Approval:**

The diet of modules included within the course are normally given due consideration via the Course First Critical Read which takes place prior to the formal validation event and will have provisionally approved the diet of modules.

The Course Approval/Periodic Review Event Panel will be required to approve the diet of modules for the course(s) under consideration. Guidance has been produced to support the development and approval of modules and is included in this guidance for approving new modules.

The validation focuses on the Course Team’s approach to setting, maintaining and enhancing academic quality and standards and on evidence of the students’ ability to achieve those standards through the learning opportunities and support provided to them.

**Course Approval:**

The starting point for the course validation is the development of a Course Approval Document (CAD) by Course Teams with a supporting File of Evidence.

**Periodic Review:**

Is designed to build explicitly on the Continuous Monitoring & Enhancement process (CME) and to draw conclusions from existing sources of information about the current provision. An Action Plan is developed that forms the basis of the revisions that have then been made to the course and identifies Recommendations, which will guide course enhancements in future years.

The starting point for the review is annual monitoring supplemented by the Course Evaluation Narrative (CEN) with a supporting File of Evidence.

**Location Approval:**

Is undertaken when an existing approved partner institution wishes to deliver a validated TU award. Further information can be found in **Chapter E** of the Quality Framework.

**Validation Judgements:**

The validation process for new course(s)/review/location approval results in a judgement of two aspects:

1. The academic provision in terms of the confidence that can be reasonably placed in the Course Team’s present and future management of the quality of the course(s) for which it is responsible.
2. The academic standards of the associated award.

## 1.1 Guidance for the New Course Approval Event

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| The Course Team have been given a set of standard document templates to complete which set out the minimum information requirements. |
| The main focus of the approval process is the Course Specification and the Course Handbook, which should provide most of the information required by Panel Members. |
| The Course Approval Document (CAD) should provide the Panel with a concise narrative on the course development and design, utilisation of external and internal sources and support mechanisms for example, to deliver and ensure a responsive and consistent student learning and teaching experience, and should be accompanied by a File of Evidence. |
| There will be a completed course structure, assessment chart, map of course outcomes to modules, and level outcomes chart. Panel members will also receive a copy of the diet of modules. |
| The CVs of key members of the Course Team will be made available at the Approval Event. |

## 1.2 Guidance for the Location Approval

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| The partner Course Team have been given a set of standard document templates to complete which set out the minimum information requirements. |
| The main focus of the Location Approval process is the local contextualisation and delivery of the TU validated parent award, supported by the Collaborative Provision Course(s) Location Visit statement, Operations Manual and Course Handbook, which should provide most of the information required by Panel Members. |
| The Location Approval Document (LAD) should provide the Panel with a concise narrative on how the TU validated parent award will be delivered and quality assured to ensure a responsive and equivalent student learning and teaching experience, and should be accompanied by a File of Evidence. |
| There will be a completed course structure and assessment chart, which should align with the TU delivered parent award. The Panel members will also receive a copy of the diet of modules. |
| The CVs of key members of the Course Team will be made available at the Location Approval Event. |

## 1.3 Guidance for the Periodic Review Event

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| The Course Team have been given guidance detailing the requirements for the production of a satisfactory annual monitoring and Course Evaluation Narrative (CEN).  Rather than being a detailed discursive document developed solely for the purpose of the review activity. |
| The CEN should be a detailed but concise document that is supported by a File of Evidence containing existing documents. The CEN should not re-present data that has already been discussed in the Annual Monitoring but should summarise trends, making reference to student metrics (applications, enrolments, continuation rates and classifications etc.), across the years and identify further actions that may be necessary. |
| The Periodic Review Event will focus on the course evaluation process and the Action Plan that has resulted from this. |
| Panel Members will receive some information in hard copy to review in detail and all the information including the File of Evidence; in an electronic format, Panel members arenot expected to review the File of Evidence and modules in detail. The information is provided in order that any issues raised in the CEN or review of particular module(s) can be followed up, as required. |
| Panel members will be presented with the minimum set of documentation. The revised Course Specification will give an overview of the course in its entirety and the Course Handbook will give an overview of the course from the students’ perspective. |
| Continuous Monitoring & Enhancement and CEN should provide a concise account on the evolution of the course since its last approval/periodic review exercise, enhancements undertaken and their impact, and signpost Panel members to where key information can be located and gives the Course Team the opportunity to provide any additional relevant information. |
| There will be a completed course structure, assessment chart, map of course outcomes to modules and level outcomes chart. |
| The CVs of key members of the Course Team will be made available at the Review Event. |

# 2. PREPARATION FOR THE COURSE FIRST CRITICAL READ EVENT

The purpose of the Course First Critical Read is set out in the Quality Framework [**Chapter C: Course Design, Development and Validation**](https://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/DocRepo/Quality%20framework/C-Course%20Design,%20Development%20and%20Approval.doc), **section 6.1–6.2**. Also clearly articulated in the documents is the recommended Course First Critical Read Event Panel constitution.

**Guidance for Course First Critical Read Panels**

The following recommended guidance has been provided to help the Course First Critical Read Panel support the Course Team in meeting the requirements of the next stage of the formal validation for Course Approval and Periodic Review.

* This document, should be used as a guide by the Course First Critical Read Panel to thoroughlytest the viability, academic rigour and student experience of the course(s) proposed or due for Periodic Review.
* You will be provided with the ‘**Themes for Discussion and Conclusion’** pages which provide the template to guide the discussion. Key discussion points have been highlighted in bold and these should be the focus of the Panel.
* The **outcome** of the Course First Critical Read should be the production of a recommended/advisable Action Sheet, which clearly highlights the changes required to documentation and modules and by when.
* The Course Team should fully address all actions prior to submission of the final documentation prior to proceeding to the formal validation event.

**Module Approval**

The **function** **of the Course First Critical Read** is to provisionally **approve** the module diet according to institutionally agreed requirements (CAMS, AFP and Assessment Regulations). Therefore, the Course First Critical Read Panel will seek to ensure that:

* Academic standard (level) and sustainability of modules.
* Coherence (vertical and horizontal structure) and subject specificity.
* The nature and inclusivity of assessments in the overall design, that assessment tariffs conform to the guidance provided in the Academic Workload Management Framework (AWMF).
* MVF Module Delivery Details are aligned with AWMF and UTREG LTAS and
* To confirm Module Tutors have drawn on all appropriate external references i.e. FHEQ, QAA Subject Benchmarks etc. internal University strategic agenda, academic regulations and guidance surrounding the design and delivery of modules.
* Appropriate consideration on the digital empowerment of learners.

Where the Panel are considering new pathway(s) the Panel should pay particular attention to:

* The appropriateness and distinctiveness of the new award, including course structure and learning and teaching strategy as appropriate.
* Any specific requirements relating to assessment and progression.
* The availability and appropriateness of resources to support the new development.
* The student experience on the new development.

The Panel as a minimum should therefore:

* Examine the coherence of the course structure e.g. sequencing.
* Ensure modules are subject specific, current and academically rigours in terms of level, against FHEQ and QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Characteristics.
* Modules include necessary delivery pattern data for publication and tally against the proposed or reviewed award(s) delivery period, please refer to the Academic Workload Management Framework, UTREG/MVFs.
* Additional Assessment Attempt and Variance to the course or module(s) has been tested for appropriateness.
* Modules have been designed taking into account protected characteristics. e.g. OIA and inclusivity guidance.
* PSRB, HN and Professional Apprenticeship mapping is examined to ensure depth of coverage of competencies/and or standards against module content and assessment.
* Formative and summative strategies are clearly articulated and address the needs of students with protected characteristics.
* For Periodic Reviews the views of current External Examiners should be sought as part of the review and provisional re-approval of modules.

# 3. PREPARATION FOR THE FORMAL VALIDATION EVENT

Panel members should review the documentation provided and complete the **Themes for Discussion and Conclusion pages,** which summarise the points Panel members may wish to discuss with the Course Team, and which will help the Panel Chair to construct an appropriate agenda.

During the Course Approval/Periodic Review process, consideration is given to these main themes:

* + The **rationale/consultation** for the course(s), including the **distinctive features**.
  + The course **curriculum**, its design, content, delivery and assessment.
  + The appropriateness of the **standards** set for the level of the award.
  + The suitability of human, physical and other learning **resources** to support the course(s).
  + The **student experience** offered by the course including opportunities for employment and further study for its graduates.
  + The way in which the course facilitates the **widest possible access** to ensure that all students can maximise their potential.

If further documentation or information is required prior to the event or documentation is incomplete, Panel Members should contact the Event Officer, whose contact details will be detailed on the email/letter of invitation to the Course Approval/Periodic Review Event.

# 4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The title approval (PD)/Course Costing process will have already considered the business case for the course and sought confirmation that resource issues have been addressed in the School/ Partner Institution planning cycle and/or Development Plan.

The Portfolio Development form (PD), if applicable, in the documentation, gives information about the business case/market intelligence, so Panel members will not be expected to explore this aspect in detail.

Course Teams will have been asked to:

* Incorporate the key features of the University’s/ Partner Institutions Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan, embracing Future Facing Learning (the University’s distinctive pedagogic approach) and the underpinning Academic Enhancement Framework;
* Reflect the Universities key strategies - Enterprise and Business Engagement Strategic Plan, International Strategic Plan and Research Strategy and Policy;
* Reflect the University’s level descriptors (2022) and address Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) qualification characteristics statements and relevant QAA subject benchmarking statements.

Course documentation must therefore, clearly demonstrate how these requirements have been addressed and in particular the expectations of the AEF have been embedded.

# 5. USING THE THEMES FOR DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS PAGES – COURSE APPROVAL & COURSE REVIEW

The **Themes** **for Discussion and Conclusions** pagesfor Panel Members ensure that University requirements have been met, and that there is a consistent approach to the consideration of all University/Partner course proposals/periodic reviews. It will also help create an agenda of key discussion points for the meeting with the Course Team. The Course Team will have been provided with a guidance document to ensure that they take these features into account when developing courses.

The **Themes for Discussion and Conclusions pages** follows the student journey/course cycle rather than focusing individually on specific documents presented to the Panel. It provides a series of prompt questions to assist Panel Members when examining the extent to which major themes and key University strategic agenda have been taken into account in course design, development and review documentation.

Panel members will find it useful to review each document and then collate comments under the themed headings in the spaces provided in the **Themes for Discussion and Conclusions pages**.

Please also note that not all of the themes will be relevant to each proposal and the Panel is not expected to ask questions about all of them. Panel members will be asked to focus on the most relevant themes.

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| **Panel members will be required to complete the *Themes for Discussion and Conclusions* pages in advance and submit comments via the Event SharePoint site 48 hours prior to the meeting.** |

# 6. FORMAT OF THE COURSE APPROVAL/PERIODIC REVIEW EVENT

The Panel will consist of a range of colleagues both internal and external to the School/Partner Institution and University. The Panel will be chaired by a staff member who may work in the School (Internal Chair) where the course is associated or they may work in a different School or Department within the University (External to the School Chair). Most Panels will include a Student Panel Member and some Panels may include representatives of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRBs).

The validation event will normally take the following format:

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# 7. PANEL CONCLUSIONS

When reaching conclusions, the Panel must ensure that the course is consistent with the [**QAA UK Quality Code**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code).

The Panel will make recommendations to the Academic Registrar under the following headings:

## 7.1 Conclusion – Quality and Standards

This relates to the confidence that can be placed in the Course Team’s approach to setting, maintaining and enhancing academic quality and standards, and in the likelihood that the students will be able to achieve those standards through the learning opportunities and support provided to them.

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| **The judgement for Course Approval Events will be either:**  ***Approved*** – the course(s)/location can be recommended for approval. The normal approval period would be 6 years (indicating the mode of attendance, delivery location and method of delivery)  ***OR***  ***Not Approved*** – the course(s) cannot be recommended for approval. |

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| **The judgement for Periodic Review will be either:**  ***Approved*** – the course(s) may continue in approval. The normal approval period would be 6 years (indicating the mode of attendance, delivery location and method of delivery) unless an Interim or full Periodic Review was needed earlier  ***OR***  ***Not Approved*** – the course(s) may not continue in approval. |

**The period of approval can be shorter than 6 years to align with courses that form part of a subject cluster/framework or where accreditation bodies in international countries dictate a longer approval/review period e.g. Malaysia – 7 years.**

## 7.2 Conclusion – Periodic Review Process (only)

The Panel will be asked to consider whether or not the Course Team has undertaken a sufficiently robust and rigorous evaluation of the course, and has ensured that it remains current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline, practice in its application, and developments in teaching and learning.

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| **The judgement will be either:**  **No further action** required  ***OR***  **Further action** required to enhance the review process |

The latter judgement would be appropriate if following a review of the CEN and discussion with the Course Team, there is insufficient detail provided or evidence of rigour in the course review process. If further action is required to enhance the review process, then the course could still continue in approval, but would require a further Interim Review (see the Quality Framework, **Chapter C:** **Interim Review of Teesside University Taught Provision**).

## 7.3 Approval Period

Where the approval period is stated in years, a cohort (intake(s)) of students can be admitted during each year of the approval period. For example, where a course is approved for the standard University timeframe of 6 years, then intakes of students can take place for each of the 6 years that the course is in approval. The number of intakes per year and entry points e.g. September, February should be discussed at the event and can only be changed through the course modification process.

Where a different approval period is agreed, the Panel should specify this detail on the report form. (Example wording: Approved for two intakes of students for three years).

Where an **Interim Review** is required, the rationale and focus for this must be clearly articulated, and the **Interim Review Event: Summary of Requirements Form** completed. As an alternative the Panel can request, as part of the Recommendations, enhanced continuous monitoring and enhancement. The rationale and focus for this must be made clear in the Event Report.

## 7.4 Conclusions – Commendations

The Panel may wish to make a commendation(s), this is considered formal praise and support for the Course Team for undertaking practice that is considered above the norm e.g. employer engagement, collegiate approach to design and or delivery. Commendations are not the same as Transferrable Good Practice.

## 7.5 Conclusions – Transferable Good Practice

Panel members will be asked to identify aspects of the course which are particularly innovative or which represent transferable good practice e.g. inclusive teaching and learning interventions (e.g., multi-modal opportunities (lecture capture) which both increase participation from students with protected characteristics); mechanisms and interventions that increase attainment of higher award classifications; demonstrating positive impacts on employability (Graduate Outcomes); facilitating inclusive assessments for disabled, BAME students, and enhancement of quality and standards of teaching and learning i.e. increased NSS scores etc. Therefore, Panel members are requested to make a note ahead of the meeting of any aspects of the course which are particularly innovative or represent transferable good practice on the **Themes for Discussion and Conclusions** pages.

## 7.6 Conclusions – Conditions and Recommendations

The Panel may set Conditions (these **must** be addressed prior to the confirmation of ‘sign-off’ by the Academic Registrar, or, exceptionally, by a specified date after the commencement of the course).

Recommendations for further enhancement, matters for the School/Partner to consider/address, and matters for the University to consider/address will also form part of the Panel’s report.

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# 8. POST VALIDATION EVENT

An overview of the conclusions, including the conditions and recommendations, will be sent to Panel Members and the Course Team shortly after the event, followed by a more detailed report for comment.

The Chair will ensure that the Course Team has addressed the Conditions and responded appropriately to the Recommendations as well as confirming the Course Specification is fit for publication. Subsequently, Student Learning & Academic Registry (Quality Assurance and Validation) (SLAR (QAV)) will confirm that the Event Report has been checked for accuracy and completeness and the courses(s) can be recommended for formal sign-off by the Academic Registrar or nominee on behalf of the Student Learning and Experience Committee (SLEC).

The ‘subject to approval’ flag can be removed from marketing material following this stage of the process.

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| **Supporting Guidance for Panel Members in assuring the academic standards and quality of the student experience** |

# GUIDANCE ON LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION FOR STAFF DELIVERING LEVELS 3-8

The statement below describes TU’s approach to the level of qualification required to deliver at Levels 3-8, applicable to TU and Partner staff.

