



# Professional Validation: Guidance and Requirements



The National Youth Agency's Requirements for the Professional Validation of Higher Education programmes which are recognised by the Joint Negotiating Committee as conferring professionally qualified status for Youth Workers in England





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## Acknowledgments

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## Section 1: An introduction to professional validation

### Introduction

This book details the process through which higher education institutions can seek formal professional validation of their programme of education and training in youth work in England. Such programmes would then confer professionally qualified status for youth workers in England under the terms and conditions of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers.

It provides a comprehensive description of the professional validation criteria and processes that are applied rigorously by the National Youth Agency in its scrutiny of submissions and which form the basis on which all submissions will be judged.

### Foreword

The contribution of youth work to securing positive outcomes for young people is increasingly being recognised. Yet never has the youth work sector needed to be more clear about the core principles, values and skills that underpin professional practice.

Youth work has always been delivered through a partnership of a broad-based voluntary sector and local authorities. Now, as local authorities develop integrated approaches to youth support services, bringing together professionals from a range of disciplines, the need for high quality trained staff with the competence and ability to make a difference to young people's lives, continues to be paramount.

Youth workers must not only be able to understand and celebrate what

they have in common with others, but also articulate and demonstrate their particular skill set so that social and personal development through non-formal learning and engagement is embedded in the youth offer up and down the country.

The growing pattern of funding by tendering for contracts to deliver programmes and services impacts upon work with young people at all levels and in all contexts, and the changing environments we face demand that youth workers are not only strong professionals in their own discipline, working effectively with young people, but also have skills for collaborative working and management as, increasingly, professional youth workers undertake management responsibilities at ever earlier stages in their careers.

The development of integrated services also means that volunteers and part-time staff could be attracted to youth work from a much wider set of entry points, children's work or mentoring to name but a few. It is really important that there are clear pathways to high quality professional training.

Youth work is a profession that is increasing its status and reputation. It is now a graduate profession, with professional qualifications at degree and postgraduate levels that will build the intellectual capital of youth work, as well as increase its attractiveness as a career path to high quality candidates.

**Fiona Blacke**  
**Chief Executive**  
**National Youth Agency**



## Foreword by young people

In the move towards an all degree profession, work was undertaken to secure young people's views about the purpose and processes of professional validation. The NYA continues to find ways to keep young people involved and to hear their voice in related work. The following foreword is a result of the work undertaken:

"Youth workers need to be good: they need to know about what's important to us and what affects us: they need to know how to relate to and work with us; and they need to know how to create and provide opportunities for us to get involved in a wide range of interesting and exciting things.

"Youth work is about learning about yourself and others; having the chance to choose whether to relax and have fun, focus on solving a problem or learning something new; and about being able to do something with your time that makes a difference.



"Of all the adults who work with young people, youth workers have a special role and one that we value. It is important to us that youth workers can work in different ways with different young people, and can work in different places where young people's lives and experiences are different.

"Having a university qualification does not necessarily mean that a youth worker will be good, so it is important that universities and courses are monitored and have to meet standards if we want their students to be able to be good workers. Courses need to have the right amount of learning in the classroom and then chances to try it out with young people. Young people are probably the most diverse generation and specialised skills are required to work with them. So only training of the highest standard can provide the greatest benefit to young people."

## Professional validation

The aim of professional validation is to encourage and facilitate a high standard of education and professional practice for youth work that provides the essential underpinning for professional progression and hence secures the profession of youth work in current contexts for practice.

## The principle of collaboration

The professional validation of youth work programmes is sector led. The criteria, process and subsequent engagement in the associated work of professional validation is progressed in collaboration with a cross-section of stakeholders and representatives of the youth work field. The principle of collaboration ensures that the standards of training achieved are agreed, supported and comparable across the country and that there is collective responsibility and accountability for the formation of youth workers. The criteria and processes are regularly reviewed to ensure they support the development of youth workers who have the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively with young people and with organisations across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

## The role of the Joint Negotiating Committee

The Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers (JNC) originated from recommendations in the Albemarle Committee review of the Youth Service in 1960. It developed into its current form

and structure following a major review in 1987, when it was renamed the JNC for Youth and Community Workers. The formation of the JNC represented a landmark in the emergence of youth and community work as a profession. It combined a commitment to securing high quality provision of training and qualifications, with a responsibility for negotiating salaries and terms and conditions of service related to those qualifications.

The JNC's first report in 1961 set out the various qualifications recognised as leading to the award of professionally qualified status and it is the JNC that still holds the ultimate responsibility for professional validation of programmes leading to this award. From 1961 to 1982 the JNC both agreed the categories of qualification for recognition, and scrutinised the programmes offered by the various higher education institutions and other bodies providing awards. After 1982 the detailed scrutiny of awards on behalf of the JNC passed to the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work (CETYCW) and, in 1991, to the National Youth Agency (NYA).

## The role of the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency undertakes, on behalf of the JNC, the professional validation of training and qualification programmes conferring professionally qualified status on individuals. The process of validation ensures the scrutiny of programmes in line with **the Requirements for Professional Validation of Higher Education Programmes** (Requirements), as set out in section three of this book. This work is overseen by the NYA Education and Training Standards Committee (ETS), which considers and recommends (or not)



professional validation of programmes. The ETS has a membership drawn from across the youth work sector, representing the views of statutory, voluntary and community organisations. Section two of this book describes the process and roles within professional validation.

The NYA holds and manages the lists of recognised JNC qualifications, both historic and current. Those programmes that are granted professional validation are included in the JNC report.

### Youth work and the requirements for professional validation

Youth work is a distinct educational process adapted across a variety of settings and approaches. The purpose of the work undertaken by youth workers is to facilitate and support young people's growth through dependence to inter-dependence, by encouraging their personal, social and spiritual development and enabling them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and society. Youth work offers both planned and spontaneous opportunities for people to learn through experience of the self, others and society. Youth work occurs when young people learn by interacting with their peers and others, share a range of new experiences which extend, challenge and excite the individual, and have opportunities for reflection, planning and action.

