POLICY ON VALIDATION

Scope
Policy describing the institution's approach to Validation including information on the criteria for considering validation approaches and the process of approval.

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Policy on Validation

Introduction

Validation is the process by which the University recognises as equivalent to its own the quality and standards of programmes designed, delivered and managed by another institution. Successful students receive an award from City, University of London in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Through validation, the University takes ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of the validated programmes. The University will wish to satisfy itself that the approach being applied is no less rigorous than that applied to programmes offered internally so as to meet national and international Higher Education requirements.

Purpose of Validation

The University's prime objective in forming validation relationships is to enable the development of academic links with a range of institutions which do not have Degree-Awarding Powers, thereby furthering our academic base and the awards made in our name. Through undertaking validation, the University also aims to widen its reputation and to enter into other forms of collaboration. The University only enters into a validation relationship where there is evidence that it will be of strategic benefit.

Approach to Validation

Our approach to validation is under-pinned by the following principles:

- Partner institutions will be high profile in their discipline/s and will reflect the University's focus on academic excellence and professional education.

- Programmes proposed for validation will normally be complementary to those offered within the University, thereby broadening our academic base and providing greater potential for wider educational collaborations.

- A validation relationship will only be formed whereby the University will be, or will become the sole validating body, so as to support the development of the relationship.

- The University will focus not only on our ultimate responsibility for quality and standards of the awards, but will also make provision for mutual dialogue, debate and engagement in programme design and pedagogy.

- We undertake validation only where we have the appropriate expertise and resource to enable us to undertake our responsibilities for quality, standards and wider educational dialogue; this is always supplemented by external input in accordance with our Quality Assurance Framework.

- Validation is managed at University-level; this being the most appropriate mechanism to ensure consistency of approach, both with regard to discharging our responsibility for quality and standards as well as allocating resource to overseeing the activity. This approach also rationalises bureaucracy for validation partners and enables an increased focus on developmental work.

- Validation partners will be primarily London-based to enable us to fulfil the principles of our approach.

Criteria for Considering Validation Requests

In addition to satisfying these principles, the University will also take into account when considering requests for validation:

- the compatibility and complementarity of the mission and strategic plan of the University, including current and planned academic activities and those of the prospective partner;

- the compatibility and complementarity of the proposed link with the University's existing validation links and other commitments;

- the legal status of the prospective partner and its capacity to contract with the University, along with the commitment and support of its governing body (or equivalent) for the arrangement;

- whether the ethos and environment for teaching and learning offered by the prospective partner are appropriate to the University's approach to validation and more generally to UK Higher Education;

- the financial stability of the prospective partner and its ability and commitment to provide the resources appropriate to support the proposed Higher Education programme/s and a validation relationship with the University;

- the critical mass that would comprise the partnership, both with regard to the academic viability of the proposed programme/s and the resource required by both parties to maintain a successful validation partnership. The University will normally enter into validation arrangements only where there is substantial activity;

- whether appropriate governance, resources and systems are in place for the effective management of the partner institution and, in particular, to underpin academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement. This will include the expertise of staff to teach the proposed programmes both in terms of discipline and level; and

- the University's ability to provide for the foreseeable future both a senior member of academic staff with relevant expertise to lead the activity and other appropriate staff members to contribute to academic developments.

Process for Considering Requests and Establishing Validation Relationships

Any approach for validation is received in the first instance by the Academic Director (Collaborative Provision) who will consult with the Dean of the cognate School/s of the University to consider the academic fit of the proposal and potential academic leadership for the activity. Where it is agreed that the approach should be pursued in principle, the Deputy President is responsible for considering the proposal which will be prepared by Academic Services in conjunction with the Academic Director (Collaborative Provision). Where this proposal is approved, the process will progress to a review of institutional infrastructure. Where this is successful, the process will then proceed to consideration of programmes. The full process is published in the Validation and Institutional Partnerships Handbook. In undertaking this process, the University will consider existing or previous links that the prospective validation partner may have and reserves the right to seek views directly from such bodies.

Programmes are validated for a fixed period of time. The University will undertake a full review of the validated programme/s through a revalidation process with a view to making a recommendation for a further period of validation where this is appropriate. From time to time, the University will review from the arrangements it has with its validation partners, taking into account the City, University of London Strategic Plan and any other relevant developments.

Status of the Validation Partner

Following completion of the initial validation process, a Memorandum of Agreement (known as the Validation Agreement) will be issued by the University that will document respective roles and responsibilities.

In forming a validation relationship, the validation partner, as an organisation, remains legally independent from the University. The validation partner is responsible for the organisational governance and management of the institution, including matters relating to finance. The University will expect validated programmes to be managed and delivered in accordance with University academic policies and practices. In some instances, the overall governance and management of the validation partner will have a bearing on the delivery of the validated programmes and the University will need to be consulted accordingly. Where the University considers such matters could threaten the quality and standards of validated provision, it will consider whether or not to continue with the relationship.

Status of Students on Programmes Validated by the University

Students on programmes validated by City, University of London are registered with the validation partner which is responsible for the delivery and management of the provision. Students register with the University to enable access to the designated services available under the Validation Agreement, and for records to be established and maintained on their overall academic progress and potential award. On successful

completion of the award, students become alumni of City, University of London as well as of the institution at which they studied their programme.

Termination of Validation

The Validation Agreement sets out provision for termination of a validation arrangement. The University's Principles for Exit Arrangements for Validation will be followed in any such instance.