Where staff are working towards the required higher-level qualification, the timeframe for completion of that qualification should be considered in light of the proposed course delivery commitments and the wider teaching team.

Via standard University processes, such as Approval & Review and School Student Learning & Experience Sub-Committees [SSLESCs], the application of professional judgement is permissible when considering the equivalent professional qualifications/experience of staff and the composition of the wider Course Team.

**Levels 3-6:** It is expected that staff delivering courses at Levels 3-6 are qualified to at least one level above the level to which they are teaching. For example, staff delivering a Higher National Diploma/Foundation Degree would be qualified to at least Honours Degree (Level 6), and staff teaching on Undergraduate degree courses (Levels 4-6) would be qualified to at least Level 7. The Level 7 qualification would not usually solely be a specific HE teaching qualification, unless professionally relevant to the subject being taught.

**Level 7:** For staff delivering courses at Level 7 (Masters), it is expected staff would hold a Level 8 qualification, e.g. Doctorate either PhD or Professional Doctorate.

**Level 8:** For staff delivering courses at Level 8, it is expected they would be qualified at Level 8, unless they are solely delivering the professional practice related sections of a Professional Doctorate, in which case professional equivalence and experience should be considered, alongside the broader context of the Course Team.

# FUTURE FACING LEARNING AND tHEMES FOR DISCUSSION

**Please note**: Teesside University awards, including those which are franchised will follow the guiding principles in relation to Teesside University’s Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan (LTSP). Validated Partner Institutions will utilise their own institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy, ensuring its alignment with the University LTSP.

Panel members will be provided with the Themes for Discussion and Conclusion pages to complete prior to the Course Approval/Periodic Review Event (validation). It is intended to assist in setting the agenda for the event and to help focus discussions. The prompts are offered for guidance only and therefore Panel members may not want to comment on all themes, and may have other aspects that they would like to be explored.

The document is **not** structured around the specific documents you received as there may be information relating to aspects of the course across more than one document. Following a review of each document, it would be helpful if Panel members could collate feedback under the relevant headings in the document, as the Chair will use these to structure the validation agenda discussion. The likely source of information for each section is given in brackets for each section.

**Future Facing Learning**



Future Facing Learning is the distinctive pedagogic approach adopted by Teesside University. Future Facing Learning provides students with the skills, knowledge and tools to thrive in complex and uncertain futures, and achieve sustainable success within the global workplace.

* **RESEARCH ACTIVE:** Our students encounter the grand challenges of our time through research and professional practice.
* **FUTURE READY:** High quality, future ready graduates are developed through our commitment to industry relevance and entrepreneurship.
* **GLOBALLY CONNECTED:** Our students are globally connected through an internationalised curriculum and learning experience.
* **SOCIALLY AND ETHICALLY ENGAGED:** Our students engage meaningfully with social and ethical issues from local, national and international perspectives.
* **DIGITALLY EMPOWERED:** Our students are digitally empowered with the skills and tools to deliver global impact.

**Academic Enhancement Framework**

The Academic Enhancement Framework provides the structure through which Future Facing Learning, and other key strategic priorities, are embedded within academic practice. The AEF consists of the following themes:

1. Research Active
2. Future Ready
3. Globally Connected
4. Socially and Ethically Engaged
5. Digitally Empowered
6. Student Voice
7. Student Success
8. Transitions
9. Wellbeing

Each theme is the subject of an AEF matrix which provides a set of key principles and outlines the trajectory from expectation through to excellence.

The University is advocating a Course First approach to the design and development of curricula. The approach places emphasis on the overall coherence and connectedness of learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment practices at the scale of the course. Such a course-focused view helps to frame curriculum and assessment design to fully consider the learning journey and experience of the student. There are three core considerations:

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| **A** | **Approach(es):** Learning, Teaching and Assessment approaches and methods selected for best fit with course learning outcomes, including knowledge/skills development and learner autonomy. |
| **B** | **Balance:** Course diet includes a variety of modes and methods of learning, teaching and assessment, providing an appropriate mix of formative and summative activities, paying particular attention to the quantity and timing of assessment to promote student learning development. |
| **C** | **Coherence:** Alignment of assessment, learning outcomes and teaching and learning activities is established and clearly communicated. Learning and teaching practices are consistent across levels of study and assessment and feedback processes are designed to create connectivity between modules and tasks across and along the entire programme (vertically and horizontally). |

To support staff embed the 3 core considerations (A, B and C) of the Course First Approach in course design and development, staff will have completed a Curriculum Road Map exercise. The components involved in the mapping exercise are outlined below and have been aligned with the validation panel prompts.

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| **Supporting Guidance for Panel Members in assuring the academic standards and quality of the student experience** |

# Teesside University Credit Level Descriptors – July 2022

**What are Credit Level Descriptors?**

**Credit level descriptors define the level of complexity, relative demand and autonomy expected of a student on completion of a module or course. They provide a description of learning through a hierarchy of knowledge and skills (see** [**SEEC 2021**](https://seec.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MDX_SEEC-Descriptors_Update-May-2021_Version-2_For-screen_AW13885.pdf)**)**

**Why do we need them?**

**Credit level descriptors provide a framework to aid course and module development. They help us to develop learning outcomes that reflect the level expected. This means the level expected in our courses and modules is broadly comparable across the University and the Sector.**

**How do we know what is expected for each level?**

**The** [**Framework for Higher Education Qualifications [FHEQ]**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks) **in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (QAA) defines the expectations of awards within FHEQ through qualification descriptors. For example, the FHEQ tells us what typical students will demonstrate at honours level (level 6) and what types of qualities and transferable skills they will acquire. The University is expected to demonstrate how its awards meet the requirements of the Higher Education sector.**

**How do I demonstrate that my course meets the FHEQ?**

**You don’t need to worry about directly linking your learning outcomes to the FHEQ. The University’s Credit Level Descriptors are informed by the sector’s Qualification Frameworks, which include the FHEQ and the Outcome Classification Descriptions for Level 6, both of which are published by the Quality Assurance Agency on the link above. So, as long as you use the University’s Credit Level Descriptors, your course will meet the requirements of FHEQ.**

**What is the difference between the Credit Level Descriptors and learning outcomes?**

**The Credit Level Descriptors provide general statements about the level of skills and abilities developed in the course in relation to the context in which students are working or studying. This context is not defined in the Credit Level Descriptor which is why they are not meant to be used as learning outcomes. If we did this, all our courses would be the same. When you design your course outcomes, you need to consider how the Credit Level Descriptors apply to the context of your course or module and write specific learning outcomes that reflect that context.**

**Do I have to demonstrate how the Credit Level Descriptors are assessed?**

**No! The Credit Level Descriptors are used to develop learning outcomes. It is the learning outcomes that are assessed not the Credit Level Descriptors.**

**Should an award at a particular level cover all the Credit Level Descriptors for that level?**

**The Credit Level Descriptors are an indicative framework and not intended to be all encompassing or prescriptive. At the module level you should consider which aspects of the Credit Level Descriptors are applicable and develop your learning outcomes accordingly. Not all categories will be relevant for each module and the emphasis will depend on the context and focus of the module. At the level of the award, there is an expectation that all categories of the Credit Level Descriptors are used to develop your outcomes in a holistic way.**

**Do I have to have a learning outcome for each level of the course?**

**No. Higher levels subsume the Credit Level Descriptors and the learning outcomes at the lower level.**

**I have some learning outcomes that could fit under more than one heading. Do I include them in more than one category?** Depending on the focus of the course, learning outcomes can be relevant to more than one category. For example, team working can occur in the context of a research team, as part of professional practice or in an academic module. Use your judgement in terms of where it is most relevant and just include it in that category.

**What else do I need to consider when developing learning outcomes?**

**If your course is accredited by a Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) you will need to incorporate their requirements in your learning outcomes. The QAA also publishes a comprehensive range of subject benchmark statements at honours level and also has some statements for masters’ level. These must also be considered when writing learning outcomes - see** [**Subject Benchmark Statements**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements)**. Additionally, the QAA has published** [**Qualification Characteristics Statements**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/characteristics-statements) **that describe the distinctive features of qualifications at a particular level within the Qualifications Frameworks.**

**If your course is a Professional Apprenticeship you will need to incorporate the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) expressed within the relevant** [**Apprenticeship Standard**](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/) **and/or the End Point Assessment (EPA) Plan for Integrated Apprenticeships (in some instances KSBs may be expressed as learning outcomes within the EPA Plan) within your learning outcomes. In addition, the QAA has published an** [**Apprenticeship Characteristic Statement**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/characteristics-statements) **which must also be considered when writing learning outcomes.**

**Learning activities at the respective level of study are designed to enable students to demonstrate:**

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| **Personal and Transferrable Skills Development** | | | | | | |
| **Domain** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5** | **Level 6** | **Level 7** | **Level 8** |
| **Personal responsibility, evaluation, and development**  **Linked AEF Theme:**  **- *Student Success*** | Articulate their individual capabilities using pre-defined criteria in familiar contexts and engage in guided personal development. | Take responsibility for the evaluation of own capabilities and development using established criteria in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. | Take responsibility for the evaluation of own and/or others’ capabilities and development using wide-ranging approaches and criteria in contexts of varying complexity. | Take responsibility for the critical evaluation of own and others’ capabilities and development using selected management approaches in complex and interrelated contexts. | Take responsibility for leading the systematic and critical evaluation of own and others’ capabilities, performance, and development, applying strategic management approaches in unpredictably complex contexts. | Lead and is accountable for the comprehensive and critical evaluation of own and others’ capabilities, performance, and development, applying innovative and transformative leadership approaches in highly complex contexts. |
| **Organisational and** | Use organisational | Use organisational | Adapt organisational | Set criteria for and be | Identify, evaluate, | Select relevant |
| **communication skills** | and communication  skills to clarify and | and communication  skills to clarify and | and communication  skills to a range of | effective in  professional and | and maintain  capabilities and | communication tools  to communicate |
|  | arrange tasks, | arrange tasks, as well | situations, audiences, | interpersonal | qualities to support | complex or |
|  | identify problems, | as identify and rectify | and degrees of | communication in a | effective | contentious |
|  | and communicate | issues in a range of | complexity. | wide range of | communication in a | information that is |
|  | outcomes in narrowly | contexts. |  | situations. | range of complex and | relevant to the target |
|  | defined contexts**.** |  |  |  | specialised contexts. | audience. |

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| **Domain** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5** | **Level 6** | **Level 7** | **Level 8** |
| **Project and activity design and development** | Designs and develops projects and/or activities using predefined criteria to support own and/ or others learning, work or practice in familiar contexts. | Designs and develops projects and/ or activities using established criteria to inform own and/ or others learning. Work or practice in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. | Designs and develops a range of relevant projects and/or activities to improve areas of own and/ or others learning, work or practice of varying complexity. | Designs and develops specialist projects and/or activities to enhance inter-related areas of own and/ or others learning, work or practice in complex contexts. | Designs and develops advanced specialist projects and/or activities to strategically enhance own and/ or others learning, work or practice within unpredictably complex contexts. | Designs and develops highly advanced, specialist and innovative projects and/or activities to transform own and/ or others learning, work or practice in highly complex contexts. |
| **Interpersonal, team- based, and networking skills**  **Linked AEF Theme:**  **- *Globally Connected*** | Applies pre-defined interpersonal, team and networking skills to support team performance in familiar contexts. | Applies established interpersonal, team and networking skills to recognise factors that affect team performance in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. | Applies a range of relevant interpersonal, team and networking skills to contribute to the enhancement of team performance in contexts of varying complexity. | Applies and develops selected interpersonal, team and networking skills to enhance team performance in complex and interrelated contexts and engages with relevant professional communities. | Applies and develops advanced interpersonal, team and networking skills to strategically enhance team performance in unpredictably complex contexts and contributes to specialist professional communities. | Applies and develops highly advanced interpersonal, team and networking skills to transformatively enhance team performance in highly complex contexts and innovatively contributes to specialist professional communities. |
| **Working in digital environments**  **Linked AEF Theme:**  **- *Digital Empowerment*** | Understands and has a practical appreciation for digital environments and works effectively and responsibly with digital media. | Operates competently and responsibly in digital environments and uses a range of digital media effectively. | Selects appropriate digital tools to achieve outcomes and operates competently and responsibly within digital environments. | Selects from a wide range of digital media appropriate to the task and operates competently and responsibly within digital environments of varying complexity. | Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of a range of complex digital environments and the ability to operate competently and responsibly within  them. | Demonstrates advanced understanding of a range of complex digital environments and model responsible use of digital environments. |

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| **Domain** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5** | **Level 6** | **Level 7** | **Level 8** |
| **Decision making skills** | Makes sound decisions in defined contexts and articulates the basis for that decision. | Understands different perspectives that can inform decisions and articulates sound reasoning for own decisions. | Weighs different perspectives and justifies decisions and judgements with sound reasoning. | Makes evidence- based decisions in more complex situations and takes accountability for the outcome and impact of those decisions. | Uses sound judgement to make evidence-based decisions within complex academic and/or professional contexts, and takes accountability for the outcome and impact of those decisions. | Operates as a decision maker in complex and unpredictable contexts and develops a strategic, evidence-based, approaches to delivering outcomes. |

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| **Research, Knowledge and Cognitive Skills** | | | | | | |
| **Domain** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5** | **Level 6** | **Level 7** | **Level 8** |
| **Conceptualisation and critical thinking**  **Linked AEF Theme:**  **- *Future Ready*** | Identifies, understands, and applies pre-defined principles, concepts, theoretical frameworks, and approaches in familiar contexts. | Identifies, understands, and applies established principles, concepts, theoretical frameworks, and approaches, recognising their relative strengths in familiar and unfamiliar of contexts. | Identifies, understands at a deeper level, and applies a range of relevant principles, concepts, theoretical frameworks, and approaches recognising competing perspectives in contexts of varying complexity. | Works with, articulates, and applies relevant specialist principles concepts, theoretical frameworks and approaches from competing perspectives and critically identifies the possibility of new ideas in complex and inter-related contexts. | Works with, articulates, applies advanced principles, concepts, theoretical frameworks, and approaches to critically develop systematic responses to existing discourses and methodologies, suggesting new ideas in unpredictably complex contexts. | Develops and applies innovative and highly advanced principles, concepts, theoretical frameworks, and approaches to critically produce a comprehensive and coherent discourse and methodology to underpin new knowledge in highly abstract and complex contexts. |
| **Problem-solving and enquiry** | Applies pre-defined problem-solving techniques to investigate given problems using information and data in familiar contexts. | Applies established problem-solving methods and techniques to recognise and investigate problems, using information and data in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. | Applies a range of relevant problem- solving methods and techniques to define and investigate problems, patterns and relationships using information and data in contexts of varying complexity. | Selects and applies specialist problem- solving strategies, methods, and techniques to define, investigate and critically evaluate problems using information and data in complex and interrelated contexts. | Selects and adapts appropriate advanced problem- solving strategies, methods, and techniques to design systematic investigations that define and critically evaluate problems, using specialist information and data in unpredictable and complex contexts. | Develops innovative and highly advanced problem-solving strategies, methods, and techniques to design comprehensive investigations that critically evaluate problems to generate new and information and data in highly abstract and complex contexts. |

