

## 25 Programme Development Procedure

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
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| Person Responsible              | Programme Manager              |
| Linked policies                 | Learning and Teaching Strategy |
| Chapter in OU Operations Manual | 25                             |
| Mapping to Quality Code         | Expectation A3.1               |

### 25.1 Overview

The process for the validation of new programmes at Ballet West is informed by the Open University Handbook for Validated Awards Section D, which clearly sets out the procedures involved in seeking validation for new awards.

### 25.2 Stage 1 - Initial Proposal

25.2.1 Initial ideas for new programmes can be generate through a variety of means, including but not exclusively -

- Feedback from existing students through course committees and student representation on Academic Board
- Demand from the dance industry or from prospective students
- Staff interest or particular skill set
- Objectives of the strategic aims of the Board of Trustees

25.2.2 A development team will be formed of academic and programme staff and a student representative who will consider the content of the new programme, produce a draft Programme Specification and outline business case which together will set out the rationale for the course and outline content.

25.2.3 The draft programme specification and business case will be considered by the Academic Board prior to submission to the Board of Trustees, who will undertake market research and determine whether the programme is financially viable. An iterative process may result in refinement of the initial proposal before proceeding to the formal Open University Validation Process.

#### Consideration of Academic Standards

25.2.4 At this stage, The OU regulations for validated awards will be used to guide where the proposed course fits into the FHEQ or SCQF framework. The QAA Quality Code part A is also very important in guiding structure and content of the programme and ensuring the appropriate academic standards are considered in the very early stages of programmes development. Similarly, the Subject benchmark statements are also crucial to considering the academic standards with respect to current

industry and Higher Education standards in the subject area.

## **25.3 Stage 2 - Open University Validation Process**

- 25.3.1 The Open University Handbook for Validated Awards Section D clearly sets out the formal procedures involved in seeking validation for new awards. The first step is contact with the Senior Quality and Partnership Manager and the arrangement of a planning meeting to discuss the initial proposal.
- 25.3.2 Following a successful outcome from the planning meeting, the programme team will develop detailed course documentation to submit to the formal validation panel, which takes the form of a preliminary and final validation meeting. At the conclusion of the validation panel, the award will either be validated, validated with conditions or not validated.

### **Consideration of Academic Standards**

- 25.3.3 The documentary guidance of the QAA Quality Code Part A and the Subject Benchmark Statements is most important at this stage to ensure that the proposed programme and constituent modules matches agreed quality and framework benchmarks and learning outcomes are level and subject appropriate. Similarly, guidance from OU regulations and handbook for validating awards are important.
- 25.3.4 In addition to the published guidance the experience of the Open University Academic Reviewer, the Senior Quality and Partnerships Manager and the External Examiner to existing programmes are very important in considering academic standards and peer-reviewing the proposed programme documentation.
- 25.3.5 At the validation meetings, three subject specialist reviewers will be invited to join the validation meetings, one will be invited to join both preliminary and final meetings. These reviewers add a further layer of external peer review to the process, ensuring academic standards are maintained and are consistent with current HE and subject specific practice.
- 25.3.6 The iterative nature of the transition from planning through preliminary to final validation meetings allows all those involved with the consideration of the academic standards of new programmes to be fully engaged in the process.