The task of the youth worker is to plan, provide, manage and evaluate appropriate experiences of learning, challenge and reflection; to take advantage of opportunities for learning, challenge and reflection that arise spontaneously; and to foster the benefits of these experiences by employing a range of interpersonal skills such as building relationships,



mentoring, advocacy and group work. Relevant themes and issues such as health, housing and employment are incorporated as appropriate. This task, and the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to deliver it, forms the bedrock of all education and training programmes for youth workers.

Such work, primarily with young people aged 13 to 19, is the principal concern of the NYA. It has the responsibility to ensure that individuals who work as informal educators with young people are properly trained and prepared. The NYA's responsibility is enshrined within the Requirements, which focus on the fitness for purpose of programmes; programmes that develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to carry out the core task described above. The Requirements cover the management, staffing and resourcing, teaching and learning, professional practice and the quality assurance of programmes. Professional practice is a key element of what makes the professional programmes distinct, putting the student's ability to apply academic theory to the direct work with young people and organisations as crucial to their achievement of professional status.

To ensure all programmes are comprehensive and current, they must be developed in line with the curriculum requirements set out in section four of this book. The **QAA youth and community work specific benchmark statements** are pivotal and should be read in conjunction with this book. They set out the principles, values and ethics for youth work and the learning that should be enshrined within professional programmes.

## Programmes eligible for professional validation

The NYA recognises that young people's services are changing. With the development of integrated young people's service provision comes discussion around the appropriate qualifications for young people's workers. The position of the NYA and ETS is that the professional validation process is first and foremost designed and run to promote and secure the profession of youth work as a distinct and different approach to working with young people. The Requirements expect programmes to be in line with current policy and delivery contexts so that newly qualified workers are able to contribute effectively to services for young people and work within multi-disciplinary teams. In this regard, programmes should demonstrate how they equip learners to meet the requirements of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for all who work within children and young people's services (set out in section four).

Therefore the programmes eligible for professional validation are those that have a clear youth work pathway throughout all levels of learning and cover the curriculum requirements as set out in section four of this book. The NYA does not accept requests for validation from combined programmes where youth work is only part of the learning. However, the NYA does allow for consideration programmes that have a specialised approach to youth work or are contextualised, if in line with the following guidance.

## Specialised and contextualised programmes

### **Definitions**

#### **Specialised programmes**

These are programmes that have an additional learning element that links to the practice of youth work. For example Sport, Performing Arts, Health etc.

#### **Contextualised programmes**

These are programmes that wish to contextualise the learning experience in line with the context of their underlying philosophical faith base or pedagogy. This will also include programmes that wish to consider youth work in the context of integrated youth services.

Both specialised and contextualised programmes will be considered for validation so long as they meet the following criteria:

1. The main aim of the programme, as stated in the documentation and at the beginning of the Student Handbook, shall be the professional formation of a youth worker.
2. The programme will have been designed such that a graduate would be able to enter any generic youth work or youth work post.
3. The assessments through the programme and the range of supervised practice undertaken will provide evidence of this.

For a programme with a specialism or with contextualised learning, modules will be designed in order to enable the youth work student to develop their skill set and apply their learning in their context/specialist



area. However, all modules and their assessment should be designed to show the application of learning is focused on young people and the delivery of youth work.

### **Distance and open learning programmes**

Distance and open learning programmes are valuable approaches to the delivery of youth work programmes. The Requirements are written generically for university based provision and do not reference specific differences in delivery model. For these programmes it is expected that they provide equitable support, the sense of being part of a learning group, intellectual stimulation and develop professional practice skills in line with a university-based programme. They should also ensure that students have access to ICT and library facilities appropriate to the demands of the programme.

If a programme intends to recruit students who are in residence outside of England, they must inform the NYA. This is to ensure that other countries' requirements for professional validation of youth work programmes are considered, if appropriate. See section below on UK and Republic of Ireland-wide programmes.



## **Professional validation in the UK and Republic of Ireland**

### **Reciprocal arrangements**

The NYA is responsible for the professional validation of youth work programmes in England only. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and

the Republic of Ireland have their own professionally validating ETS bodies and Requirements. The NYA has entered into an agreement with the JNC and other bodies in the UK and Ireland that grant professionally validated status to programmes of professional formation in youth work. This agreement is that:

1. Professional qualifications in Youth Work (and Community Learning and Development in Scotland) that have been validated by the NYA's ETS, the Wales ETS Committee, Ireland's North/South ETS Committee and the Standards Council for Scotland confer professionally qualified youth worker status in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
2. Scotland only recognises honours level professional qualifications. Those holding non-honours qualifications should direct enquires to the Standards Council for Scotland. Email: [contact@oldstandardscouncil.org.uk](mailto:contact@oldstandardscouncil.org.uk) Tel: 0141 282 5264.

### **UK and Republic of Ireland-wide programmes**

A programme that operates across more than one country within the UK and Republic of Ireland will submit for professional validation through the agency in which the main administrative site of the sponsor is located. For example, programmes offered by the Open University (Milton Keynes), the YMCA (George Williams College, London) or OASIS (University of Wales) etc will come under the jurisdiction of the NYA's ETS Committee and will operate according to these Requirements. The working group that visits a sponsor to engage in the professional validation process of such a programme on behalf of the NYA ETS Committee will normally include representation from, or on behalf of, Wales, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland or Scotland.

## Section 2: The process of professional validation

This section outlines the process of professional validation; for new and existing programmes and for modifications to existing programmes. It also includes guidance on writing and submitting a proposal for professional validation, and an explanation of the principles and process of annual monitoring by the NYA. The word 'sponsor' is used to refer to the organisation presenting a programme for professional validation.

The specific criteria and evidence requirements for professional validation of qualifications in youth work are set out in section three of this booklet.

### Overview of the validation process

The professional validation process is designed to be as developmental as possible. The approach to validation involves staff from the NYA to steer the process, but most importantly it involves fellow youth work practitioners from the field and from academic learning who ensure that quality programmes of youth work are validated and developed to secure excellent professional formation, providing graduates with the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of young people and services.