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| **Domain** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5** | **Level 6** | **Level 7** | **Level 8** |
| **Synthesis and creativity** | Synthesises information and ideas and formulates creative proposals to address pre-defined issues or opportunities in familiar contexts. | Synthesises information and ideas and formulates creative proposals to address established issues or opportunities in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. | Synthesises Information and ideas and formulates creative proposals to address a range of issues or opportunities in contexts of varying complexity. | Synthesises specialist and inter-related information and ideas and formulates and develops creative and coherent proposals to address selected issues or opportunities in complex contexts. | Systematically synthesises advanced and specialist information and ideas and formulates and develops innovative proposals to address strategic issues or opportunities in and unpredictably complex contexts. | Comprehensively synthesises highly advanced and specialist information and ideas and formulates and develops new and transformative proposals to address and challenge issues or opportunities at the forefront of knowledge, in highly abstract and complex contexts. |
| **Analysis and Evaluation**  **Linked AEF Theme:**  **- *Research Active*** | Collates and articulates a range of information using pre-defined principles, techniques, frameworks and/or criteria. | Analyses a range of information evaluates the reliability of data and information using pre-defined techniques and/or criteria. | Analyses and evaluates a range of information using appropriate subject- specific techniques and to discriminate between the relative relevance and significance of data/evidence collected. | Critically analyses and evaluates the reliability, validity and significance of in- depth data and evidence, selecting effective principles, frameworks, criteria, and techniques to support conclusions in complex and interrelated contexts. | Systematically and critically analyses complex, incomplete, or contradictory evidence/data and justify the enquiry methodologies used and recognise and argue for alternative approaches. | Undertakes comprehensive independent critical analysis or evaluation, managing complexity, incompleteness of data or contradictions in areas of knowledge. |

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| **Professional Skills, Values and Behaviours** | | | | | | |
| **Domain** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5** | **Level 6** | **Level 7** | **Level 8** |
| For courses with PSRB accreditation and/or other professional and/or regulatory requirements, level descriptors and outcomes under this heading should primarily be focused on meeting PSRB requirements and QAA subject benchmark statements. For example, a key descriptor could be:   * Meet the professional requirements/competencies that enable registration.   Credit level descriptors can assist with identifying the level of learning derived from the workplace as part of a formal work-based or work-integrated learning course/programme of study, including degree apprenticeships. Work-based learning is concurrent and integrated with study. Assessment is normally derived from evidence of learning generated from involvement in work-based practices. The credit level descriptors in this section can inform judgements about the level of the learning achievement demonstrated.  There may be other / additional skills that are developed within the course or programme of work that need to be evidenced at an appropriate level. For example:  **Adapting to Operational Context(s)**   * The ability to adapt to different operational contexts with different levels of autonomy and direction.   **Performance Autonomy and Responsibility for Actions**   * The ability to perform tasks, techniques, and processes with different levels of familiarity and complexity. * Taking on different levels of responsibility for synthesising, analysing, and evaluating the performance of self (and others) based on different ranges and sources of information / evidence.   **Ethical Awareness and Application**   * Developing and demonstrating different levels of awareness of professional ethical issues and professional codes of conduct. * Developing and demonstrating different levels of ability to manage ethical dilemmas and formulate appropriate solutions working with others. | | | | | | |
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| **Professional Skills, Values and Behaviours** | | | | | | |
| **Domain** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5** | **Level 6** | **Level 7** | **Level 8** |
| **Adapting to Operational Context(s)** | Operates in familiar learning, work or practice roles/contexts that require the use of predefined techniques and information sources. | Operates in familiar and unfamiliar learning, work or practice roles/contexts that require the use of established techniques and information sources. | Operates in learning, work or practice roles/contexts of varying complexity requiring the application of a wide range of techniques and information sources. | Operates in and adapts to complex and inter-related learning, work, or practice roles/contexts, requiring selection and application of relevant specialist techniques and information sources. | Operates in and adapts to abstract and unpredictably complex learning, work, or practice roles/contexts, requiring selection and application of advanced and specialist techniques and information sources. | Operates in and adapts to highly abstract and complex learning, work, or practice roles/contexts at the forefront of knowledge requiring selection, development and innovative application of highly advanced and specialist techniques and information sources. |
| **Performance Autonomy and Responsibility for Actions** | Acts largely under direction, within predefined guidelines, taking responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures in familiar contexts. | Acts with support within established guidelines and takes responsibility for and reflects on the nature and quality of outputs in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. | Acts with partial self- direction within relevant guidelines and accepts personal responsibility for achieving personal and/or group outcomes/outputs in wide-ranging contexts of varying complexity. | Acts autonomously within relevant self- selected guidelines, taking personal responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes in complex and interrelated contexts. | Acts autonomously to make strategic decisions and develops appropriate practice guidelines, taking personal responsibility for outcomes in abstract and unpredictably complex contexts. | Acts autonomously to drive and develop transformative initiatives and guidelines, often in a professional capacity, with full accountability for self and others in highly abstract and complex contexts at the forefront of knowledge, work, and practice. |

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| **Ethical Awareness and Application**  **Linked AEF Theme:**  **- *Socially and Ethically Engaged.*** | Applies an awareness of pre-defined ethical values and issues to personal decisions and actions in familiar contexts. | Applies an awareness of established ethical values and issues to personal decisions, actions, and responsibilities in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. | Applies an awareness of a range of relevant ethical and professional values and codes of conduct to personal and/ or group decisions, actions, responsibilities, and outcomes in contexts of varying complexity. | Applies an in-depth awareness of specialist ethical and professional values and codes of conduct to personal and/ or group decisions, actions, responsibilities, and outcomes within complex and interrelated contexts. | Systematically applies an advanced awareness of ethical and professional values and codes of conduct, to personal and strategic decisions, actions, responsibilities, outcomes, and dilemmas, whilst working proactively with others to suggest and advocate appropriate solutions in unpredictably complex contexts. | Comprehensively applies a highly advanced awareness of ethical and professional values and codes of conduct, as an accountable aspect of own professional practice and works transformatively with others to formulate and implement innovative solutions and value frameworks in highly complex contexts. |

# Notes for Course Teams on Compensatable Modules, Additional Assessment attempt and Variance

The University operates using standard assessment and progression regulations [“the Regulations”] for all types of awards. Within the course approval and periodic review process, there is provision for courses to designate modules as “non-compensatable” and apply for approval of Additional Assessment Attempts [AAA] for individual modules within a course. There is also provision for Course Teams to seek Variance from either the Assessment Regulations, Assessment & Feedback Policy or the Credit Accumulation & Modular Scheme [CAMS] Framework.

The following definitions are contained within the Regulations:

**1. Compensation of Failed Module:** Compensation refers to the process of deliberately balancing a marginal fail in one aspect of a student/apprentice’s performance in a Level against the otherwise successful performance in the Level as a whole. Where compensation is confirmed by an Assessment Board, credits will be awarded to the relevant module but the original mark will be used for the purposes of calculating Level averages and classification. (see **section 2.4** UG/FD post 2021/22 Regulations and **section 2.1** Taught Postgraduate post 2021/22 Regulations).

**2. Non-Compensatable Modules**: The default position is that a module is compensatable. Defining a module as ‘non-compensatable’ may impact on students when it comes to considering their progression profile. As such, unless there are specific and justifiable reasons for doing so, modules should normally be approved as ‘compensatable’. (see section 1 above)).

However, under particular circumstances modules can be approved as ‘non-compensatable’. These circumstances include the defined requirements, or other such expectations, of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and/or where the module assesses specific aspects of professional competency associated with public health, safety or associated risks. A designation of non-compensatable may also be considered where the module is the only place where a specific level/learning outcome is assessed or where the module assesses competency, including where there is a Pass/Fail component. The Panel should consider the designation ‘non-compensatable’ as part of the overall assessment strategy for the course.

It should be noted that under the assessment regulations, the maximum amount of credit that can be compensated at each of Levels 3-6 is 20 credits and the maximum amount that can be compensated at Level 7 is 30 credits. Compensation is not permitted for modules at Level 8. Therefore some modules may be designed non-compensatable due to their size.

**3. Additional Assessment Attempt [AAA][[1]](#footnote-1):** Under certain circumstances, it is possible to approve a specific reassessment strategy for a module which permits students/apprentices to *either* undertake reassessment before the formal ratification of a mark by a Module Board *or* undertake a second reassessment opportunity (see **section 1.2** UG/FD post 2021/22 Regulations and **section 1.2** Taught Postgraduate post 2021/22 Regulations). For approval to be granted, the module must meet certain criteria:

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| ***“Additional Assessment Attempts will only be permitted only where all of the following criteria have been met:***   1. The module is designated as non-compensatable 2. The module is at Level 4 or above. AAA is not available for Level 3 modules. 3. Either the module pass mark has not been attained outright; or the module pass mark has been attained but the minimum required mark in specified assessment component(s) has not been achieved. 4. A submission for the module assessment(s) has been made. 5. Any module where academic misconduct has been proven will not be eligible for an AAA.” |

Where the failed assessment task(s) is an in-course assessment [ICA] or an end course assessment [ECA], and has been subjected to full internal moderation processes, the AAA may be taken before the result has been formally ratified by a Module Assessment Board.

Where the module outcome has been ratified at a Module Assessment Board, a reassessment should be offered. If the reassessment is unsuccessful the student/apprentice may be offered an AAA, where an AAA has not been previously applied under this regulation.

When a student retakes an AAA, the marks obtained in the component(s) of assessment passed at the first attempt shall stand. The maximum mark that may be awarded for any reassessment and/or for the AAA component(s) is the pass mark for the module. The mark for the module will be recalculated on the basis of the original marks for any component(s) passed at the first attempt and the marks gained in the AAA components.

Where, exceptionally, capping at the component level results in a failed mark for the module overall, and where capping at module level would have resulted in a pass, the module shall be recorded as passed with a capped mark of 40% (50% L7).

If the pass mark for the module has not been attained following the AAA, the mark that will stand is the higher of either the original module mark, the reassessment mark or the recalculated mark following the AAA.

**6. Variance:** Isa process whereby an application can be made to operate other than within the agreed assessment regulation(s). Applications may be made in relation to a module and/or a course. Variance can also be sought from the CAMS, RPL and a small number of other assessment related processes. For integrated apprenticeship courses, the appropriate Annex relating to Integrated Apprenticeships should also be considered.

Applications for Variance should be made by using the appropriate on-line proforma. The process and a **Variance Register** is maintained by Student Learning & Academic Registry (Academic Policy and Regulations) (SLAR (APR)) which manages and records all successful variance applications.

**7. Proposal and approval of AAA:** Details of whether modules are compensatable or not and the modules to which AAA is being applied should be detailed in **section 11** of the Course Specification Template along with any modules for which a Variance application will be sought.

The Approval/Periodic Review Panels are required to give consideration to:

* The Assessment strategy for the course which has led to the decision to propose modules as being non-compensatable and/or
* An application for AAA (***NOTE:*** *For AAA to be applied, the module must be non-compensatable*).

Course Teams should not routinely designate all modules as non-compensatable nor apply for AAA for all modules. Course Teams should be able to demonstrate how the non-compensatable modules and AAA designation forms part of the assessment/re-assessment strategy and why it is needed in the context of the course under consideration.

* Where non-compensatable modules and AAA are proposed, the Approval/Periodic Review Panel will fully explore the rationale for the proposal questioning whether the potential impact on student progression has been taken into account. Defining a module as non-compensatable may be detrimental to students when it comes to considering their progression profile.

Where a Course Team is seeking approval for an Additional Assessment Attempt the Panel should explore this in light of the overall assessment/reassessment strategy. Panels should also consider whether the AAA is clearly defined as a specific form of reassessment strategy on the UTREG form

Proposal for Variance

Where a Course Team is putting forward a proposal for a variance, this should be considered by the Panel. The Approval/Periodic Review Panel will consider the rationale for the proposed variance and whether this is supported or not. Module Variances may be approved by the Panel and notified to the University Student Learning & Experience Committee [SLEC]. Course Variances and variances to other regulations/frameworks, such as CAMS, must be presented to SLEC for approval following endorsement by a Panel.

Reporting in AAA and Variance

The report of the approval/periodic review event should include details of the discussion relating to non-compensatable modules, AAA and Variance and should make clear the decision of the Approval/Periodic Panel in relation to non-compensatable modules, AAA and any approval/recommendation in relation to the Variance proposal.

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| **NOTE: A Variance form is not required when NON-COMPENSATABLE MODULES and AAA are considered and agreed as part of the formal course approval/review event. Outside of a formal event, applications should be made via the modification process.** |

*Further information relating to assessment can also be found below.*

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS CHARACTERISTICS TO BE CONSIDERED THROUGH THE COURSE APPROVAL AND PERIODIC REVIEW PROCESS**:**

**Prompts for Chairs and Panel Members**

**Introduction**

The University approved a set of Assessment Regulations in 2014 which resulted in a number of implications for other University regulations, policies, procedures, and processes, including the University’s quality processes which govern the approval of courses and modules. These were subsequently updated in a review which took place during 2021/22 (Undergraduate, Foundation Degree, Integrated Masters and Taught Masters awards) and 2022/23 for Higher National and Professional Doctorate awards. This document has been produced to support Panel members and Course Teams involved in the University’s course approval and periodic review processes. The guidance presents a series of criterion-referenced ‘prompt’ questions.

**Approval of Modules**

The following applies to the approval of individual modules and the approval of groups of modules that constitute courses of study at Course First Critical Read and Approval/Review Panels.

1. **Non-compensatable Modules**: If approval is being sought to approve a module as non-compensatable, is there a clear and justifiable rationale for this given the potential impact on student progression?

Under particular circumstances modules can be approved as ‘non-compensatable’. These circumstances include the defined requirements, or other such expectations, of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and/or where the module assesses specific aspects of professional competency associated with public health, safety or associated risks. A designation of non-compensatable may also be considered where the module is the only place where a specific level/learning outcome is assessed or where the module assesses competency, including where there is a Pass/Fail component. The Panel should consider the designation ‘non-compensatable’ as part of the overall assessment strategy for the course.

It should be noted that under the assessment regulations, the maximum amount of credit that can be compensated at each of Levels 3-6 is 20 credits and the maximum amount that can be compensated at Level 7 is 30 credits. Compensation is not permitted for modules at Level 8. Therefore some modules will be designed non-compensatable due to their size.

1. **Assessment Components:** Is there a clear rationale for the number of assessment components? The University does not state a qualification mark for individual components of assessment, only an overall requirement for the module. This may render redundant the need to have compound assessment tasks (i.e. components comprised of multiple elements). As such, if elements of assessment are being proposed (for example, a portfolio of two or more tasks that comprise a single component) is there clear justification for this? Is there a risk of over-assessment? Sometimes it is not evident from the information provided on the UTREG2 form that compound assessment is being employed so this may need to be explored through discussion. Elements are not recognised within the regulations and cannot be recorded on the Student Record System [SITS].
2. **Additional Assessment Attempt [AAA]:** If approval of an AAA is being sought, is there clear and evident justification for this? Does the assessment concerned meet the following criteria as defined in **section 1.2** of the Assessment Regulations:

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| ***“Additional Assessment Attempts are permitted only where:***   * The module is designated as non-compensatable. * The module is at Level 4 or above. AAA is not available for Level 3 modules. * Either the module pass mark has not been attained outright; or the module pass mark has been attained but the minimum required mark in specified assessment component(s) has not been achieved. * A submission for the module assessment(s) has been made. * Any module where academic misconduct has been proven will not be eligible for an AAA.” |

If approval is granted, is it clear on the UTREG2 form that it is approved as a specific Reassessment Strategy and is the rationale apparent?

1. **Variance from the Standard Assessment Regulations:** If a variance is being sought, is the need exceptional and the rationale expressed clearly? Variance to the Assessment Regulations should normally only be approved to meet the specified requirements or expectations of PSRBs or other such external bodies that accredit awards of the University. **Note:** Module Variance can be approved by the Course Approval and Periodic Review Panel. Course Variance should be considered and endorsed by the Panel but will need to be formally approved by the University Student Learning & Experience Committee [SLEC].

**Approval of Courses**

Course Approval, which may follow a Course First Critical Read Event which provisionally approves modules, is where the same issues detailed above are examined in light of the course as a whole. In other words, the questions relating to decisions taken at modular level are explored and tested in terms of their impact on the course as a whole and the learning experience it offers its students. The following prompt-questions, understood in relation to the notes above, will help to ensure that such questions are adequately addressed.

