TRINITY LABAN

ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK

CHAPTER C – PROGRAMME DESIGN, APPROVAL AND VALIDATION

Contents

C.1 Programme Validation

1.1 Aims of the Approval and Validation Process

- To safeguard academic standards and to maintain and enhance academic quality.
- To take into account the UK Quality Code and other national and European reference points as appropriate; subject benchmarks; and the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Research Training Frameworks.
- To ensure that programmes meet the strategic needs of the Institution.
- To ensure that the introduction of programmes is based on a sound business case, supported by financial planning, market research and taking into account the implications for the provision of learning resources at an early stage of the planning process.
- To ensure sound educational rationale and curriculum design and the constructive alignment of curriculum, with delivery and assessment.

1.2 Timeline for validation activities

Draft validation documents must be submitted to either:

- The summer term meeting of ASQB for (re)validation events in the autumn term
- The autumn term meeting of ASQB for (re)validation events in the spring term

An extraordinary meeting may be called where the volume of (re)validation work in a given term is high.

Deadline	Activity
October (academic year before validation event)	Deadline for submission of new programme proposal to PMG
December (AY before validation event)	Deadline for PMG to approve new programme development
June (AY before validation event)	Draft validation submissions to ASQB
End of October (AY before start of programme)	Latest date for validation event
November (AY of validation event)	ASQB recommends approval of validation report and conditions to Chair of Academic Board
November-February (AY of validation event)	Programme Team completes conditions of approval

March (AY of validation event)	ASQB reviews responses to validation conditions and recommends final approval to Academic Board
March (AY of validation event)	Academic Board gives final approval for validation and signs off responses to validation conditions
September (AY after validation event)	Programme commences (earliest date)

1.3   First Stage Approval: Initial Proposal for Development

a)   The first stage of the process allows an early opportunity to ensure that proposals fit with the Institutional strategy, are supported by a sound business case and meet the requirements of the appropriate academic award.

b)   The Principal's Management Group will oversee the preparation of the initial proposal, establishing a Programme Development Group to carry out the work (see appendix C.1 for standard membership and terms of reference). The relevant Quality Committee(s) will be informed of the proposal and where appropriate, may nominate student members of the Programme Development Group. The Programme Development Group will be responsible for:

- meeting the required timeline for decisions and submission of documentation for all stages of the validation process
- setting up internal and external consultation groups, to include internal subject specialists; student groups; external examiners; external subject specialists from academia and the music/dance-related professions and industries
- Preparing the programme proposal reflecting initial consultation and market research activities

The proposal will be submitted on a standard template (see appendix C.3).

c)   After receiving the initial proposal from the Programme Development Group, the Principal's Management Group will decide whether to give approval for the development of the proposed programme, through an assessment of the strategic and resource implications of the initial proposal.

d)   The Registry will agree the timeline for validation with the Programme Development Group, in accordance with the institutional deadlines (see 1.2).

1.4   Publicity for Programmes Subject to Validation

The Principal and the Registrar have authority to approve publicity for a programme with the clause 'subject to validation'. They will decide whether to grant approval for publicity following

the approval of the initial proposal, including a full business case, by the Principal's Management Group.

Permission to advertise 'subject to validation' will not include permission to make offers to applicants. Offers may only be made following the authorisation of programme validation by Academic Board (see 1.8 below).

1.5   Validation and Accreditation

Validation is the process whereby a programme leading to an award is examined to ensure that it meets the criteria of the validating institution.

A programme may also be submitted for accreditation, a process to ensure that it meets the requirements of the accrediting organisation, usually a body associated with the music/dance industry. Proposals will be prepared for validation/accreditation using the process set out below.