The process of validation is broadly the same for new validations and revalidations of existing programmes. They both require a programme to produce a submission, written to the criteria set out in section three of this booklet and which contains supportive evidence as required. The submission is then scrutinised by a working group, with field and academic representation, to identify lines of enquiry for the final stage, an onsite visit. During this visit these lines of enquiry will be explored through interviews with management, staff, field representatives and

students. A report is written and the programme will be presented to the Education and Training Standards Committee for validation to be granted.

Validation for new programmes is set out in two stages. Stage one is for new programmes only. All programmes (new and existing that are being revalidated) need to go through stage two. These stages of the process are detailed in this section.

### Roles and responsibilities within the validation process

There are a number of people involved in the process of validation. These are set out below.

#### Project Management Officer (PMO) – Validation

The NYA will appoint a PMO to oversee all validation schedules and processes. They are the main point of contact for enquiries and will negotiate schedules with programmes and oversee progress through the stages of validation and payments.

#### Development Officer (DO)

The NYA will appoint a development officer to each programme validation and they play an important role in relation to both the sponsors and the Education and Training Standards Committee (ETS). Their main functions are:

- to advise a sponsor considering or developing a submission for professional validation



- to advise a sponsor on arrangements for the visit of the ETS working group
- to advise and guide the ETS working group in the scrutiny of submissions and to service the visit(s) made to the sponsor
- to advise and assist the ETS Committee to carry out its validation responsibilities.

Sponsors are reminded that the officer is accountable to the NYA and the Requirements for professional validation. Officers have a strong commitment to the development of good practice in education and training in youth work, and will assist sponsors to understand how to adhere to the Requirements for the purposes of preparing and proposing a submission for professional validation that will be both successful and provide for excellent professional formation. However, it is the responsibility of the ETS Committee, rather than the officer, to judge the adequacy of the proposed programme.

### Working Group

Supported by the NYA Development Officer, a Working Group consists of practitioners from the youth work field, representatives of other institutions with professionally validated programmes and a member of the ETS Committee as Chair. Their role is to consider the submission before and during an onsite visit and work to establish that the programme meets the Requirements for professional validation.

### Education and Training Standards Committee

The NYA's Education and Training Standards (ETS) Committee considers and recommends (or not) professional validation of professionally qualifying programmes of study. Those programmes that are granted professional validation are included in the JNC report. The membership

of the ETS Committee is drawn from statutory, voluntary and national support organisations for youth work and practitioners.

## The schedule for validation

### Negotiation

Both new programmes and existing programmes need to negotiate a schedule for validation with the PMO. This will result in a series of dates for each step to be completed in order for the validation process to progress to a satisfactory conclusion.

The NYA will discuss and agree a schedule with new programmes during stage one. The NYA will remind existing validated programmes, 18 months ahead of the expiry date, of the need to re-submit and outline a schedule to the institution. The NYA will advise on the arrangements for re-submission and agree a schedule for re-submission to ensure that it has the resource capacity to manage the workload, allowing for the total number of professionally validated programmes, so that the re-validation is secured within six months of the renewal date.

### Delays and changes to the schedule

It is expected that all submissions will be made in accordance with the agreed schedule. Failure to do so may result in significant delays until such time as the development officer or working group of the ETS committee can re-schedule. This may impact on an existing programme sponsor's ability to advertise their programme as JNC validated beyond the original period of validation, or for a new programme sponsor to realise their anticipated programme start date. Where difficulties are



being experienced it is the sponsor's responsibility to raise this for discussion with the NYA development officer or PMO at the earliest possible opportunity.

Where difficulties arise that put re-validation or validation within the agreed schedule in jeopardy, it is the sponsor's responsibility to advise students enrolled on or enrolling on the programme that JNC recognition has not been secured and cannot be guaranteed. It is also possible that delays and alterations to schedules may result in additional fees being necessarily negotiated in order to cover additional administrative and officer time.

## Advisory notes

### Payment of fees

For new programmes the fees are payable in two stages; on submission of stage one documentation and on submission of stage two draft documentation. For revalidations full payment is required on submission of the stage two draft documentation. Where a programme decides to withdraw during the stage one process, having agreed and secured the validation staffing and dates, programmes are contracted to pay the stage one fee in full. Where a programme decides to withdraw from the process after draft submission, they are still contracted to pay fees in full. This is to cover the costs incurred by the NYA throughout the process.

### Marketing of programmes

No marketing documentation for any proposed programme may cite 'JNC recognised' in advance of formal approval being granted – which

is not until the conclusion of stage two, after ETS has received and considered the working group report, reported to the NYA Executive Board and any identified conditions have been satisfactorily met. Once approval has been confirmed, the following form of words is to be used: JNC Recognised through NYA Validation.

### Links to the field

Sponsors of new programmes are strongly advised to enter into consultation and partnership working with employers and representatives from the local and regional field at a very early date (particularly the local Regional Youth Work Unit). Formal structures for input from the field into the management and development of the programme, as outlined in section three Professional Validation Criteria and Evidence Requirements should be established at the earliest point possible. Experience has shown that close collaboration secured from an early stage will lead to greater success in the professional validation process and also continuing critical evaluation and review of the programme appropriate to contemporary needs within the youth work field. This collaboration is also likely to lead to a greater number and range of fieldwork placements as well as wider continuing support for the programme by employers in the form of applications for places by employees and recruitment of graduates.



## The stages in the validation process

### Stage one – new proposals only

Experience has shown that the development of a new programme, especially in an institution not previously offering youth work, is a fairly lengthy process. Sponsors are required to contact the NYA at least 18 months ahead of the proposed starting date for the programme.

The NYA Project Management Officer, in conjunction with the Development Officer, will negotiate a detailed schedule for professional validation with sponsors to ensure a constructive developmental process in support of the proposal.

### Stage one – the consideration of new programmes for professional validation

- The sponsor makes preliminary enquiries to the NYA, resulting in initial consultation, a visit and advice from NYA staff. See page 54 for contact details.
- The sponsor provides written formal registration of interest confirming the decision to proceed (or not). This is the point at which a schedule for the work necessary to complete the professional validation process is negotiated.