1. **Course Outcomes:** Do the course outcomes adequately articulate the specificities of the subject/discipline and the distinctive nature of the particular course/award?
2. **Assessment of Learning Outcomes:** Is each Level Outcome assessed on two separate occasions? If not, are the Course Team confident that the learning outcomes for the Level will be achieved if the student progresses with compensation?
3. **Non-compensatable Modules:** Is there a clear rationale for the inclusion of any non-compensatable modules? Have the Course Team taken account of the potential impact on student progression of defining modules as “non-compensatable”? (e.g. trailing – see Section 2.5 UG/FD post 2021/22 Regulations).
4. **Assessment Components and Elements:** Is the total number of assessment tasks (i.e. the sum of components + elements) appropriate? While ensuring that all outcomes are assessed, is there a risk of over-assessment? Is there a clear rationale in the course assessment strategy for the use of compound assessment tasks?
5. **Formative Work and Feed-Forward Processes**: Is there a clear, course-wide, approach to feed-forward processes/opportunities through the provision of formative learning tasks? Is this articulated appropriately in the course learning strategy?
6. **Additional Assessment Attempt (AAA):** If the course is seeking to make use of this regulatory provision, is there a clear rationale for doing so? Is this adequately articulated in the course assessment and reassessment strategy? **Note:** The module must be non-compensatable for this provision to apply.
7. **Variance from the Standard Assessment Regulations:** If a variance is being sought, is the need for it exceptional and the rationale expressed clearly? Are the requested variances clearly articulated *requirements* of a PSRB or other such external accrediting body? If it is not a requirement per se, what evidence is there to support the variance?

# Guidance - Approving Modules

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| **1. Context of Development** |
| * What is the rationale for the introduction, change, modification to, or re-approval of the module? * How have current students and/or alumni of the course participated in the development of the module and the design of the curriculum? * How will the module be incorporated within and enhance the broader course(s) in which it will be delivered? * Will the module conflict with or replicate any existing provision? If so, what is the rationale for this? * Does the module require any variance to the standard University Assessment Regulations? If so, please refer to the Variance to the Assessment Regulations procedures. |
| **2. Module Title, Descriptor, and Key Words** |
| * Does the title accurately and succinctly convey the focus of the module? * Is the Descriptor written in a student-facing style? * Thinking of the module’s potential students, does the descriptor provide a clear overview of the module’s content, the learning and teaching strategies it employs, and the strategy used to assess student learning? * Where appropriate, does the Descriptor include a mapping to relevant PSRB or Partner frameworks? * Do the Key Words correspond to the Descriptor and the Indicative Content? Do they provide suitable searchable terms? |
| **3. Tutors and External Examiners** |
| * Have a suitable Module Leader and Tutors been identified? * Has an External Examiner been identified? |
| **4. Module Details** |
| * Are the level and credit rating of the module appropriate? Are they commensurate with the learning hours, scope of the curriculum, and learning, teaching, and assessment strategies? Do they meet CAMS requirements? * Does the Assessment Pattern correspond to the information provided in the Assessment Strategy section? |
| **5. Compensatable/Non-compensatable** |
| * If selecting ‘non-compensatable’, is there clear justification? Has the potential impact on student progression been taken into account? (*See “Note on Non-compensatable Modules” below*). |
| **6. Resubmission** |
| * Is the ‘Resubmission’ field set to ‘no’? (*See “Note on Resubmission” below).* |

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| **7. Delivery and Delivery Pattern** |
| **Delivery Mode**   * What is the rationale for the mode(s) of delivery (if not semester based) and is it commensurate with the indicative content, learning hours, and delivery pattern?   **Delivery Pattern**   * How does the delivery pattern support student learning and the achievement of the learning outcomes through the assessment strategy? * Have questions of student engagement and participation been considered in proposing the delivery pattern? * Is the ratio of contact time to independent study appropriate and does this ratio corresponds to the Level of the module and its status within the course’s overarching curriculum? |
| **8. Module Aims** |
| * Are the aims of the module articulated clearly? * Is the relationship between the aims and the learning outcomes apparent and logical? |
| **9. Indicative Content** |
| * Is the module’s key content/subject matter clearly summarised? * Is the scope of the module appropriate for the credit rating of the module? * Is the content commensurate with the module title and the learning outcomes, including those in the Personal and Transferable Skills category? |
| **10. Learning Strategy** |
| * Clearly articulate the Learning Strategy for each mode of delivery. * Does the Learning Strategy align with Future Facing Learning? * Is it clear how the students will learn throughout the module? * Are appropriate formative work and feedback processes identified? * How are issues related to inclusivity and accessibility addressed in the Learning Strategy? * Are the learning methods sufficiently flexible to meet the individual learning needs of the student? (disabled students) * Are the methods identified commensurate with the content and delivery mode? * Is there appropriate use of the VLE and/or opportunities to engage in online/blended learning? * Will lectures or other kinds of taught sessions be ‘captured’ and made available to students? * Is the Learning Strategy consistent with the delivery hours that have been identified? |
| **11. Learning Outcomes** |
| * Are there an appropriate number of outcomes identified? * Are the outcomes constructively aligned to the learning and teaching methods and Assessment Strategy? * Do the outcomes adequately correspond to the relevant University Level Descriptors (2022) and/or Level Outcomes of the course? |

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| **12. Assessment** |
| **Assessment Strategy**   * How does the Assessment Strategy promote learning? * Does the Assessment Strategy measure achievement in all of the Learning Outcomes of the module? * Is the Assessment Strategy suitably inclusive? Are there any unnecessary barriers to participation and/or success? (need to be explicit with regards to disabled students) * Is there a clear rationale for the number of assessment components? * Will elements of assessment be used (for example, a portfolio of two or more tasks that comprise a single component)? If so, is there clear justification for this? **Note:** Elements are not recognised within the Assessment Regulations. * Is it apparent which component assesses which learning outcome(s)? * Is the total assessment workload commensurate with the module’s credit rating? * Is the design of the Assessment Strategy cognisant of the broader Course Assessment Strategy? * If seeking approval for an Additional Assessment Attempt:   a) are the criteria for approving this met;  b) is the need clear and evident; and  c) is it clearly defined as a specific form of reassessment strategy on the UTREG form?.  **Assessment Criteria**   * Do the Assessment Criteria clearly relate to the learning outcomes being assessed on the module? * Do the Assessment Criteria address the various dimensions that will be used to judge to what level a student has achieved the learning outcomes of the module? * Is the Assessment Criteria commensurate with the academic level of the module? * Are the Assessment Criteria comprehensive? Are all aspects used to gauge student performance covered (e.g. referencing, presentation, consent, confidentiality)? * Are there separate Assessment Criteria for each component of assessment and are these clearly articulated? |
| **13. Indicative Resources** |
| * Has a suitable number and variety of resources been identified and are these listed in the appropriate category on Reading List Online (RLO)? * Are the resources up-to-date? * Do the resources correspond to the Indicative Content? * Has the relevant Academic Librarian been consulted? * Are all of the indicative resources currently available? If not, have you identified/supplied a budget and budget code from which the new resources will be funded? * If specialist ICT resources are required, have ITDS been consulted? |

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| **14. Digital Empowerment** |
| **Learning Design Framework and Toolkit:**   * Is there evidence of engagement with the toolkit to inform the planning of the module? * Has the toolkit informed the module introduction? * How has the toolkit informed the structure of weekly content and topics? * Has the toolkit informed learning collaboration and knowledge construction within the module? * Has the toolkit informed the formative/summative elements of the module? |

# course first Critical Read and Course validation Questions

**Introduction**

The following question sets, derived from the information in the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx), with which Course Teams are expected to engage during the Course Design Briefing (CDB), are intended to provide guidance to Chairs and Panel Members. Course Teams should be prepared to discuss their engagement with the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) at both the Course First Critical Read and Course Validation events, whilst contextualising to subject knowledge and PSRB requirements.

**The Validation Panel members will seek to:**

* Be satisfied that course teams have engaged with the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) to inform the learning design of their module and course holistically.
* Determine the necessary staff development initiatives which derive from the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) to support staff in their learning design and digital empowerment.
* Be satisfied that the engagement with the [**toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) has resulted in the creation of a curriculum that spans the learning ecosystems, engaging meaningfully with classroom and digital tools to afford learning.

**Questions presented by the Panel may include:**

1. How have you engaged with the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) to inform the planning of your module? For example:
2. Is there an adequate blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning throughout the module? Is this based on pedagogic rationales, learning outcomes and the assessment strategy for the module?
3. How do you plan to integrate the seamless flow of learning by enabling learning, thinking and conversation across multiple spaces and over time?
4. Are materials appropriately formatted/structured so they are accessible to students using screen readers and other assistive technologies? Have you consulted our Accessibility Help Guides on LTE Online?
5. How have you engaged with the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) to inform your module introduction? For example:
6. Setting upfront information and schedules around synchronous, asynchronous and collaboration is key to excellent student experience and learning. It would be helpful for students to know how much time will be spent learning via synchronous methods each week, via live classes and activities.
7. When integrating different digital technologies consideration should be given as to how students will be expected to interact and utilise these, both in terms of access to equipment but also the level of digital competency required. What sort of initial activities will you develop for your students to become familiar and confident with the digital technologies used in your module? How will this be communicated to students? Will students know where to turn to for support and advice? The University supports a number of digital tools/technologies. Consider utilising these before seeking alternative solutions.
8. Students may be unfamiliar with how to collaborate online and contribute to online discussions. Consider setting expectations from the outset on this. Be present yourself to respond to and encourage contributions but be mindful that sometimes tutor presence can also discourage student contributions. Much of the research into student retention and attainment identifies that being part of an engaging and well-managed online community has a positive impact on student achievement and retention and those students who engage in the community do better in their final assessments than those that don’t.
9. How have you engaged with the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) to inform the structure of your weekly content and/or topics? For example:
10. Have you considered how lessons/topics within modules can be presented to students when studying online? Throughout each topic we encourage providing appropriate learning activities online, for instance, online discussion forums, and ensuring communication, assessment and feedback is continuous throughout the course, all the time thinking of the context in which the online learner is working.
11. How have you engaged with the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) to inform learner collaboration and knowledge construction within your module? For example:
12. If any taught content will be delivered solely online (synchronously or asynchronously), we encourage breaking down the learning into manageable chunks of time for the students. Have you considered, for each lesson/topic, how you would segment the learning so that students are building from foundational knowledge chunks to more complex analytical and critical thinking?
13. What methods will be used for collaboration? What are the points in the module(s) where this happens, how will these methods span different learning ecosystems and what are the expectations on students?
14. Is the design for delivery of content clearly set out in a structured format so that it is inclusive/accessible for all different learning styles with clear guidance and instructions on how the module will be delivered and the students’ role in this?
15. How have you engaged with the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) to inform the formative elements of your module? For example:
16. Introducing easily actionable formative opportunities for students to trial new practices and build confidence in using tools and technologies. Through formative assessment activities, students will benefit from experiencing and experimenting with methods required for summative assessment. This affords a good opportunity for students to check their understanding of what it means to ‘do’ assessment and increase their confidence at what is likely to a period of high stress and anxiety.
17. How have you engaged with the [**Learning Design Framework and Toolkit**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SitePages/Learning%20Design%20Framework%20and%20Toolkit.aspx) to inform the summative assessment element(s) of your module? For example:
18. Have you considered the sorts of alternative assessment for campus-based assessments, based on the skills students have already developed and not demand complex ‘additional’ requirements?

# Principles of Academic Delivery

**Teesside University On-campus Undergraduate Courses**

The following principles were approved by Academic Board in July 2022 and will be applied to new Full Time Undergraduate intakes from September 2023:

1. Minimum student numbers on eligible modules
2. Students should study four modules per level, with a minimum of 20 credits per module.
3. Each student will complete one module at levels 4 and 5, which directly prepares them for graduate level employment and/or enterprise
4. Resilient staffing plans for each module must embed a team-teaching approach. This includes robust staffing contingency planning to ensure the sustainability and quality of delivery.
5. Where appropriate, curriculum design should embrace a cross-University approach to course delivery.
6. Lean assessment strategies must be embedded which avoid the bunching of assessments during key periods and remove the use of compound assessments (elements). Bespoke assessment strategies will enhance academic integrity.
7. Implicit pre- and co-requisites in teaching delivery must be avoided.
8. Early reassessment opportunities must be prioritised.
9. Optional modules will be permitted at level 6 only, where linked to professional specialisation and are subject to all of the above principles. Optional modules may be standalone or an existing core module.

**Teesside University TU London Courses**

1. The educational ethos will be focus on preparing students for sustained success through a professional career, start-up enterprise or impact in their community. This will be reflected in a common core curriculum focussed on personal and professional development threaded through all modules.
2. Courses will be co-designed and co-delivered with industry, taught by dual teaching/practitioner staff, and underpinned by a relentless focus on permeability with industry, employers, and practice.
3. Project-based learning will be core to course design, drawing directly on industry projects and real-world scenarios, alongside embedded employment/enterprise experience days and a commitment to work placements for all.
4. No implicit/explicit pre- or co-requisites in teaching delivery will be permitted at any stage.
5. UG students should study 4 x 30 credit modules per level (with a final 60 credit level 6 project module).
6. UG 30 credit module will be delivered through an intensive six-week sprint, around which the academic calendar will be constructed.
7. PGT students will study 4 x 30 credit taught modules followed by 1 x 60 credit research/project module with an intervening progression point.
8. Teaching timetables will be compressed and zoned to enable students to study alongside their work and life commitments, as well as undertake placements and internships.
9. All modules will be designed for on-campus and online delivery, underpinned and supplemented by high-quality online learning materials crafted through a ‘digital first’ approach.
10. Every student will be provided with an individual development coach, aligned with the core curriculum model in driving personal and professional growth.
11. All courses will have a suite of professional certifications (e.g., Microsoft, Apple and Adobe) ‘baked in’ at the point of design to demonstrate industry-standard expertise, alongside professional accreditation where appropriate.
12. Assessment strategies will be lean, reflect workplace requirements and permit rapid reassessment opportunities aligned with the distinctive academic calendar of TU London.

**Assessment Regulations Implications**

**Structures**

In line with the agreed principles of academic delivery, full-time undergraduate students (levels 3-6) should study four modules per level with a minimum of 20 credits per module. This means that the following structures are available:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Model A** | **Model B** | **Model C** | **Model D** |
|  | 20 | 20 | 30 | 20 |
|  | 20 | 30 | 30 | 20 |
|  | 40 | 30 | 30 | 20 |
|  | 40 | 40 | 30 | 60 |
| **Total** | **120** | **120** | **120** | **120** |

Each student will complete one module at both Level 4 and 5 which directly prepares them for graduate level employment and/or enterprise with the potential option of central delivery for ‘future ready’ modules.

Optional modules will only be permitted at Level 6, where linked to professional specialisation and are subject to the ADM Principles. Optional modules may be standalone or an existing core module.

It is possible to have a different model for the structure at each level as appropriate to the course delivery and in order to meet the requirements of the ADM Principles.

Standard delivery is over one semester with students studying two semesters per year.

Implications of the delivery model and in-level progression should also be considered for part-time students, who in-fill on full-time delivery. Such students are normally required to have submitted for assessment in at least 30 credits in the current academic year unless otherwise interrupted.

**Assessment Regulations Considerations**

The assessment strategy for each module would need to consider the size of the module.

