

Taught Course Approval Guidance

This guidance document provides a list of questions which should be considered during the development and approval of a new course or apprenticeship, indicating in which documents these questions should be addressed. NB The documents in *italics* will not be part of the documentation submission to the Validation Panel or School Academic Committee but the team should still ensure the information is included in them.

Objectives of the Programme

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
1.	Do the programme objectives provide a brief, but clear, overall impression of the purpose of the course?	Programme Specification, <i>Apprenticeship/Course Handbook</i>	The objectives must be the same in both documents.
2.	Do the course objectives include reference to intended graduate outcomes and potential destinations (employment, further study)?	Programme Specification <i>Apprenticeship/Course Handbook</i>	The objectives must be the same in both documents.

Learning Outcomes

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
3.	Does the course documentation define clearly the learning outcomes students must demonstrate in order to be awarded each named qualification?	Programme Specification, <i>Apprenticeship/Course Handbook</i>	Final and intermediate award learning outcomes should be listed in the Programme Specification and Course Handbook.
4.	Do the award learning outcomes align with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications? (Are the learning outcomes expressed at a level which meets or exceeds the threshold standards set out in the FHEQ?)	Programme Specification, <i>Apprenticeship/Course Handbook</i>	

5.	Do the award and module learning outcomes align with the Staffordshire University's Typology of Award Outcomes and Indicative Descriptions of Levels (the 8 plus 2)?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
6.	Is there clear information, advice and guidance about how learning outcomes relate to regulatory and/or professional body competency standards? (if applicable)	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i>	

Curriculum Design and Content

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
7.	Will the content and structure of the course enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the award learning outcomes at the requisite level?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
8.	Does the curriculum align with the proposed titles of the intermediate and final awards?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
9.	Is the curriculum current?	Module Descriptors	
10.	Does the curriculum take into account and reference relevant subject benchmarks ? Has this been demonstrated through the inclusion of a learning outcome mapping within the Programme Specification and Course Handbook?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i>	The mapping should be done within the programme learning outcomes table by indicating which elements of the benchmark statements are covered (using the paragraph numbers).
11.	Is the structure of the course coherent; ensuring an appropriate study load in each semester?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
12.	Are modules appropriately sequenced for both full and part-time routes to facilitate student progression? (Where appropriate)	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Approach

Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
13. Is the approach to learning, teaching and assessment pedagogically sound; appropriate to the academic subject and level; and clearly articulated within the course documentation?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
14. Is it clear how or whether work based/placement learning fits into the design of the course? Including how this will be managed, supported and assessed.	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Validation Support Document, <i>Placement Handbook</i>	The Validation Support Document should explain the rationale for how and why placement learning has been incorporated into the curriculum and how it will be managed. The Programme Specification should explain the opportunities available to the student.
15. Will technology enhanced learning be used appropriately to enhance students' learning experience? Eg use of online discussions blogs, reading lists, e-resources, audio and video clips etc which facilitate students' learning.	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors, Validation Support Document	The Programme Specification, Course Handbook and Module Descriptors should state where technology will be utilised and the Validation Support Document should give an explanation of the team's approach to this.
16. Is it clear how the course will make appropriate use of research-engaged learning and teaching, including how staff will draw upon their research, scholarship and/or professional development to inform their teaching?	Validation Support Document	
17. Is the assessment methodology clearly articulated and does it enable students to demonstrate their learning?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
18. Are there satisfactory arrangements for providing students with developmental assessment feedback?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i>	

Employability

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
19.	Have the proposals been informed by employers, and/or relevant Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies?	Validation Support Document	The Validation Support Document should explain how employers and professional bodies have been consulted about the design of the course(s).
20.	Does the documentation clearly indicate how the course will support/enhance graduate employability?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i>	

Admissions Requirements

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
21.	Are the admissions criteria appropriate for the course?	Programme Specification	