The sponsor is then required to provide evidence to demonstrate that:

- a) there is a current and potential pool of prospective recruits to sustain the proposal
- b) key youth work employers, other potential employers and other training agencies support the proposal as a means of meeting employment needs (in normal circumstances



- c) evidence to be sought from local and regional sources)
- c) the institution is committed to the proposal and will give an assurance of resource allocation pertaining to
  - staffing
  - accommodation and teaching resources
  - set up costs to establish the programme
- d) consultation has taken place to assess the nature and availability of suitable fieldwork locations in the locality and region
- e) collaboration with representatives of the field has been secured and actual working relationships have started
- f) research clearly demonstrates, where appropriate, the validity of having two or more higher education courses in the same or close geographic location.

Submission of this evidence must be accompanied by the first part of the fees for professional validation.

The NYA will consider the evidence provided and on the basis of this will decide whether the sponsor is able to proceed to the second stage of the professional validation process. If, at this time, the sponsor is unsuccessful a full explanation will be offered including feedback on where improvements could have been made.

To help develop the programme sponsors may find it helpful to contact the Training Agencies Group (TAG) to register interest and identify support. Email: [l.m.boyd@hud.ac.uk](mailto:l.m.boyd@hud.ac.uk) Tel: 01484 478107.

## Stage two – for new and existing programmes

The sponsor is responsible for preparation of a submission that fulfils the Requirements as set out in section three Professional Validation Criteria and Evidence Requirements. Steps in the schedule for this part of the professional validation process are:

- Draft submission
- Final submission
- The visit of the ETS committee working group (onsite visit)
- Outcome and reporting
- Presentation and recommendation to ETS
- Meeting of conditions and granting of validated status.

### Draft submission

The sponsor needs to plan and prepare a draft submission. Programmes are entitled to a total of one day of support and advice from the NYA. The draft is submitted to the NYA for consideration and the NYA gives feedback to the sponsor to assist the shaping of the final submission.

The final sum due to the NYA in respect of fees for professional validation is to be paid when the draft submission is due. Please note that formal approval of professionally validated status will not be given until all fees have been paid. Guidelines on the structure and presentation of the submission are provided later in this section.

### Final submission

A full and final submission is submitted to the NYA. **Six hard copies of the documentation must be provided by post.** This is required to supply the development officer and the working group members with a copy each and one file copy. A working group on behalf of the NYA's ETS Committee gives consideration to the final submission. It identifies

lines of enquiry to be pursued during the onsite visit.

### Submission of documentation

Timely submission of documentation at each point in the timeline is essential for the smooth and effective operation of the professional validation process. Delays in submission can have serious consequences for all parties – the NYA, the working group, and the sponsoring institutions; and can have a detrimental impact on the process and outcomes of a working group's visit. Furthermore, sponsors are asked to bear in mind that at any one point in their own professional validation process the NYA will be managing a similar process for several other sponsors. Delays within the schedule of one sponsor can have a negative impact on the overall effectiveness and smooth running of the professional validation process and disadvantage other sponsors.

The minimum requirement for receipt of final submission is at least four weeks prior to the agreed visit of the ETS working group. The NYA reserves the right to cancel an arranged visit if it considers that there are large gaps in the documentation sent by the institution. Unless requested by a working group or agreed with the NYA's officer, tabled material will not be permitted at a validation event. Sponsors are expected to provide all necessary documentation by the agreed submission date.

### Use of the submission within the professional validation process

The professional validation process is designed to be as developmental as possible. The visit of the working group is crucial to the formative nature of the NYA's work in securing excellent professional formation and ensuring its continuous development. The working group will use the submission as a starting point for exploration with the



representatives of the sponsor of a proposed programme of professional formation so that it can be enhanced. The practice of making conditions or recommendations following a visit to a sponsor allows the sponsor to further develop a submission. The working group's visit is not a 'test' designed to catch sponsors out. Nevertheless, sponsors should take great care in both ensuring all required evidence is in place and that this is accessible to an outsider attempting to make sense of the content, structure and practices within a proposed programme of professional formation.

The submission and reports on the visit of the working group will constitute the 'document' that the NYA uses to provide evidence to the JNC of the appropriateness both of its own procedures for professional validation and of the quality of the programmes that hold professionally validated status. Within the five-year period for which professionally validated status is granted the documentation may be referred to in instances where there is a concern, question about or proposed amendment to provision. For all these reasons it is essential that submissions are prepared with care over a period of time so as to document and represent the proposed programme in as accurate and detailed a form as practicable. When considering re-validation, the NYA ETS working group will consider submissions in conjunction with issues raised by previous validation events and outcomes of annual monitoring over previous validated periods.

### The visit of the ETS Committee working group

The NYA will use the evidence within the submission to inform a process of inquiry into the nature of the programme. This inquiry takes

the form of a visit by members of the youth work field, representatives of other institutions with professionally validated programmes and a member of the ETS Committee as Chair. The working group will be supported by a Development Officer from the NYA and this person is most likely to be the officer who has supported the development of the submission to the date of the visit. The visit will involve meetings with the sponsor and representatives of the groups that provide input into, or will benefit from, the programme.

The NYA expects the sponsor to secure the participation of all the individuals requested by the NYA Development Officer. Failure to secure adequate and appropriate representation can adversely affect the validation process and may impact on the working group's ability to reach a conclusion. The sponsor will notify the NYA's Development Officer of the names of individuals who are expected to attend the visit no less than three days before the date of the visit. The individuals expected to attend the visit include:

#### Senior management

Normally at least three people comprising someone with responsibility for:

- institutional and faculty/school financial strategy, capable of giving authoritative advice on the financial commitment to, and security of the programme
- managing quality assurance processes at the relevant level and knowledgeable about how these apply to the proposed programme under scrutiny
- staff development and training in the unit and in the faculty/school.



### Programme team

- head of the unit containing the submission for a proposed programme
- leader for the proposed programme
- fieldwork coordinator
- all academic staff contributing to the programme
- a selection of part-time/sessional fieldwork tutors to the proposed programme
- representatives of all partner organisations/dispersed centres responsible for delivering the proposed programme (where appropriate).

### Representatives from the field

A group of 8 to 12 people representing:

- members of the professional field with formal involvement in the management and development of the programme
- placement supervisors; a sample reflecting the range of placement types used, eg voluntary, statutory and special-project agencies and small and large organisations
- agencies which have students enrolled on the programme on a full or part-time basis
- employers in the region.