1. **Compensation** - the maximum number of credits that can be compensated at Levels 3-6 is 20 credits where a module is designated as compensatable at approval. Therefore, the models would vary as to the amount of compensation that could be applied and for Model C, no compensation could be applied. It should also be noted that from the 2022-23 academic year, new students will need to achieve a minimum mark of 20% in order to be compensated in a module.
2. **Additional Assessment Attempt (AAA)** – this replaces In-Module Retake (IMR) and Exceptional Third Attempt (ETA). It may be applied to non-compensatable modules on a course-specific basis. It provides an additional exceptional assessment attempt that can be applied prior to the formal progression point, subject to completion of all moderation. It is not restricted to PSRB requirements. AAA must be considered and approved at Course Approval in relation to the reassessment strategy for a course.**[[2]](#footnote-2)**
3. **Pass/Fail Modules/Components** - modules may include a Pass/Fail component. In order to pass the module, the Pass/Fail component must be successfully completed. Compensation can be applied to the component(s) that are marked/graded. Modules may also be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis only. In which case, compensation will not be applied.
4. **Trailing** – where a module is non-compensatable, subject to meeting the regulatory requirements, a student may trail up to a maximum of 20 credits on one occasion only. Therefore, the models would vary as to whether Trailing could be applied. It should be noted that Trailing is not applicable between Levels 3 and 4.
5. **Reassessment** – students are offered a reassessment opportunity in all failed modules so there are no implications in relation to reassessment opportunities of the different models. However, consideration would need to be given to the reassessment strategies.
6. **Restudy** – students are offered restudy where they have achieved at least 60 credits following reassessment. Where failure is more than 60 credits, it is a discretionary decision of a Board. Therefore, the structure may have more impact on this e.g., Model A, if a student failed the two 40 credit modules, they would automatically move to discretionary, rather than automatic, restudy. Consideration may also need to be given as to how partial restudy could be applied.
7. **Proceed under Provision** – this discretionary decision of a Board provides an opportunity for students to complete the progression criteria at the current level within a maximum of 6 weeks into the next academic year. Consideration may need to be given as to the module loading in the first semester of an academic year in relation to those students who may be utilising this regulation.
8. **Study Abroad** – the study abroad period will normally take place between Levels 5 and 6 or for one semester during Level 5. Where a study abroad period is offered, consideration may need to be given to the structure at Level 5.
9. **Assessment Boards** – the Assessment Regulations allow Schools the discretion to convene Boards to suit the progression needs of their provision, i.e., out with the “standard” summer period.**[[3]](#footnote-3)**

**Employability Modules**

Employability modules at Level 4 and Level 5 focus on ensuring graduates are ‘opportunity ready’ – ready to start a new role, ready to launch a business, ready for the future. Their aim is to prepare graduates for rapidly changing labour markets and diverse career pathways including linear, non-linear and portfolio career pathways and enable graduates to make informed decisions about their futures. All undergraduate students should study and be assessed on employment related content at level 5 although course teams may feel it more appropriate for their students to study further employability related content or focus on a level 5 entrepreneurship module.

By not only focusing on embedding employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship into the curriculum but adding recruit-ability skills Teesside graduates will be ready and able to make successful transitions post-graduation and beyond. Upon completion of the module's students will be able to build relationships, find solutions, reflect professionally, and collaborate locally, nationally, and internationally.

**Course Teams should u**se the framework below to assess whether current modules in the School/course are comparable to those outlined in the framework (indicative content).

**Level 4**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Type** | **Learning outcome** | **L&T activities** | **Indicative content** | **Assessment Strategy** | **Assessment Criteria** | **Assessment Weighting** |
| 4 | PTS | Explore and explain personal strengths and opportunities | Employer presentations, seminars,  reflective practice theory sessions, workshop on communication skills, Full networking event, teamworking,  External presentations on real world problems. Case Studies,  Wicked Problems, Insight Day,  Research skills,  Guest speakers,  Digital badges, Employer Q&A Panel, Seminars | Reflective practice, Awareness of professional roles within the subject area and beyond,  Self-awareness, resilience,  wellbeing,  self-care,  values,  Communication, networking techniques, Information seeking,  Team working,  emotional intelligence, Digital Profile,  Creative thinking, Enterprise,  Influencing change, Current landscape,  Ethical considerations, Global factors, Sustainability agenda | Create a Professional Digital Profile /cv and produce a 1000-word reflection on individual strengths and opportunities for personal development | Create an effective digital profile evidencing professionalism. Use reflective practice to identify areas of strength and development; write in an appropriate style and refer to relevant literature as appropriate. | 50% |
| PTS | Demonstrate professionalism in an organisational context and create a professional profile |
| PTS | Identify and articulate methods appropriate for solving problems in each real-world scenario | As a team produce a short, recorded presentation using appropriate digital tools on a real-world problem currently faced in the subject area and outline the current strategies to address these reflecting a global context. | Ability to work as a team to produce a coherent presentation, use of digital tools to prepare the presentation, ability to articulate a real-world problem, identify and explore appropriate solutions, consideration of social and ethical factors, use of literature as appropriate. | 50% |
| PTS | Demonstrate effective use of digital communication tools relevant to global audience |
| RKC | Consider and appraise global issues in the context of sustainability and environment |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Level 5**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Type** | **Learning outcome** | **L&T activities** | **Indicative content** | **Assessment Strategy** | **Assessment Criteria** | **Assessment Weighting** |
| 5 | PTS | Identify and evaluate own values to present personal professional brand | Seminars,  Employer Guest speakers,  Creative Jam,  Insight Day,  Team challenge, Teamwork,  Experiential opportunity,  Enterprise,  Seminars,  Case studies, Showcase event,  Mock interviews, Employer led challenge Experiential learning (simulation or live) | Creative thinking,  Professional Presentation,  Reflective Practice, Interview techniques Professional Pitch: Selection of content and format,  Entrepreneurship  Communication, Networking techniques, Emotional intelligence, Social and Ethical considerations,  Global challenges, Sustainability | Portfolio:  Evidence using appropriate digital tools to demonstrate graduate talents and personal professional brand. (Including evidence of mock interview or evidence of a professional pitch to employers/potential investors)  Evidence of engagement in team and Individual tasks with reflective summary (500 words per task)  Evidence of digital certification (e.g. Adobe, Microsoft or equivalent)  Reflective summary of experiential learning and workforce challenges of the future (500 words)) | Appropriate digital tool to develop the portfolio, with clarity or presentation relevant to the industry.  Mock Interview: Use of appropriate language, examples of previous work/experiences in relation to role.  or  Professional Pitch to employers/potential investors:  Clarity, content, creativity and appeal, use of appropriate tools, concise professional style in relation to the audience.  Evidence of teamwork and taking responsibility for individual tasks.  Provide evidence of achieving digital certification  Reflective summary of workforce challenges: Use of appropriate reflective model, concise writing style, evaluation of workforce challenges relevant to the industry, use of appropriate source material. | 100% |
| PTS | Demonstrate the ability to work in a team and reflect on your own and your peers’ contributions |
| PTS | Create a pitch suitable for a professional audience |
| RKC | Evaluate and present workforce challenges of the future |
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**Level 5 Enterprise Module**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Type** | **Learning outcomes** | **L&T activities** | **Indicative content** | **Assessment Strategy** | **Assessment Criteria** | **Assessment Weighting** |
| 5 | PTS | Identify and evaluate the building blocks of a business start up | Entrepreneurial process, Ideation and design thinking, Business models, Business model canvas, business model patterns, Viability,  desirability and feasibility,  Lean start-up, validation experiments, customer research, Present a business idea, | Entrepreneurial mindset, Effectuation,  Business Planning, Communication and interpersonal skills, Creative thinking and problem solving,  Opportunity awareness, Organisational skills, Networking skills, presentation skills, team working skills  Reflective Practice  Project management team management,  Financing for start ups | Portfolio of evidence using appropriate digital tools to demonstrate graduate talents and personal professional brand.  Evidence of a professional pitch to employers/potential investors.  Evidence of engagement in team and Individual tasks with reflective summary (500 words per task)  Evidence of digital certification (e.g. Adobe, Microsoft or equivalent)  Reflective summary of the role of entrepreneurship in society (500 words) | Appropriate digital tools to develop the portfolio, with clarity or presentation relevant to the industry.  Professional Pitch to employers/potential investors:  Clarity, content, creativity and appeal, use of appropriate tools, concise professional style in relation to the audience.    Evidence of teamwork and taking responsibility for individual tasks.  Provide evidence of achieving digital certification    Reflective summary of the role of entrepreneurship in society: Use of appropriate reflective model, concise writing style, evaluation of workforce challenges relevant to the industry, use of appropriate source material. | 100% |
| PTS | Demonstrate the ability to work in a team and reflect on your own and your peers’ contributions |
| PTS | Develop an idea into a business model using business model canvas |
| PTS | Test a business value proposition using lean start up methods |
| PTS | Apply entrepreneurship principles to gather resources |

# Guidance - APPROVING option modules iN AWARDS

In order to be compliant with the guidance of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the University needs to ensure that resources are in place to support the delivery of the modules that form a course of study as advertised to students.

At validation the Panel Members will need to be assured that all core and option modules approved as part of the course structure can be delivered and will run.

This is particularly important where option modules are based on the specialisms of a member of staff. In such cases, the Panel will need to seek assurance from the Course Teams that the module(s) can be delivered in the absence of that member of staff.

The following proposals suggest some ways in which the delivery of option modules can be assured and approved:

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| a) Consider whether core modules on another course/pathway(s) can be offered as option modules on the course. |
| b) Carefully consider how many optional modules are offered within the course structure. Course Teams are encouraged to place a limit on the number of options that are available within the course structure. |
| c) Look to develop option modules with a flexible indicative content e.g. *Current Topics in xxxxx*. This can allow different groups of academic staff to deliver their specialisms and ensure that students experience cutting edge research or professional practice. |
| d) Consider whether options in the course could be made available to students on other courses within the School and/or wider University. This has been discussed and agreed with the appropriate Heads of Department. |
| e) Consider which semester an option is placed within the course structure and whether this will facilitate students from other courses choosing those options. |
| f) Unless there is a specific resource required to deliver the module, options should not be designed with capped numbers. Option modules requiring specialist resources should be carefully considered by teams. |
| g) Careful thought should be given to how the choice of options will be managed and approval/review panels should seek assurance that students will be provided with sufficient information to make informed choices e.g. requiring Level 4 students to choose option modules before they arrive at the University may cause some issues. |

# Guidance - APPROVAL OF MAJOR/MINOR AWARDS

The validation Panel should seek to ensure the course involves the in-depth study of one discipline (the “major”) and a less comprehensive study of a second discipline (the “minor”).

A major/minor degree is composed of a minimum of 240 credits from the Major subject and a maximum of 120 credits from the Minor subject, normally distributed as detailed in **Table 2** below.

An honours degree course which involves the study of subject “A” as a “major” and subject “B” as a “minor” will be referred to as an honours degree in “A **with** B”.

Other than in exceptional cases, major/minor awards will involve **two** disciplines drawn from the same School, and are therefore the responsibility of that School.

Where the major and minor are drawn from different Schools, the School delivering the major component will act as the “home” School for the course and be the responsibility of that School.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TABLE: STRUCTURE OF A MAJOR/MINOR**  **HONOURS DEGREE AWARD** | | | |
| **Year** | **Major** | **Minor** | **Total** |
| **1** | 80 credits | 40 credits | 120 credits |
| **2** | 80 credits | 40 credits | 120 credits |
| **Final Year** | 80-100 credits maximum | 20-40 credits maximum | 120 credits |
| **TOTAL** | **240-260 credits maximum** | **100-120 credits maximum** | **360 credits** |

*(Variants across the 3 years are permissible within the total minimum and maximum credits stated above - subject to approval at validation.)*

**Dissertation**

The dissertation may be based on the major field only or build on several areas of study, subject to confirmation that:

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| * There is no Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirement which would preclude such an approach. * The areas of study are clearly related and can be supported, in the case of a cross-School course, through primary support from the home School and formal agreement between the Course Leader in that School about further support arrangements from the “Minor” School. * The formal agreement must designate the responsibilities of each School and this must be communicated clearly to the student. |

# Guidance - Approval of dual and joint awards

It is the University’s responsibility for assuring the quality and academic standards of each Dual and/or Joint Award.

Definitions:

* Dual awards are used to describe a qualification given as two awards, each from a different organisation with degree-awarding powers, for the same course of study.
* Joint Awards are used to describe a qualification given as a single award made jointly by two or more Institutions, for the same course of study. Each participating Institution must have degree-awarding powers in its own country and the award must meet all the UK Higher Education (HE) descriptors and benchmarks.

The following key identifies where items for quality assuring Dual/ Joint Awards should be discussed:

I = Institutional Approval

C = Course Approval

B = Both

Whether the validation is for single or multiple Dual or Joint Awards, the Panel will be expected to consider, and be assured that academic standards are maintained when making an award in the same subject area, paying particular attention to the following aspects of delivery and lines of enquiry:

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| **1. Marketing, Recruitment Admissions and Enrolment** |
| * Has marketing material been agreed/approved in each institution, confirming that material conforms to each institutional quality and legal requirements e.g. course details, institutional logos? (I) * Are common arrangements (compatibility) for entry requirements/criteria in place, ensuring a clear and transparent recruitment purposes, including English Language requirements are in place for each institution? (B) * Are arrangements for non-standard entry consistent/parallel with regards to RPL arrangements in each institution for the dual or joint award(s)? Has the necessary mapping been undertaken and presented by the Course Team? (B) * Where DBS is required have local equivalents been applied? (B) * Where there are no equivalences in-country how will you be assured if this forms part of the entry criteria e.g. in-county police/security checks? (B) * With regards to enrolment, what has been agreed e.g. single/joint enrolment? Are practices consistent for both institutions with regards to Joint Awards, how is this going to be achieved/what is the process to ensure students are accurately enrolled to secure access to resources? Which institution is issuing the offer letters? (B) * What are the institutions agreed arrangements for UKBA monitoring? (I) * With regards to student transfer between Dual Awards, will this be permissible? What is the process for transfer? (B) |
| **2. Academic Calendars** |
| * Have each institutions academic calendars for the delivery of the dual or joint award(s) been aligned, for instance in the case of national holidays, institution closures etc.? (I) * Have any issues for non-alignment been resolved and how will accuracy be maintained? (I) |
| **3. Curriculum Content** |
| * Is there a clear distinction between full-time and part-time provision, are the number of credits clearly articulated in documentation/course delivery structures for both full-time and part-time delivery? (C) * Has each institution been involved in the design of all modules? (C) * Does each institutions contribution to the diet of the joint or dual award align with the equivalency of the FHEQ and that of the other institutions national expectations? How are you ensuring academic equivalency e.g. for credits/level/assessment? (B) * Will In-country accreditation be applied for, after the approval event/periodic review event? (I) * Have all In-country accreditation requirements been considered, mapped and applied to the joint or dual award(s) under consideration e.g. MQA, HKCAAVQ? * What issues does the Panel need to be made aware of should this approval of the award not meet specified timescale for accreditation? (B) * Have QAA subject benchmark statements been considered and incorporated into the design of the curriculum/modules? (B) * Are any interim awards to be considered? (C) * Has the delivery pattern of the joint or dual award (semester, academic year) been agreed? (B) * In the case of a joint award is there clear articulation of which modules are to be delivered, when and by which institution? (B) * In the case of joint or dual awards do modules align with the designated credit level and volume (CAMS)? (B) * Has due consideration been given to the avoidance of double credit accumulation/transfer? * Is there clear indication of the total amount of credit required to attain the joint or dual awards at each institution? (B) * Is the minimum period of study clearly articulated at each institution in the case of joint or dual awards? (B) * Are work related placements offered as part of the modules, when will this take place and at which institution? What documentation will students receive? How will the placement be monitored? (B) * Who will undertake any training/staff development needs for supervisors/mentors? What arrangements are in place for monitoring these staff and their turnover? (B) * Are there any PSRB requirements/implications, for instance is accreditation transferable, or will separate accreditation arrangement be required? How is this articulated in student facing documentation e.g. marketing literature? (B) |
| **4. Learning, Teaching and Assessment** |
| * In the case of joint and dual awards how does the assessment strategy promote a cohesive student learning experience? (C) * In the case of joint and dual awards how does the assessment strategy promote a cohesive student learning experience? (C) * Have the variety and range of assessments been designed collaboratively? (B) * Is there a joint marking rubric to ensure grade equivalency? (B) * Who is developing the teaching material for the modules? (B) * Will there be any co-delivery of modules? (B) * Will both Course Teams have access to modules, assessment and student outputs e.g. assessment results and feedback? How will access be facilitated? (B) * Are lines of responsibility clear for marking and moderation across the whole of the award(s)? How is marketing/moderation going to take place? What technical infrastructure will be used? (B) * What arrangements have been agreed for the consideration of joint assessment boards, extenuating circumstances and academic appeals? (I) * With regards to External Examining (EE) what are the arrangements for joint or dual awards? (I) * In the case of dissertation supervision u/g or Masters, will this be undertaken jointly, what are the arrangements, and for marking? (B) * In relation to student placement/work related learning what arrangements are in place to ensure students receive an equivalent experience? (B) * Are any variances to the assessment regulations required to meet each institutions requirements? (B)   If provision requires ethical approval for research projects what arrangements have been agreed for this?   * With regards to Research/Project Supervision, what are the minimum expectations for students and staff? (B) * If modules were taken by students on more than one site, then what consideration has been given to the security of exam questions? How will these be securely communicated to partners e.g. encryption? How will time zone differences be taken into account in the scheduling of exams? Who will have access rights to exam papers etc.? (B) |
| **5. Learning Resources** |
| * Can students access resources at each institution e.g. library, VLE? (I) * Have licence agreements been considered, not for just electronic resources e.g. online journals but also specific software with the relevant library/IT staff in each institution to ensure student access (full-time, part-time, distance)? (I) * Will staff have access to each institutions VLE? Who will train both staff and students on accessing resources? Also how will staff lists be kept up to date to make sure this can happen? (I) * What information will each institution upload/include? Has this been agreed jointly? (I) * Will technical support be provided/expectation for managing infrastructure problems? (I) |
| **6. Student Experience (Support/Induction/Student Representation/Handbook)** |
| * With regards to Induction what arrangements have been made? Is there any possibility of a shared induction, if applicable, or the use of video clips/lecture capture to ensure consistency of information communicated to students during this period? (B) * What arrangements are in place for both academic and personal tutorial support arrangements in each institution for full, part-time, ODL students? Are these comparable? Have these arrangements been clearly articulated in the Course Handbook? (B) * How will cohort identity be established and with the University? (B) * Will you have a joint Course Handbook? (B) * If students need to provide feedback relating to teaching, learning or resources, which institution will take the lead on resolving these? How will actions taken be communicated to students? (C) * How will students receive their marks/grades? Is this via e-Vision how will you ensure students and staff can access this facility? (I) * Are the roles and expectations of the Module and Course Leader in each institution clear e.g. model of delivery/access to material? (B) |
| **7. Quality Assurance** |
| * What will be the assessment board arrangements and who will be represented at the boards? (B) * How will each institution monitor and track modifications to modules? What arrangements are in place to ensure a consistent and timely approach? (B) * How will you prevent changes to assessment dates at short notice? (B) * What arrangements are in place for marking/classification, feedback and moderation of assessments to ensure standardisation e.g. video-conferencing to explain marking/grades/feedback? (B) * What arrangements are in place for the downloading, marking and moderation of large pieces of work such as dissertations, given the different time zones? (B) * How will student discipline, complaints and appeals be managed with regards to Dual/Joint Awards? (I) * Will there be reciprocal arrangements for annual monitoring e.g. External Examiners, quality visits? How will annual monitoring outputs feed into each institutions monitoring structures? (I) * Will staff have Associate Accounts to access SITS/e-Vision? What arrangements are in place for training/staff development e.g. Skype/on-site? (I) * What arrangements are in place to review and monitor Course Handbooks to ensure accuracy of published information? (B) * Are any changes required to the Quality Mapping as a result of the above discussions? (B) |