1.6   Preparation of Proposal for Validation

a)   The Programme Development Group will co-ordinate the preparation of the proposal for validation, in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The validation submission should be compiled using the template in appendix C.3 and consist of a detailed rationale for the programme, the programme and module specification and supporting documents (such as assessment maps, handbooks, programme/department-specific policies etc.).

b)   The Programme Development Group will submit the full documentation for validation to to the relevant Quality Committee for approval and following that to the ASQB for inclusion in the validation process (detailed in appendix C.2). ASQB will consider the documentation, taking into account the academic rationale, the fit of the programme within the FHEQ, and the expertise and resources required to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

c)   ASQB may:
- decide to refer the proposal to a validation panel for consideration
- refuse approval for the proposal, stating the reasons for the decision
- refer the proposal back to the Programme Development Group for revision
- ASQB will refer any substantial changes in learning resources requirements since approval of the initial proposal, to the Principal's Management Group.

The documents may be revised after presentation to the relevant committees, taking account of members' feedback, prior to submission to the panel.

1.7 Nomination of the validation panel

a)   ASQB will appoint a validation panel to consider the proposal. Members of the Panel should not otherwise have been directly involved in the drafting of the proposal. The membership will normally include:

- Artistic Director/Deputy Director (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) or another senior member of staff nominated by ASQB (in the chair) (from outside the subject area of the proposal)
- Registrar or nominee (Secretary)
- A Programme Leader from outside the subject area of the proposal
- One other member of academic staff from outside the subject area of the proposal
- An external adviser
- A student representative, nominated by the President of the Students' Union

b)   Information about the scope of the validation is available at appendix C.2.

c)   The Registry will make operational arrangements for the validation process, including liaison with the Programme Development Group; the setting of dates for the submission of documentation; the final validation event and the preparation of the validation report. The timetable for the validation event will be planned to take account of the schedule of recruitment for the programme, in accordance with the institutional deadlines

1.8 Validation Event

1.8.1   The validation event will be conducted as outlined in appendix C.2.

Following the validation event, the Panel will give the proposers of the validation verbal feedback on the likely overall recommendations.

a)   The panel may:
- recommend a period of validation up to a maximum of five academic years
- recommend any conditions for validation, to support the maintenance of the quality and standards of the programme
- require the resubmission of documentation with substantial amendments – this will trigger resubmission of the documentation to ASQB and a further validation event
- refuse approval for the proposal, stating the reasons for the decision
- recommend action by the programme team to enhance the development of the programme

b) Following the provision of verbal feedback, the Panel Secretary will produce a written report on the validation event. The Panel Chair will approve the report and the Panel Secretary will then send the document to the proposers of the validation for any comments on factual accuracy. The Panel Chair/Secretary will submit the final version of the report to ASQB.

c) ASQB will consider the report of the validation panel, deciding whether to recommend to the Chair of the Academic Board to to approve the validation report with any conditions or recommendations for validation.

d) The Registry will co-ordinate the fulfilment of validation conditions, reporting through ASQB to the Academic Board who will give final approval for validation once conditions have been met

1.8.2   Follow-up actions

The Chair of the validation panel will be asked to confirm that conditions have been met prior to commencement of the programme. A written response to the validation report from the Programme Development Group, including details of the action taken to meet any conditions, will be presented to ASQB and subsequently the Academic Board.

Amendments to the programme documents submitted to the validation panel may result from the conditions or recommendations emerging from the validation event. All such changes should be submitted to the Registry for approval by the Chair of the Validation Panel and submitted to ASQB alongside a response to any conditions or recommendations set out in the validation report.

Following final confirmation by Academic Board that conditions and recommendations have been addressed and programme delivery may commence, definitive versions of programme and module specifications will be added to institutional directories and made available to prospective students. Any further amendments to the programme must be made through the programme amendment process outlined in Chapter D.

The Artistic Director will be responsible for ensuring that all resource requirements identified during the validation process and approved by PMG are incorporated into relevant budgets.

1.9   External Accreditation

Following a recommendation from ASQB, the Academic Board may approve the submission of a proposal for validation to the designated accreditation authority. The Programme Development Group will then prepare the proposal for presentation to the accreditation authority, supported by the Quality & Governance team.

Following the completion of the procedure, the Academic Board will receive an application from ASQB for final approval for the operation of the accredited programme, and a report on any accreditation conditions. ASQB will be responsible for overseeing the fulfilment of accreditation conditions, reporting to the Academic Board.