### Students

A group of 8 to 12 students from the existing programme (or similar programmes where the programme is proposed as new provision within the sponsor's institution) and representing:

- all levels of study
- full and part-time students
- employer supported and self-financing students

- male and female students
- older and younger students
- ethnic minority students
- recent graduates.

The sponsor will provide the working group with facilities for the duration of the professional validation visit that are suited to the groups attending and to quiet discussion and thought. The meeting room/s should be large enough to accommodate the working group and representatives of the programme comfortably and arranged in round-table format. The meeting room/s should be as undisturbed by noise and institutional staff/students as possible. The NYA will inform the institution in advance should any member of the working group require facilities to assist with mobility.

The NYA requests that the sponsor provides tea/coffee and lunch refreshments for the duration of the visit. The NYA will inform the sponsor in advance should any member of the working group have special dietary requirements. The working group would normally expect all individuals representing the proposed programme at the visit to be invited to attend lunch and arrangements should allow for informal discussion between all involved.

The sponsor is asked to liaise with the NYA to assist with finding hotel accommodation, producing directions to the accommodation and location of the space (and parking) to be used for the visit, and whether the working group will be greeted on arrival.



## Outcome and reporting (presentation and recommendation to ETS)

The ETS working group will make decisions about the proposed programme on the basis of the submission and outcomes of their visit to the sponsor. Oral feedback on the working group's decision is normally given to sponsors on the day of the event, indicating the nature of that decision. This includes details of any conditions and recommendations to be presented to the ETS Committee within a formal report on the submission and the visit. The ETS Committee will discuss the report and may make further recommendations or conditions. Thus, oral feedback given on the day of the visit is not binding on the working group, ETS Committee or the NYA.

Scrutiny of the submission and visit by the working group may result in one of three outcomes:

- to validate the programme unconditionally, with or without recommendations
- to impose conditions that must be met before the programme is validated
- not to validate and to require a re-submission of the programme.

The decision of the working group will be referred to the next meeting of the ETS Committee. These are held three times a year during March, June and November. The formal report will be considered and can either lead to ETS approval of the working group's decision or the committee may make further recommendations or conditions. If there are no conditions and the working group's decision is supported then the programme can be granted validated status at this point.



## Meeting of conditions

Where conditions are stipulated, these should normally be met within two months of the date of the letter stipulating conditions being sent to the institution by the NYA, unless the nature of the conditions makes this impracticable. Where this is the case, a specific timeframe will be agreed for evidence of compliance to be provided. Sponsors should note that the validation is not secured until the NYA has received a response to conditions, the chair of the working group has approved this as satisfactory, and payment of any outstanding fees has been made. The chair's decision will be notified to the ETS Committee.

Decisions on professional validation are formally confirmed by the NYA's Executive Board and communicated to JNC for formal approval and inclusion in the JNC report.

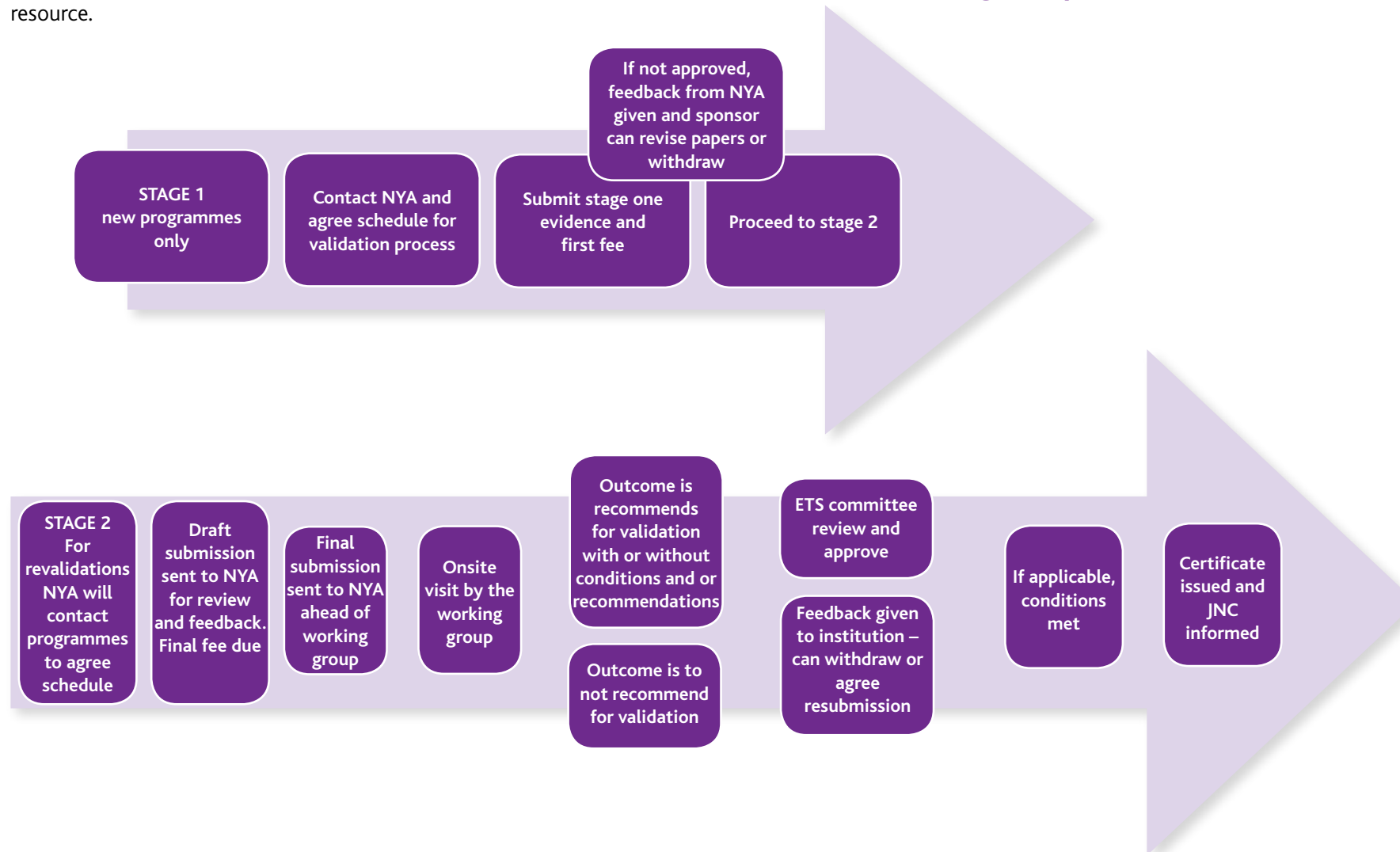
The NYA does not confer retrospective validation on programmes. In those instances where responses are late or are unsatisfactory, the starting date for validation will be delayed. The programme must be validated at the point of commencement of study by a student enrolled on a programme for that student's qualification to hold professionally validated status.