# Guidance - Approval of accelerated degrees

The University offers a range of provision delivered in a variety of flexible delivery patterns such as full-time, part-time and ODL modes. The University is extending its provision to include Accelerated degrees, sometime called fast-track or two-year degrees.

Definition: an ‘accelerated course’ as a higher education course where the number of academic years applicable to the course is at least one fewer than would normally be the case for that course, or a course of equivalent content leading to the grant of the same or an equivalent academic award (Department of Education, Dec 2017).

As part of the validation event to approve accelerated degrees the Panel will be required to assure themselves not only of the equivalence of the student experience against other patterns of delivery but also ensuring the quality and academic rigour of such courses is maintained. The following lines of enquiry have been developed to aid the Panel in addressing the most common themes of concern when approving accelerated provision.

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| --- |
| **1. Marketing and Recruitment** |
| * What is the target audience/market for this provision? * What research and analysis of the market has been undertaken to ensure the viability of such provision? * How are/have the Course Team developed effective relationships with students, employers, feeder schools and colleges to raise awareness of accelerated degree courses? * How are the Course Team ensuring they are not diluting the current market you currently recruit to for the standard parent course? * Are the Course Team intending to recruit an international market? * What mechanisms are in place to ensure students receive transparent, accurate information, advice and guidance on accelerated degrees e.g. quality, pace, expectation/management of rigorous study load, reduced breaks, extra curricula activity etc., and this is the correct route for the student? * Will the Course Team interview all applicants to assess their suitability and ability? * Will entry/admissions criteria differ from the equivalent parent course(s) run over the standard period (3 years)? What is the Course Team rationale where entry criteria are higher e.g. UCAS tariff, IELTS? Will this deter under-represented groups? * How will RPL be applied to increase WP, improve access and social mobility to such awards? Can students apply RPL towards module exemptions? What is the process and how easy is it for students to complete? * With regards to student transfer, how easy will it be for students to transfer between accelerated awards and standard parent awards, is this permissible? Are students informed of this option on entry? What is the process for transfer? * What makes the accelerated degree distinctive besides the fact that it is delivered and compressed into 2 years instead of the traditional 3 years, what are the unique selling points (USP)? |
| **2. Curriculum Structure and Design** |
| * Is the pedagogical approach to the accelerated award different from the standard parent course e.g. andragogic approach? * How have the Course Team worked with prospective or current students to co-design the course and the way it will be delivered to assure coherence and reduce fragmentation of the curriculum? How has this informed the restructuring of content and processes? * Is the award structure clearly articulated to ensure transparency of the number of credits to be studied in each academic year e.g. 180 credits? * How are modules structured i.e. sequentially, trimester or elongated existing semesters with a shorter summer session? * How are the notional number of hours accommodated in the accelerated award? * Will any modules be shared and delivered at the same time as those of the parent course? * Is the accelerated degree structured differently to the standard parent provision with regards to the use of a combination of learning modalities i.e. weekends or evenings, block delivery, blended learning, ODL etc. * What percentage of the accelerated degree will be face-to-face? * Are the Course Team intending or considering different entry and exit points to take account of a modular approach to delivery? * Are the range of core and option modules on offer the same as the standard parent course? * How will this course ensure sufficient time for reflection, deep learning and any preparatory work? * How will the Course Team ensure opportunities offered to standard students on parent courses such as work experience/work related learning/internships are scheduled to complement the students’ studies on an accelerated award(s)? * With regards to accreditation, have accrediting body requirements been incorporated into the design, if this is a feature of the award? * Will students still be able to undertake paid employment alongside the course? |
| **3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment** |
| * How are the Course Team assuring equity of experience and educational value with regards to delivering the appropriate amount of learning content in a shortened period of time? * With regards to embedding academic skills, how and what mechanisms are the Course Team employing to ensure students are equipped with the necessary skills to meet learning and assessment outcomes in a short period of time? * Are the Course Team engaging with Student & Library Services (SLS) to provide academic skills input? * What formative strategy is employed to facilitate initial and continuing feedback on meeting learning and assessment requirements e.g. early formative piece of work, continuous feedback? And how does this link to the summative assessment strategy? * With regards to the summative assessment strategy, how is this facilitating inclusive forms of assessment, and have any changes been made from the parent course to accommodate an accelerated mode? How are the Course Team ensuring academic rigour? * Will students have sufficient time to reflect and improve their work between summative assessments? * With regards to the summative assessment strategy, how is this facilitating inclusive forms of assessment, and have any changes been made from the parent course to accommodate an accelerated mode? How are the Course Team ensuring academic rigour? * Is submission of draft work encouraged? * Can you explain your assessment timing strategy and how this facilitates student achievement/progression? Are there any consequences envisaged because of the tighter schedule for assessment? * Can the Course Team explain the re-assessment strategy and how this will be operationalised to ensure students have an equitable experience? * Are any adjustments required to Assessment Regulation’s to ensure students’ progress between trimesters and stages on the accelerated route e.g. Variance/re-study/re-assessment opportunities/ trailing modules? * Does the academic calendar for the delivery of the accelerated award(s) include opportunities for staff to undertake research and embed research informed teaching? * Will students have time to undertake or participate in the students as researchers’ scheme? |
| **4. Learning Resources** |
| * Will there be a need for additional resources to accommodate the accelerated provision, particularly where modules/resources are to be shared? * How are the Course Team ensuring the level of access/availability of academic tutors and technical staff e.g. IT, Lab technician staff, remains consistent during the summer semester? * Will the Course Team look to include additional support, such as English support for International students? |
| **5. Student Experience (Support/Induction/Student Representation/Handbook)** |
| * With regards to Induction, how does this differ from the standard parent course? * What support arrangement are in place outside of timetabled hours? * Where the delivery period operates in trimester 3 – summer period what support arrangements are in place to Personal Tutors and additional support facilities? * What mechanisms have the Course Team put in place to develop and build cohort identity and peer support to aid retention? * What mechanisms are in place to closely monitor the students experience and progression? What happens if students experience difficulties in managing their studies? * How will you ensure students don’t become isolated if large parts of the award delivery is via ODL? * Will students still have the same level of access to student facilities, such as student support e.g. counselling, learning support, catering, and accommodation during the summer semester? * Will students share the same Course Handbooks as the parent course or will this be tailored to reflect the uniqueness of the accelerated award? * What strategies and mechanisms are the Course Team employing for cross working/building relationships/networks between students on the standard parent course and the accelerated award? |
| **6. Quality Assurance** |
| * How are you the Course Team ensuring Mitigation and Extenuating Circumstances are dealt with in a timely manner to support student attainment and progression? How are processes ensuring an equivalent experience is maintained with standard parent courses? * How will the Course Team prevent changes to assessment dates at short notice? * Are the Course Team making adjustments to feedback and moderation practices to accommodate the accelerated mode? * How will student discipline, complaints and non-academic appeals be managed? |

# Guidance - Additional Regulatory Requirements for the Approval of Professional Doctorate Courses – 2017 Regulations

The Framework and Regulations for the Assessment, Progression & Award of Professional Doctorates makes reference to a number of requirements that should be established at approval/period review of such courses.

These guidelines detail the regulations that make reference to the validation process and Panels should ensure that these themes are addressed and recorded within course documentation.

**Period of Registration**

The maximum period of registration for professional doctorate awards studied by online learning will be considered and approved during the approval/review process.

**1.1 Admission/Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)**

Admission and RPEL requirements **must be clearly specified at the course approval stage.** It is not expected that students will be granted RPEL against the Advanced Independent Work part of the Professional Doctorate award.

**1.2 Research Methods Training**

All Professional Doctorate courses must include an element of advanced research methods, defined as specific techniques required to conduct research in a particular discipline, minimally to the value of 60 credits or 600 hours of notional learning time. **The course documentation must state clearly how and where in the course this is achieved*.*** This aspect of the course is intended to provide the student with the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of the Advanced Independent Work.

**1.3 Recognition of Intermediate Achievement**

Subject to meeting the requisite regulations, students enrolling on a Professional Doctorate Course may exit with a Masters award. The student must achieve a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7/8, of which at least 60 credits must be achieved via a successful dissertation or equivalent. Subject to meeting the requisite regulations for the course and credit requirements, students may also be allowed to exit with a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma (i.e. without the requirement for at least 60 credits via a dissertation or equivalent).

**The title of such awards will be determined at the approval stage of the course.**

Any student enrolling for a Professional Doctorate Course will not, normally, be permitted to receive an intermediate award unless they withdraw (or is withdrawn) from a course holding sufficient credits for the conferment of the intermediate award.

**1.4(i) Progression Points**

Documentation should clearly articulate any areas where sequencing of modules within the course is critical to course coherence and the effective “progression” of students through the course. Exit points should be made clear in the course documentation***.***

**Each course should develop a proposal for managing progression, as appropriate to the course structure, which can be discussed at approval/review.** For full-time courses, progression points are likely to be at the end of each year of study.

As a minimum, one progression point should be included at which a Progression & Award Board determines whether a student has made sufficient progress as to move to the Advanced Independent Work part of the course. **For this progression point, Course Teams are also required to identify, at course Approval/Review, which modules must be successfully completed before the student is allowed to progress to the Advanced Independent Work*.*** Additional progression points may be included as appropriate to the course structure.

**1.4 (ii) Progress on the Advanced Independent Work**

Where the Advanced Independent Work is completed following the taught modules, once per year, as agreed at Course Approval, the Progression & Award Board of the student’s course of study shall establish whether a student is still actively engaged on the Advanced Independent Work and is maintaining regular contact with the supervisors, and shall consider a report from the supervisor on the student’s progress. As a result of obtaining this report, the Progression & Award Board shall take appropriate action which may include the withdrawal from the course. The Quality Framework,[**Framework for Assessment, Award & Progression**](https://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/index.cfm?folder=student%20regulations&name=Assessment%20Regulations) sets out further specific Regulations for the Advanced Independent Work.

A student whose Progression is not approved may not proceed and withdrawal processes may be initiated by the Progression & Award Board.

**1.4 (iii) Recording of Supervision Meetings**

Mechanisms for the recording of supervision meetings (e.g. either through the use of log books or tutorial records) **will be agreed at course approval**.

**1.5 Nomination of Examination Team**

Nomination for External Examiner(s) for the Advanced Independent Work module will be forwarded to the School Student Learning & Experience Sub-Committee (SSLESC).

[**Chapter D2: External Examiner Process**](https://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/DocRepo/Quality%20framework/D2%20-%20External%20Examiner%20Process.doc)

Arrangements for the nomination of the Examination Team for individual students shall be determined at course approval.

**1.6 Composition of Examination Team**

A student shall be examined by at least two and, normally, not more than three examiners [except where **section 6.8.6** below applies], of whom at least one shall be an External Examiner, and at least one of whom shall have up-to-date professional expertise. The Course Director/Leader will oversee the selection of the **Examination Team following the mechanisms agreed at course approval.** The student shall have no input into the selection of the Examination Team.

**Guideline Extracts:**

From the regulations that make reference to the Approval/Review process and Panels should ensure that these issues are addressed within course documentation and recorded within Approval/Periodic Review reports.

Course Teams should access the full [**assessment regulations**](https://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/index.cfm?folder=student%20regulations&name=Assessment%20Regulations) when considering these issues as the guidance only provides a summary rather than the full regulation.

**1. Format of the Advanced Independent Work**

**Regulation 1.2.2** - The format of the Advanced Independent Work (AIW) (Thesis/Dissertation) may differ according to the requirements of the area of professional practice in question and will be discussed and approved as part of Course Approval Processes.

**Regulation 1.2.3** - The word length of the AIW should be commensurate with the number of credits allocated, with Level 8 outcomes and appropriate to the form of AIW presented. This should be agreed as part of the Course Approval process. Where a Course Team wishes to include more than one component for the AIW, this should be considered as part of the Course Approval process.

**2. Research Methods Training**

**Regulation 1.2.5** - All Professional Doctorate courses must include an element of advanced research methods, defined as specific techniques required to conduct research in a particular discipline, minimally to the value of 60 credits or 600 hours of notional learning time. The Course Document for each Professional Doctorate award must clearly state how and where in the course this is achieved.

**3. Recognition of Prior Learning**

**Regulation 3.5 –** Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) requirements for each Professional Doctorate award must be clearly specified at course approval. Students will not be granted RPL against the AIW part of a Professional Doctorate award.

**4.** **Intermediate Awards**

**Regulation 3.16 -** If a student fails to satisfy the requirements for a primary target award, an intermediate award may be conferred if the credit requirements and associated learning outcomes for that award have been met. These requirements will be specified either at course approval or in the University’s CAMS framework.

Intermediate Awards should be agreed as part of the Approval process and a Course Specification produced. Such awards must be contained within the University Schedule of Awards.