Inclusivity

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
22.	Are the learning outcomes designed in such a way that they are achievable by a wide range of students (including students with protected characteristics and those students where reasonable adjustments may be required)	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship/ <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
23.	Does the curriculum present a diverse range of voices and perspectives across course content eg reading lists, case studies, lecture content etc?	All documentation	The Validation Support Document should explain how the course will facilitate an inclusive learning environment. This may be through the curriculum content, the teaching and assessment methods or the learning resources, which may be aligned to the needs of students, taking into consideration their age, gender,

			abilities, race and ethnicity, cultural background and previous educational experience.
24.	Does the curriculum present equality in a positive light and a non-stereotypical way that allows students to see themselves and others reflected in the curriculum in a positive way?	All documentation	The Validation Support Document should explain how the course will facilitate an inclusive learning environment. This may be through the curriculum content, the teaching and assessment methods or the learning resources, which may be aligned to the needs of students, taking into consideration their age, gender, abilities, race and ethnicity, cultural background and previous educational experience.

Student Support and Guidance

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
25.	Is there appropriate provision for academic and pastoral support (including where there is off campus learning)?	Validation Support Document <i>Apprenticeship/Course Handbook/Placement Handbook</i>	

Learning Resources

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
26.	Will the collective expertise and availability of academic staff facilitate the effective delivery of the curricula?	Validation Support Document	The Validation Support Document should include a table of staffing and the CVs for all the staff included in that table.
27.	Will there be appropriate technical support?	Validation Support Document	The Validation Support Document should explain the technical support which will be available to this course.
28.	Are appropriate and sufficient books and journals available in the University library or library at the partner institute? If no,	Validation Support Document	

	has an appropriate purchase plan been provided?		
29.	Does the teaching and learning accommodation (including specialist facilities and equipment) appear to be appropriate?	Validation Support Document	The Validation Support Document should include a summary of the accommodation to be used for teaching, along with any specific resources/equipment which will be required.
30.	Where additional resources are required to support the course, has this information (with timescales for their acquisition) been provided?	Validation Support Document	The Validation Support Document should note any additional resources/equipment which will be required to support the course.

Student Engagement

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
31.	Has the proposal been informed by consultations with former, current and/or prospective students?	Validation Support Document	The Validation Support Document should explain how students have been consulted about the design of the course.
32.	Is it clear how student engagement will be facilitated - including students studying full-time, part-time and via distance learning - (eg course committee meetings, student surveys, module feedback)?	Validation Support Document <i>Apprenticeship/Course Handbook</i>	

Course Documentation

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
33.	Is the course documentation accurate, consistent and complete?	All documentation	

Apprenticeships (If Applicable)

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
34.	Do the objectives of the programme specifically outline that apprentices will achieve competence in a skilled occupation through the employer led programme?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship Handbook	
35.	Have the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the relevant apprenticeship standard been clearly mapped against module and assessment outcomes?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship Handbook	
36.	Does the assessment methodology provide opportunities for capturing consistent application of knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship Handbook, Module Descriptors	The documentation should specify how the assessment of KSBs for apprenticeships will be tracked to evidence at 'gateway'.
37.	Does the assessment methodology prepare students to successfully articulate their competence through the methods of assessment deployed at End Point Assessment?	Programme Specification, Apprenticeship Handbook, Module Descriptors	
38.	Will apprentices be aware of their responsibility to engage with the prescribed digital platform for providing evidence of learning activities and progress?	Validation Support Document Apprenticeship Handbook	
39.	Will the management and delivery of the apprenticeship meet the needs of the apprenticeship standard, the assessment plan and the overall requirements set down by the Institute for Apprenticeships ?	Apprenticeship Handbook	The documentation should specify how any mandatory externally awarded qualifications will be embedded and achieved.

Overall Conclusion

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
40.	Does the documentation present a clear rationale for the development of the programme; which is reflected within the final design of the course?	All documentation	

41.	Overall, does the course documentation take account of QAA guidance on qualification characteristics ? (If Applicable)	All documentation	
42.	Does the course demonstrate compliance with the Staffordshire University academic regulations or any award specific regulations set out within the documentation?	All documentation	
43.	Does the course align with the University's Academic Strategy?	Programme Specification Validation Support Document	

Quality Enhancement Service
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