## Closure of programmes

On discontinuation of a programme, professionally validated status is valid for all students who have enrolled and commenced study within the five-year period following the last professionally validated event, provided satisfactory annual monitoring results for that period have been received.

When a programme takes the decision to discontinue they must notify the NYA in writing. They must provide information on the timeframe for closure and how the remaining cohort(s) of students will be supported to complete their validated programme with appropriate levels of resource.

## Stages in professional validation



## Guidance to writing a submission for professional validation

The Requirements set out the criteria for professional validation and guide sponsors as to the evidence that should be provided in order to demonstrate adherence to them. Because the writing and inspection of a submission is a lengthy process further advice to sponsors is given here to ensure that their submission is effective in communicating policy and practice to the working group in as cohesive a fashion as possible.

### Structure

The submission should be as concise as possible, structured as one main document of no more than 100 pages and supplemented with a contents page and appendices as necessary. The main document is required to be organised and presented with the same headings and in the same order as the Professional Validation Criteria and Evidence. Appendices should be used to contain detailed policy documentation, curriculum content, periodic reviews and staff CVs etc. They should also be used for fieldwork and student handbooks, which will inevitably contain much material found in the main text. Where policies are required, judgment should be used as to whether entire policies are included. Some university-wide policies are large and it may be more appropriate to include only pages of direct relevance to the Requirements.

The NYA issues all new and re-submitting sponsors with a template that is to be used to write the submission. This contains an annotation margin to highlight supporting evidence. This assists the working group in navigating the full submission, enabling supporting evidence relevant



to the specific criteria to be found. This is also available for download at [www.nya.org.uk/professionalvalidation](http://www.nya.org.uk/professionalvalidation)

### Can paperwork prepared for other purposes be included?

It can be the case that paperwork designed for other purposes may also be appropriate. For instance, some institutions use material prepared for academic validation as a major part of the submission for professional validation. This is perfectly acceptable providing it also clearly meets the criteria for professional validation. However, it is essential to introduce such material within the narrative and then give an indication (for example, the page number) of where the evidence relevant to the Requirements can be found.

### Use of diagrams and charts

Working groups find summary charts and diagrams very helpful in conveying complex structures and systems. For instance, diagrams and charts lend themselves readily to an illustration of programme structure, timeline, assessment schedules, inter-relationships and progression across elements of the curriculum, staffing and organisational structures.

### Fit of curriculum with the Requirements

The NYA requires the sponsor to map how the programme meets the Requirements, set out in section four of this book, although they do not prescribe how. It is essential that a submission contains evidence, clearly indicated, that these external criteria have been used to develop the curriculum content and structure. Many sponsors find it useful to show this 'fit' within the learning outcomes for each module and each level of the programme. **The subject benchmarks for youth and community are essential in this process and clearly set out the necessary content.**

## The consideration of modifications or developments to existing programmes

During the five-year period for which professionally validated status is normally granted, sponsors may wish to change aspects of their programme from that which was detailed within the original submission. Any changes to submissions must be notified to the NYA in writing. The NYA will then determine whether the nature and extent of such changes requires consideration by the ETS Committee. Changes may be deemed 'minor', 'substantial' or 'major'.

'Minor' changes are those which require scrutiny by the NYA on behalf of, and with notification to the Chair of the ETS Committee.

'Substantial' changes are those that are of sufficient magnitude to also require further scrutiny by another member of the ETS Committee or a member (members) of the original ETS working group that visited the institution.

'Major' changes are those that require a visit to the institution by one or more representatives of the ETS Committee and NYA personnel.

Fees are charged for modifications to programmes. Fees are charged appropriate to the workload and expenses incurred by the NYA as a result of the proposed modification. The charging policy and current fees can be obtained from the NYA. The NYA reserves the right to judge the nature and extent of the proposed change to the programme and hence the appropriate fee.

## Quality assurance and the annual monitoring process

The main responsibility for monitoring and quality assurance of the programme rests with the sponsor, to ensure a consistent learning experience and effective professional formation for every student. The NYA operates a programme of annual monitoring. This requires a programme to submit a statistical return on an annual basis that allows for the effective monitoring of the programme's recruitment, retention, placement levels and staffing. This will be on a standard template and will also allow a programme to highlight issues and good practice areas.

In addition, each year the NYA will select three programmes to visit for moderation purposes. The visit will be made by a Development Officer working to a standard template of evidence gathering which will be forwarded to the programme four weeks before the visit. The purpose is to allow the NYA to check that programmes continue to operate in line with the Requirements during the period between validation visits, and also to gather information on good practice or issues that can be shared with the sector and raised with the Education and Training Standards Committee. This will be based on a random sample, managed to ensure programmes only receive a visit once within any ten year period, unless the NYA has concerns. This will be in addition to the required re-validation event but not immediately before or after a full validation event.

The information on the statistical return will be used in the following ways:

- to allow the NYA to assess whether programmes are operating as expected and identify where problems to programmes may exist



- to assist the NYA to select the moderation sample for visits
- to alert the ETS Committee to overall patterns and trends in education and training.

The NYA will inform leaders of professionally validated programmes in September about the due date for submission of programme statistical data for the annual monitoring process. Statistical data is normally required to be submitted prior to Christmas. To enable the NYA to carry out its monitoring function, institutions are required to complete an online proforma which asks for mainly quantitative data but includes some qualitative response boxes to identify issues or areas of good practice. The information required to be submitted comprises:

- data on admission, progression, completion and destinations and the demographic profile of new student numbers
- details of staffing levels and numbers of JNC qualified staff
- issues for programmes or areas of good practice to share.