**5.** **In-module Retake**

**Regulation 4.5.4 -** On a module basis, and only if approved as a specific reassessment strategy at the time of approval, courses may make arrangements for students to retake specific assessment tasks in-module before the result has been formally ratified by a Module Assessment Board.

In-module Retake is not available for the Advanced Independent Work (Thesis/Dissertation).

**6.** **Exceptional Third Attempt**

**Regulation 4.5.5 -** On a module basis, and only if approved as a specific reassessment strategy at the time of approval, courses may make arrangements for students to undertake a second reassessment opportunity (i.e. a third attempt).

Exceptional Third Attempts are only available for modules at Level 7 and are not available for the Advanced Independent Work.

**7.** **Progression**

**Regulation 5** **-** Each course should develop a proposal for managing progression, as appropriate to the course structure, which should be agreed as part of the course approval process. As a minimum, one progression point should be included at which a Progression & Award Board determines whether a student has made sufficient progress to move to the Advanced Independent Work part of the course. Any exist points and intermediate awards should be made clear in course documentation.

**8. Responsibilities of the Supervisory Team**

**Regulation 6.2.7 -** Course Teams are required to develop a list of responsibilities of the Supervisory Team and of the student which should be discussed at Approval/Review. This should be clearly communicated to students, normally through the Course Handbook.

**9.** **Length of the AIW**

**Regulation 6.3.8** **-** The length of the AIW should conform to the word limit and other requirements as agreed at course approval, depending upon the type of AIW format required for the assessment.

Specific details of the format of the AIW will be included in the Research Handbook for each course.

**10. Nomination of the Examination Team**

***Regulation 6.4.7******-*** *Arrangements for the nomination of the Examination Team for individual students shall be determined at course approval.*

# Guidance - Approval of Awards Containing Workplace/Work Related Learning

Workplace Learning (WPL) can constitute all or part of an award at any level. It most often appears in awards with Employer Partnership involvement though the complexity of the Partnership and the level of involvement of the Employer Partner can vary. It is not particularly useful therefore to approach the validation of awards containing WPL with a single set of questions, as those questions will not be relevant for all eventualities.

The Course Team should have considered a set of over-arching principles in relation to the student learning experience and provided information based on those principles.

**Principles:**

**1. Recognisable as Higher Education**

The validation Panel must seek evidence which demonstrates that awards and modules containing Workplace Learning:

* Meet the academic standards for credits as articulated in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
* Are assessed with a view to meeting those standards in a fair and rigorous manner.

**2. The Student Learning Experience**

Workplace Learning involves at least some if not the vast majority of the learning to occur in the workplace. It is likely that students will have their own unique “learning environment” depending on the opportunities in their workplace; their capacity to attend any campus-based session, and their access to IT and HE facilities. The Approval Panel must seek evidence which demonstrates that awards and modules containing WPL present students with multiple opportunities to:

* Access and use learning materials.
* Seek tutorial advice and support (including academic and workplace support where relevant).
* Contact and engage in academic and professional discussion with other learners.

Awards will develop different strategies to enable these activities (use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), residential weekends, electronic discussion boards, times when tutors are available via phone, etc.). These strategies should be outlined in the Course Specification.

**3. Incorporating Workplace Expertise**

For awards that contain substantial elements of WPL and assessment (including placements), it is usually the case that the student is learning from (and sometimes being assessed by) other staff in the workplace. Whatever the level of involvement of staff in employer organisations, it is the University that is ultimately responsible for the quality of standards and the rigour of the assessment. The Course Team must provide evidence which demonstrates that awards and modules contain Workplace Learning by:

* Providing appropriate support to workplace mentors/supervisors/tutors (through such mechanisms as Mentor Workshops, Mentor Handbooks, e-groups etc.) to ensure that students are able to achieve the stated learning outcomes.
* The assessment of professional competence undertaken in the workplace should involve both the relevant academic Link Tutor and practice assessor, the University Assessment and Feedback Policy (AFP) provides guidance on the appropriate mechanism to support assessment and moderation.

The Academic Enhancement Framework (AEF): Future Ready provides additional relevant information.

An outline of arrangements should be given in the Course Specification. Evidence of the support for Workplace Mentors/Supervisors can best be demonstrated by submission of a Handbook alongside the course documentation. The checklist for the minimum requirements of such Handbooks can be found in the Quality Framework **Chapter C** – **C-Appendix 2 Guidance for Course Teams for the Validation of New and Periodic Review of Courses, Including Collaborative Provision** – page 81 Handbooks - Workplace Provider.

The University has established practice of designing and approving 2 year part-time foundation degrees on the basis that the nature of the work hours contributes to the overall learning hours which equates to the full-time experience. The differences in the Learning and Teaching strategy for each group of learners should be clearly articulated within both the module and/or course specification, whilst evidencing the underpinning rationale within course approval documentation.

# Guidance - Approval of Foundation Degrees

Foundation Degrees have a range of distinctive characteristics not necessarily present in other qualifications at Level 5, nor in the initial parts of courses that lead directly to Bachelor’s Degrees with Honours. Foundation Degrees would **not** normally form an intermediate award for an honours degree.

Therefore, Panels considering the validation of Foundation Degree courses should ensure that the following distinctive principles are addressed. Further guidance can be obtained from the [**QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement.**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/characteristics-statements)**[[4]](#footnote-4)**

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| **Employer Involvement** |
| Foundation Degrees integrate academic and workplace learning through close collaboration between employers and course providers. They are intended to equip learners with knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to their (potential) employment and, therefore, satisfying the needs of employees and employers.  The Panel should confirm that the Course Team has involved employers in the development/Periodic Review process and that the needs of employees have also been considered.  Where employers will be involved in the delivery and/or assessment of the course, the specific detail should be provided on how the employers will be supported to undertake this role, e.g. what training will be provided and what ongoing support mechanisms will be put in place. |
| **Accessibility and Flexibility** |
| Foundation Degrees are designed to appeal to learners wishing to enter a profession as well as those seeking continuing professional development. They can also provide pathways for lifelong learning and the opportunity to progress to other qualifications. Flexibility on the part of the Institution, the learner and the employer is central to many aspects of Foundation Degrees.  The Panel should seek evidence as to how the course(s) have been developed to accommodate the learning needs and requirements of different types of students on the course. The Panel should also establish how workplace learning is integrated into the course and whether the intended mode(s) of delivery accommodates this.  The University has established practice of designing and approving 2 year part-time foundation degrees on the basis that the nature of the work hours contributes to the overall learning hours which equates to the full-time experience. The differences in the Learning and Teaching strategy for each group of learners should be clearly articulated within both the module and/or course specification, whilst evidencing the underpinning rationale within course approval documentation. |
| **Partnership** |
| Partnership between employers, HEIs, FE Colleges and the Sector Skills Councils and/or other relevant PSRB(s) is central to the concept of Foundation Degrees. The design and delivery of Foundation Degrees are likely to be informed by the Framework(s) for Foundation Degrees of appropriate Sector Skills Council(s) and/or other relevant PSRB(s).  The Panel should confirm that the course(s) design and delivery have been informed by the Sector Skills Councils and/or other relevant PSRB(s), as well as any other relevant benchmarks. |
| **Articulation and Progression** |
| Foundation Degrees should provide recognition of the knowledge, skills and understanding that an applicant for a Foundation Degree has already developed, which may have come as a result of learning through work (paid/unpaid), or other activities and interests. Foundation Degrees provide self-standing qualifications of specific value but are also expected to provide for opportunities for further (lifelong) study which could take a number of different forms (e.g. professional body qualification, higher level (NVQ). In addition, Foundation Degrees will link to at least one course leading to a Bachelor’s Degree with Honours.  The Panel should explore how Recognition of Prior Learning will be used to assist learners in accessing the course.  The Panel should establish what degree course(s) (or other equivalent qualifications) the award(s) under consideration lead to and how students will be prepared for potential progression. The Panel should also establish what other opportunities are provided to promote lifelong learning. |
| **Knowledge and Understanding** |
| The QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark identifies the following generic outcomes that holders of a Foundation Degree should be able to demonstrate:   * Knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles in their field of study and the way in which those principles have developed. * Successful application in the workplace of the range of knowledge and skills learnt throughout the course. * Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied and the application of those principles in a work context. * Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s) and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in their field of study, and apply these in a work context. * An understanding of the limits of their knowledge and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in their field of study and in a work context.   The Panel should confirm that the outcomes detailed above will be delivered within the course(s) under consideration. |

# Guidance - Designing Professional Apprenticeships (Pa)

The following section sets out relevant information and the key considerations for the design, development and delivery of an apprenticeship course.

An Apprenticeship is essentially a job role with training to recognised industry standards. It should be about entry or progression to a recognised occupation and involve a substantial programme of on-the-job and off-the-job learning and training. The apprentice’s occupational competence will be tested at the end of the apprenticeship through an End Point Assessment (EPA). Any individual undertaking an apprenticeship that involves a higher education qualification must be employed, but they are also a participant in a higher education course and as such they will also be considered to be a student by the higher education provider. However, it is the employer, rather than the apprentice, who is the customer and purchaser of the apprenticeship.

The design of all higher education in apprenticeships must begin with the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and programmes of learning must be designed to meet the requirements of the standard.

In addition, all apprenticeships that involve a higher education qualification (a qualification that sits at level 4 or above on the FHEQ in England, Wales and Northern Island) are covered by the expectations of the **QAA** [**UK Quality Code for Higher Education**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code) **(“the Quality Code”).** As with standard University approval/review practice set out in this document, higher and degree apprenticeships delivered/awarded by the University must ensure they meet the expectations for academic standards and course design set out by the Quality Code, irrespective of the location(s) in which they are delivered, who is involved in delivery, or whether they are delivered in conjunction with professional or other qualifications.

However, as an approved apprenticeship Provider, the University must also comply with the wider regulatory frameworks that relate to apprenticeships, as well as those governing funding and professional qualifications. In particular, the University’s apprenticeship delivery **must** be compliant with the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) [**apprenticeship funding rules**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-rules-2018-to-2019) and Ofsted’s Education Inspection Framework, which govern the delivery and funding of apprenticeships.

The guidance provided in this section has been informed by the ESFA apprenticeship funding rules and extrapolated from the detailed advice published by the QAA on quality assuring higher education in apprenticeships, which is particularly pertinent to the delivery of apprenticeships that involve HE qualifications at undergraduate and post graduate level and in assuring academic standards and quality**[[5]](#footnote-5)**.

In addition, the QAA Characteristics Statement **[“Higher Education in Apprenticeships” (July 2019)](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/characteristics-statements)** sets out the characteristics and distinctive features of apprenticeships in the UK, where they include a higher education award. This should be read in the context of the Quality Code, together with the [**QAA’s accompanying advice & guidance on the theme of work-based learning**.](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/work-based-learning)

**The Difference between Higher and Degree Apprenticeships**

The difference between a “Higher” and a “Degree” apprenticeship is essentially related to whether or not a degree is a compulsory element of the apprenticeship standard and can be summarised as follows:

|  |
| --- |
| **Higher Apprenticeship**  Levels 4, 5, 6 & 7  Equivalent to FD and above. Degrees may be incorporated at L6 & L7 but are not a mandatory element of the apprenticeship standard |

|  |
| --- |
| **Degree Apprenticeship**  Level 6 (Bachelor's) & L7 (Master’s)  “Degree Apprenticeships” incorporate a mandatory degree at the specified level |

**The Apprenticeship Lifecycle**

Professional Apprenticeship courses follow the course life cycle stages as set out under **Chapter C** of the Quality Framework for Course Validation. Professional Apprenticeship courses may follow either mode set out below:

* Design of a new degree course suitable for apprenticeship delivery:

This will follow **Route A** of the Course approval process (and documentation) set out in Chapter C, and must include specific information regarding the suitability of the new course to the delivery of the apprenticeship standard, or;

* Use or adapt an existing course (e.g. Foundation degree, Batchelor’s or Master’s): This will follow **Route B** of the Course approval process (fast track accelerated route), using the Professional Apprenticeship approval form available from the Quality Framework [**templates**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/AR2017/Supporting%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx) site**.**

**Employer Engagement and Consultation**

As with all course development, and in particular with Professional Apprenticeships, employer engagement and consultation is a key element, along with collaboration with the apprentice’s employer at all stages of apprenticeship delivery, including monitoring progress and agreeing an apprentice’s work-based project and readiness for the End Point Assessment.

**Designing Professional Apprenticeships**

The starting point for offering any new higher or degree apprenticeship must always be the identification of a suitable apprenticeship Standard approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) – details of all Standards approved and in development can be found at: [**https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/**](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/)

Regarding TU internal regulations and policies, every higher or degree apprenticeship course must reflect the key features of the[**Credit Accumulation & Module Scheme**](https://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/DocRepo/Quality%20framework/CAMS.doc)**,** the [**Credit Level Descriptors**](https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/about/public_information/quality_framework.cfm), utilise the Generic Marking Criteria (see [**Assessment and Feedback Policy**](https://extra.tees.ac.uk/sites/publicdocuments/Legal%20and%20Governance%20Services/Assessment%20and%20Feedback%20Policy.pdf)), and comply with relevant [**Academic Enhancement Framework**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/SD2017/SitePages/Academic%20Enhancement%20Framework.aspx)(AEF) elements.

Externally, courses must still comply with the [**Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code), incorporate relevant qualification characteristics, subject benchmarks and satisfy any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. In addition, courses must meet relevant integrated EPA assessment plan requirements, outcomes and marking criteria, together with Ofsted requirements.

**Support available at Teesside University**

There are a number of areas of the University which can provide support during the course development process:

* The Academic Development (AD) team in Student Learning & Academic Registry will be able to provide advice and guidance to Course Teams on the overall design process or on specific learning, teaching and assessment issues. Additional guidance is available in a series of guides to help support staff in their learning and teaching role. This series of booklets is available at the [**LTE Online website**](https://blogs.tees.ac.uk/lteonline/learning-and-teaching/).
* The Quality Assurance and Validation (QAV) Team within Student Learning & Academic Registry can provide guidance and advice on quality assurance aspects of apprenticeship design and approval.
* Department for Professional Apprenticeships
* Finance, and
* Student Recruitment and Marketing (SRM).

**Subcontracting Apprenticeship Delivery**

Occasionally, the University may wish to approve the delivery of elements of a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship through a subcontracting arrangement with another organisation. This could apply to elements of a University award, or aspects of the apprenticeship which are separate to the award, but not delivered by the University.

Please ensure that you consult with the Department of Professional Apprenticeships and refer to the **ESFA Apprenticeships Subcontracting** requirements for further information, if subcontracting is going to be a feature of the apprenticeship you are developing.

**N.B.** In addition, where subcontracting involves the delivery of elements of a Teesside University award (i.e., taught credits) by another organisation, the Partnership processes in **Chapter E** of the Quality Framework will also apply (see **Chapter E**). Please contact SLAR (QAV) for assistance if this is the case for the apprenticeship you are developing.

**Methods of Assessment**

Whilst complying with the University’s Assessment and Feedback Policy, it is also important to consider the variety of assessment methods which may be required for an apprenticeship. These will need to be appropriate in enabling the apprentice to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the apprenticeship standard (see further details below). The methods of assessment used should reflect the context of authentic working practice and include opportunities for the apprentice to use their workplace experiences to meet assessment requirements.

**Use of Variance in the Design of Course Approval/Periodic Review**

The University operates Institution-wide assessment regulations to ensure professional academic judgements about standards and performance are exercised in such a way that all students are treated fairly, comparatively and with consistency regardless of School, College, subject or course.

However, it is recognised that occasionally, and under specific conditions, some variance to the Regulations may be necessary in order to meet the requirements of PSRBs or apprenticeship standards. For example, for integrated EPAs, there may be a requirement for an additional Progression Board to take place prior to students’ progression to the EPA module – this would require a variance request.

**Key Features of Professional Apprenticeships**

Individuals can only be funded and trained as apprentices if they are employed and working towards the achievement of an Apprenticeship Standard approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IFA) and Technical Education (IfATE).