The NYA will collate and analyse this data and the ETS Committee will receive a report at its meeting in June concerning the overall outcomes and recommendations for action, if appropriate, to assist with addressing issues identified to continue to support the initial training of youth workers. The report will then be made available to the sector for information.

An institution must complete and return the required annual monitoring documentation in the timeframe provided each year. Should no information be forthcoming or the content of the information raise concerns, the NYA has the right to intervene, investigate and take action. If the NYA identifies concerns about the progress of a programme in respect of the agreed terms of, and criteria for,

professional validation, it will seek to secure a satisfactory outcome with the sponsors. Should that not be secured, the NYA will implement a formal investigative procedure that may result in withdrawal of professionally validated status or imposition of a further condition that must be satisfied for continuing professionally validated status. This may include the immediate revoking of the validation.

## Appeals

Sponsors may appeal against the manner in which the professional validation process was conducted, or against the outcomes agreed by the ETS Committee. In either case the grounds for appeal must be that action or decision is not in accordance with the criteria or procedures laid down in the Requirements.

Any appeal against a decision of the ETS Committee must be lodged within 28 days of its written notification to the sponsor, outlining the grounds on which it is based. It should be addressed to the Chief Executive of the NYA. Should it be agreed that there is a case to answer, the sponsor will be invited to provide further written evidence and given an opportunity to present a case personally. An appeals panel of the NYA's Executive Board will be convened, usually comprising three of its members, none of whom will have had any previous detailed involvement with the case under consideration. The ETS Committee will be invited to explain its action/decision and respond to the appeal. The appeals panel will endeavour to meet as soon as possible and, usually, not later than two months following the formal notification of agreement to hear the appeal. The appeals panel will determine its own procedure within these guidelines, by reference to the Requirements for



Professional Validation, and has the following powers to:

- allow the appeal
- allow the appeal subject to specified conditions
- dismiss the appeal.

The panel will convey its decision in writing to the sponsor and to the NYA's Executive Board, giving reasons for its decision. The appeals panel's decision is final.

## Fees for professional validation

Fees are subject to annual review and current rates are available on the website at [www.nya.org.uk/professionalvalidation](http://www.nya.org.uk/professionalvalidation)

### Validation of new programme and re-validation of existing programme

As detailed previously, the fees are payable in two stages for new programmes (on submission of stage one documentation and on submission of stage two draft documentation) and in one payment for existing programmes (on submission of stage two draft documentation).

### Additional work

Where additional or extensive work is required by the Development Officer or other NYA staff in the preparation and development of submissions for the validation process further fees will be charged. The total number of additional days required will be agreed with the sponsor in advance of the NYA agreeing to continue with the validation process.

### Modifications

Where a programme wishes to make changes to the programme outside of the normal validation event, they are able to apply to the NYA to do this. Through discussion it will be assessed as to whether the proposed changes are viewed as:

- minor (requiring NYA officer time and noting at ETS Committee only)
- substantial (requiring NYA officer time and consultation with ETS Committee members)
- major (requiring NYA officer time, consultation with ETS Committee members and additional visit to the institution).

The fees for additional work and modifications are also on the website at [www.nya.org.uk/professionalvalidation](http://www.nya.org.uk/professionalvalidation)





## Section 3: Professional validation criteria and evidence requirements

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There are seventeen criteria across five Requirement headings. These are summarised on the following page. In order to assist with the preparation of a submission there is a description of the evidence that should be provided to demonstrate adherence to each criteria. Against each Requirement heading there is a list of essential evidence that must be included in a submission. This can act as a checklist.

Guidance on programme design and expected content is set out in section four of this book. Guidance on how to develop, write, compile and submit documentation is given in section two. Further guidance can be obtained through contact with the NYA development officer assigned to a programme. The Training Agencies Group is also a valuable source of information and support throughout the submission process.



## Summary of requirements

Requirement headings	Criteria	Overview of focus
Institutional context	1.1 Organisational arrangements 1.2 Nature of the award 1.3 Length of programme 1.4 Market analysis, institutional and employer support 1.5 Management structure 1.6 Admissions 1.7 Accreditation of Prior Learning 1.8 Application of equality and diversity principles	This group of criteria gives a contextual setting against which the rest of the submission can be considered, giving clarity around the type and nature of the award and demonstrating that there is a market need and support for a youth and community programme. This includes showing employer links, emerging and established. Equality and diversity principles that are applied across the design, delivery and management of the programme are covered in this section.
Resourcing	2.1 Staffing 2.2 Support resources	This group of criteria demonstrates that the programme has high level institutional commitment and the allocation of resources to enable the efficient and effective running of the programme in line with the requirements.
Teaching and learning	3.1 Professional focus, coherence and structure 3.2 Programme delivery	This group of criteria demonstrates a programme's ethos, principles and learning content that ensures professional formation in youth work.
Professional practice arrangements	4.1 Placement structures 4.2 Placement management and supervision	This group of criteria demonstrates quality approaches and procedures to all aspects of professional practice that support professional formation in youth work.
Assessment, quality assurance and development	5.1 Assessment of student learning 5.2 Programme monitoring, review and evaluation 5.3 Confirmation of professional recognition	This group of criteria demonstrates that the programme is underpinned by robust processes and procedures for the assessment of learning and the quality assurance of the programme, including monitoring, review and evaluation that includes all students and partners.



## 1. Institutional context

### Essential documentation

- ✓ Narrative to cover the evidence requirements
- ✓ Copies of partnership agreements (if applicable)
- ✓ Budgetary evidence
- ✓ Signed document of support from chief officer of the institution
- ✓ Organisational structure (immediate faculty)
- ✓ Copy of prospectus (marketing material)
- ✓ Institution's APL policy/procedures
- ✓ Institution's equality and diversity statement/policy

### Criteria

### Evidence

#### 1.1 Organisational arrangements

##### *The programme:*

identifies the institution(s) to which all matters relating to the programme should be addressed

if appropriate, details of partnership arrangements with other learning institutions, including the respective responsibilities of all parties to the partnership.