**Knowledge, Skills & Behaviours (KSBs)**

1. All Apprenticeship Standards define the **Knowledge**, **Skills** and **Behaviours (KSBs)** required to perform the identified job role and it is a condition of ESFA funding and Ofsted that HE providers must ensure that the courses they offer are designed to enable an apprentice to develop the duties and KSBs specified in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.
2. The clarity of the relationship between the duties and KSBs specified in the Apprenticeship Standard and course/module learning outcomes is a key consideration of the University validation process. While “knowledge” and “skills” outcomes are common to HE courses, particular attention may need to be given to how “behaviours” are reflected and supported in course/module learning outcomes.
3. Effective collaboration between the employer and the University across all aspects of the apprenticeship is required to ensure high quality apprenticeship provision. Particular consideration needs to be given to arrangements for supporting the apprentice in the workplace to develop the duties and KSBs required to pass the EPA and therefore achieve the apprenticeship.

**End Point Assessment**

* Apprenticeship Standards also require all apprentices to successfully complete an **End Point Assessment (EPA)** in order to achieve their apprenticeship. Details of the format of the EPA and other specific requirements for the ongoing assessment of the apprenticeship are contained within the published Assessment Plan, which accompanies each Apprenticeship Standard. The structure of the EPA varies from standard to standard but can include elements such as portfolios, work-based projects, presentations and professional discussions. Familiarity with both the relevant Standard and Assessment Plan is essential for course teams delivering apprenticeships.
* For a Degree Apprenticeship (i.e., where a L6 or L7 degree is a compulsory element of the apprenticeship), the EPA will be designated within the apprenticeship standard as either “integrated”, “fully integrated” or “non-integrated”. In a “non-integrated” degree apprenticeship, the EPA is external to the degree and is conducted by an independent organisation selected by the employer from the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO). In the case of an “integrated” degree apprenticeship, the EPA is conducted as part of the degree itself, by the University. However, the University must be successfully registered on the RoEPAO for this apprenticeship in order to carry out the EPA, even though it is for our own degree award. The Department of Professional Apprenticeships (DAP) will be able to advise and assist with this application process.
* The majority of apprenticeship learning takes place ‘on-the-job’ while apprentices are engaged in work activity, therefore an apprentices’ work will provide a source for learning.

**Off-the-Job Learning and Training Time**

* A statutory requirement of an apprenticeship standard is that there should be at least 6 hours of off the job training per week.
* *‘Off-the-job’* learning can take the form of traditional face-to-face delivery by a higher education provider or can take place within the workplace. However, it must always be directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard, teaching new knowledge, skills and behaviours, and can include:
* The teaching of theory (e.g., lectures, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning, manufacturer training);
* Practical training, shadowing, mentoring, industry visits & attendance at competitions;
* Learning support and time spent writing assessments / assignments.
* It does not include:
* Training to acquire KSBs not required by the Standard;
* English and Maths up to L2 (this is funded separately);
* Progress reviews / on-programme assessment;
* Training which takes place outside the Apprentice’s normal working hours.
* Further guidance and a range of examples relating to off-the-job learning and training can also be found in the DfE publication: [**“Apprenticeship off-the-job training: Policy background and examples” Version 4 (October 2022)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training)

The following table of Key Themes lists a variety of aspects the Course Team should consider in the design, development and delivery of a higher or degree apprenticeship and is intended to be used as prompts for guidance.

# Key Themes to be addressed by the Course Team in the design, development and delivery of Professional Apprenticeships

The Course Team should consider the following themes in the design, development and delivery of the professional apprenticeship:

|  |
| --- |
| **1. Setting Academic Standards and Devising Apprenticeships:** |
| * Have you checked the detail of the **apprenticeship standard and assessment plan** to ensure match to TU provision? * Does the published Apprenticeship Standard specify a compulsory title or particular qualification for the **course** itself? If so, this title must be used in order to obtain apprenticeship funding. * Have you evidenced the consultation and engagement with the employer(s) that has taken place? * Illustrate clearly the **mapping** of the degree apprenticeship qualification against the specified Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan to demonstrate the relationship between the KSBs and module learning outcomes (see Quality Framework [**templates**](https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/departments/058/AR2017/Supporting%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx) site). * Does the mapping indicate clear alignment of KSBs to meet the competencies required for apprentices to undertake the **EPA** where this is **not integrated** into the higher or degree apprenticeship? * In the case ofan **integrated** Degree Apprenticeships is the **EPA** clearly articulated and does it indicate coterminous completion with the higher or degree apprenticeship? * Where appropriate does the apprenticeship course map to the relevant PSRB and how is this demonstrated? * Is the intent and impact of the apprenticeship course clear, i.e. what is the course designed to deliver and what is the impact for the employer and apprentice? |
| **2. Recruitment, Selection and Admissions** |
| * Apprentices can be either existing or new employees, but where necessary for new employees, is there a clear selection and enrolment process between the apprenticeship employer and University? * How will you ensure that apprentices meet the minimum entry criteria for the apprenticeship and confirm that the apprenticeship is a suitable route for them (by carrying out an initial needs assessment)? * Have proposals for recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) and recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL) been incorporated into the non-standard entry requirements for the apprenticeship? |
| **3. Published Information** |
| * Has the following information been clearly articulated to support the recruitment, selection and admission process: * Title and level of apprenticeship offered (does this match the requirements of the apprenticeship standard?) * Location and modes of learning and how these are organised by both the School and employer. * The role of the employer in recruitment and selection and how this fits in with the admission requirements of the University. * The role of the employer in the EPA. * How flexible approaches are used in assessing the suitability of candidates, by taking vocational qualifications, RPCL/RPEL and employer input into account. |
| **4. Learning, Teaching and Apprentice development** |
| * How will off-the-job training and learning time be ensured (this can be achieved in a number of ways, e.g., through face-to-face delivery by HE provider, time to complete assignments, online learning or can take place within the workplace (outside of day-to-day duties). * Is there a differentiated learning, teaching, and assessment strategy employed to assess apprentice learning, particularly for the EPA? * Is any module content of the apprenticeship delivered via a blended learning approach e.g., Online Learning? * Are there any plans for teaching to be undertaken in the workplace and by whom? How you will you support them e.g., access to learning resources, VLE? * In the case of Workplace mentors how are they selected, trained and supported e.g., induction, offering mentoring and coaching qualifications, on-going liaison/meetings and virtual support, to understand expectations and undertake their responsibilities? * How and in which modules is reflective practice developed for apprentices, particularly where needed to support End Point Assessment (e.g., learning logs, PDP portfolios etc.)? * Where negotiated work-based projects are associated with the EPA, how are these going to be managed (supervision) and assessed? * Where apprentices need to undertake additional qualifications prior to EPA e.g., NVQ, Level 2 Maths and/or English, how will this be monitored to ensure engagement? |
| **5. Assessment and EPA** |
| * Do the methods of assessment incorporate sufficient opportunities for the apprentice to use their workplace experiences to meet course and EPA assessment requirements? * What consideration has been given to assessment deadlines to accommodate work priorities and Gateway & EPA timelines? * How are apprentices supported to prepare for the End Point Assessment? * What elements of assessment will be undertaken by the employer in the workplace? * What training and support will be offered to the employer for their involvement in setting work-based projects and the assessment of their apprentices’ readiness for EPA? * Thinking of potential students/apprentices, do the module descriptors provide a clear overview of the module’s content, the learning and teaching strategies it employs, and the strategy used to assess learning, including EPA where applicable? * Is the assessment of PSRB/accreditation carried out simultaneously or does it involve separate assessments? * Please note : Where a variance to the Assessment Regulations is required, this should be submitted with the course documents for consideration by the Validation Event Panel. |
| **6. Apprentice progress review and support** |
| * What support/arrangements are in place to support apprentice transition to HE and continued progression through the levels of the course? * How will apprentices access both academic study and pastoral support; what mechanisms are in place? * What support will apprentices receive whist in the workplace e.g., workplace mentoring? What minimum expectations of support have been agreed? * Will apprentices be subject to completing additional feedback to that of standard courses? * How will the mandatory 3-way review process be managed (i.e., the regular progress meetings between apprentice, University and employer)? * How will the apprentice be supported to ensure that they are prepared for the EPA whilst in the Gateway? |

# Guidance - Approval of Higher National Awards

Higher Nationals (HNs) are offered at the University under licence from Pearson. The Licence agreement brings with it a number of conditions around the award design.

The HEI Licence authorises Teesside University to operate and approve HNs using its own titles and modules tailored to meet local needs. However, the following condition must be adhered to:

* Where a Pearson BTEC National qualification already exists with a closely related title and or content, the University course must cover the same core content as the equivalent Pearson HN course.

There is no such requirement for University awards where an equivalent Pearson award does not exist.

The Panel should ensure the following:

* All proposed HNs follow the Pearson HNs regulations, detailed below:

**1. Level and Credit Requirements for the Awards**

1.1 Higher National (HN) qualifications will be available at level 4 and level 5 are mapped to the QAA Framework for FHEQ in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

1.1.1 Level 4 will be called a Higher National Certificate

1.1.2 Level 4 and 5 will be called a Higher National Diploma

1.2 Higher National Diploma (“HNDs”)

HNDs will comprise two stages of 120 credits each:

1.2.1 Stage 1 will comprise units at level 4;

1.2.2 Stage 2 will comprise units at level 5.

1.3. Higher National Certificate (“HNCs”)

1.3.1. HNCs will comprise one stage of 120 credits at level 4.

**2. Key Guiding Characteristics**

2.1 Higher National qualifications will have Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning (GL) totals as follows:

2.1.1 A HND will be worth 2400 hours of TQT and 960 hours of GL.

2.1.2 A HNC will be worth 1200 hours of TQT and 480 hours of GL.

2.2 Core/ compulsory modules credit values may vary by subject but will not be less than 30% of the whole qualification.

2.3 All Higher Nationals will share the following guiding characteristics:

2.3.1 Include significant employer/industry involvement in their development and design.

2.3.2 Demonstrate access from level 3.

2.3.3 Demonstrate that graduates at each level of the HN have the requisite skills and abilities to progress to the next level of study should they so choose. This includes ensuring that HND graduates can progress to level 6.

2.3.4 Include mandatory work skills development through work experience and or/realistic work-related learning.

2.3.5 Evidence of development and assessment of students’ knowledge and skills in:

2.3.5.1 Communication, including written English, or relevant other language.

2.3.5.2 Numeracy.

2.3.5.3 Enterprise and commercial awareness.

2.3.5.4 Problem Solving.

2.3.5.5 Self-reflection and critical appraisal.

For further advice and guidance, contact the University key contact for Pearson, contact Student Learning & Academic Registry (Academic Policy and Regulation).

# Guidance - Approval of Courses Delivered by online Learning

**Extract from the Quality Framework Chapter C, 7.3 Course(s) to be delivered by Online Learning (OL).**

**7.3 Course(s) to be delivered by Online Learning (OL)**

Where a course is delivered by online learning (OL) (either module(s) or the entire course), there is an expectation the Course Team will deliver a presentation to the Panel on the proposed pedagogic approaches to be adopted. This will include the relationships of the proposed module or course to the FFL Strategy and the OL Strategic Transformation and Change Project.

The Panel will seek to:

* Assure the viability around a proposed structure for the course, structure in modules is in line with active and collaborative pedagogic and design thinking;
* Assure the skills and the expertise of the staff delivering the course via these methods;
* Assure the alignment of the proposed provision with the University’s strategic approach to design and development and systems and processes of online learning.

The Course Team may demonstrate relevant OL learning materials within the appropriate platform.

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In addition to the themes to be addressed for Campus delivery courses, particular consideration should be given to the following:

**Inclusivity**

* Can the target population access the necessary hardware and software to engage with the learning, teaching and assessment delivery?
* Are there a variety of mediums used to provide learning materials in alternative formats?
* Is there an appropriate and varied assessment strategy that will not disadvantage students?
* How will flexibility in the provision of learning materials be offered to students to provide an inclusive approach?

What provisions are to be made to maximise accessibility to learning?

**Course Structure**

* What is the period of registration?
* What is the minimum and maximum number of modules which can be undertaken in one academic year?

**Learning and Teaching Strategy**

* What forms of communication will be used to deliver the learning content (synchronous/asynchronous/a blend of the two)?
* What is the induction process to OL for new independent learners?
* How will socialisation in the online environment be addressed?
* How will collaborative work take place between learners?
* What tools and methods will be used to ensure active student engagement?
* How will the Course Team ensure an equitable high-quality student experience?
* How will the development of learning materials be managed?
* How will the student experience be managed to avoid isolation?
* If the course is to be offered in different delivery modes (face-to-face, online distance) is there equivalence in learning outcomes, assessment strategy and overall student experience between the different modes?

**Assessment**

* Is the assessment strategy aligned with the mode of delivery and the learning outcomes?
* Will technology be used for the assessment and how will this be managed to ensure an equitable experience and maintain quality assurance practices?
* Is there group and peer assessment and if so, how will this be managed?
* How are opportunities for formative assessment embedded?
* How will feedback be provided?

**Resources**

* How will students receive induction to the Library and central resources (and do Teesside University’s licence agreements permit this access?)?
* Have resources been identified that are appropriate and accessible to OL learners?
* How will access to textbooks and resources be facilitated?
* Is there a report from the Academic Librarian on the availability and accessibility of resources?

**Staffing**

* How many cohorts per year are being proposed?
* What are the FT/PT options for study?
* What is your proposed staff-student ratio?
* Are you able to successfully operate the pedagogic model proposed (to a high standard) with the available staffing/resourcing?
* Is there appropriate technical and administration infrastructure and resource in place (centrally and locally) to support the delivery of the award via OL?

**Student Support**

* How might student support issues/demands from OL learners differ from face-to-face learners? How are these issues addressed?
* What would you define as acceptable attendance/engagement and what is your plan to monitor this?
* What process will you follow in attempting to re-engage students who appear disengaged (and have you factored this in to your proposal in terms of staff resource/time?)?
* What is the involvement of the Retention Support Officer (Student & Library Services) and has this been communicated to them?
* What is the involvement of the School Disability Co-ordinator and has this been communicated to them?
* What electronic peer support will be available?
* How will pastoral support be managed?
* Has the Course Handbook been tailored to provide specific support for OL delivery?
* How will skills development be supported?
* Is there a code of conduct for staff and students?
* How will technology support be provided?
* Through what mechanism(s) do you envisage students raising queries? What is the plan and timescales in terms of monitoring and responding to these queries?

**Student Voice**

* What mechanisms are in place to encourage students to provide feedback on their experiences?
* What mechanisms are in place to ensure effective student representation?
* How will the Student Voice be facilitated in the CME process?

**Staff Development and Scholarly Research**

* What support requirements do academic staff have in order to implement, support and assess your OL course?
* What support requirements do administrative and technical staff have in order to implement and support your OL course?

**Market Research**

* Is there a market for your course? What makes your course unique/what are its selling points?
* Is there a business case for delivering the award via OL?
* Is there a pedagogic case for delivering the award via OL?

**General**

* Are all learning technologies being proposed within the award supported by Teesside University?
* Has a risk assessment been undertaken in relation to any proposed learning technologies that are not managed or supported by Teesside University?
* Has a technical specification of what learners are required to have access to (computer, software, connectivity, speakers, microphone, etc.) been produced?
* Are there any language issues and what are the English language requirements at entry point?
* If relevant, how will a worldwide delivery operate?
* How will the course be marketed?
* How will any timing issues for delivery and assessment be resolved?
* How are ePortfolios used within the course?
* How will PDP operate?

1. The Assessment Regulations made reference to In-module Retake and Exceptional Third Attempt prior until the Regulations were revised for new cohorts from 2022/23. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This regulation links to Principle 8 regarding early reassessment [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This regulation links to Principle 8 regarding early reassessment [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. NB: The QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement was reviewed by the QAA – September 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships – Current Approaches July 2018](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/quality-assuring-higher-education-in-apprenticeships.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)