##### *Submissions must contain:*

all relevant contact names and addresses

copies of contracts of any partnership arrangements to secure the programme.



### 1.2 Nature of the award

*The programme:*

is academically validated and leads to Honours Degree or postgraduate award

is clearly identified in all relevant paperwork as leading to professional qualification in youth work.

*Submissions must give a precise statement of:*

the name/title of the qualification(s) to be awarded

the name of the awarding body/bodies – full title, address, status of organisation

the name of the academic validation body and/or any other form of validation or accreditation secured or sought

the academic level of the award.

### 1.3 Length of programme

*The programme:*

meets the minimum period for professional validation –

for Honours Degree programmes  
three years full-time (or part-time equivalent)

for postgraduate programmes  
one year full-time (or part-time equivalent)

*Submissions must contain:*

detail of the minimum length of time of study required to achieve the award, part-time variations, and the normally allowed maximum

if applicable, demonstrate flexible approaches that reduce the overall number of years it can take a part-time student to complete an Honours degree, do not normally exceed 45 weeks study per year and ensure that the workload is not prohibitive of a student maintaining effective employment, and securing their health.



#### 1.4 Market analysis, institutional and employer support

*The programme has:*

secure commitment from the institution and sufficient resources to allow for its effective delivery

relevant market and evaluation research that supports that there is current and forecast future student and employer demand for the programme and that there is a sufficient pool of suitable potential recruits.

*Submissions must contain:*

information about resources for the programme in the form of budgetary evidence and a signed statement from the chief officer of the institution that this commitment will be (or continues to be) honoured

a brief introduction outlining relevant background. This should include a description of the development of the programme to date, and any special features of the sponsor or the local community

results from market research, with local and regional employers and regional youth work units, undertaken to explore the employment needs of the locality and the region, and the occupational prospects of the students

*Submissions for re-validation must include the above. In addition the submission for re-validation will provide evidence to address the following requirements:*

summary evidence on the process adopted, outcomes identified and action taken following substantial review of the programme, which must be undertaken within the five year period of professional validation, in addition to any annual review procedures operated by the institution

any published report on institutional or subject-related provision undertaken by the QAA within the professional validation period

how the sponsor has sought to address any recommendations made at the previous professional validation event.



### 1.5 Management structure

*The programme has:*

a dedicated structure for the programme team to oversee the programme

a clear system for strategic and operational management

formal representation of local employers and regional groupings in the governance process

student representation in the governance process

clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each partner, where there are partner organisations involved in the management and delivery of the programme.

*Submissions must contain:*

the organisational structure and programme location within the institution

the structure, composition, terms of reference, responsibilities and powers of programme committee (or equivalent, however named)

the range and remit of key staff roles eg programme leader, field-work coordinator

any written partnership agreements between organisations/institutions involved in the management/delivery of the programme.



## 1.6 Admissions

### *The programme has:*

a clear strategy and evidence of a well-managed system for recruitment and selection

a clear rationale for any target groups linked with the professional focus of the programme

a rigorous selection criteria that includes requirements for personal, academic and practical youth work experience on entry

a selection process that examines and assesses an applicant's capacity to develop and achieve professional competence in the areas set out in curriculum requirements (section 4 and 3.1).

### *Submissions must contain:*

a comprehensive strategy for recruitment linking projections, target populations, regional and local emphases with the professional focus of the course

the size and categories (if any) of the group the institution seeks to recruit – indicating maximum and minimum numbers

copies of the prospectus (or equivalent publication)

any restrictions on application with reference to 'personal suitability for youth work' as set out in personal suitability and professional conduct (section four)

requirements and criteria for admission, including minimum practical experience and qualifications and the information sought on applicants' criminal records

guidance given to and composition of selection panels. Guidance must stipulate that the admissions process ensures that, when given available support, an applicant has the capacity to develop and achieve competence in the areas set out in the curriculum requirements (section four)

institutions must produce evidence of adherence to Criminal Records Bureau requirements for all new students at their time of entry

arrangements for undertaking and responding to the outcomes of CRB checks.



### 1.7 Accreditation of prior learning

*The programme has a process of APL that:*

- operates within a larger institution wide procedure
- only accepts tangible and assessable evidence, such as copies of certificates or transcripts, of a similar level of attainment in a comparable programme of study in an equivalent institutional setting
- allows advanced standing into level 2 or 3 of a BA programme, only on condition that evidence clearly supports a level of professional formation equal to that of students on the programme they are entering. More specifically:

*Academic learning:*

obtained by completing modules within a JNC programme or by demonstrating academic understanding from completing related academic study, so that by the end of the third level they have met the full curriculum requirements as laid out in 3.1 and youth work is evident at each level of student learning.

*Professional practice:*

has completed field practice on another JNC validated youth work

*continued on page 33*

**See additional APL/APEL notes in section four for definitions and guidance.**

*Submissions must contain:*

a definitive statement on APL/APEL and admission to the programme with advanced standing where the institution's general procedures allow for APEL to provide advanced standing, a clear statement identifying the accepted break in procedure made for the programme being proposed

copies of institutional procedure relating to APL/APEL

evidence that APL and transfer arrangements are clearly stated in the student handbook.



*continued from page 32*

programme, and/or that by the end of the third level will have completed 888 hours of supervised practice (50 per cent direct engagement with young people aged 13 – 19).

where someone is transferring from a non-JNC degree level programme, with related learning and practice for working with young people, formally supervised practice can only be APL if:

- practice has been supervised and assessed with reports written by both supervisor and student
- practice was predominantly with the 13 to 19 age group (50 per cent direct engagement with young people)
- practice involved group work
- practice took place in a range of contexts
- practice involved work on social and personal development learning achieved covers, and has been mapped to the NOS for youth work
- evidence of practice and reports are produced

*at the end of the third level of the programme the student will have completed 888 hours with 50 per cent direct engagement with young people aged 13 to 19*



### 1.8 Application of equality and diversity principles

*The programme has*

institutional policies on equality and diversity that are applied appropriately to the programme, enshrined within all practices, including recruitment and admissions, and curriculum content, and reflect those set out in the QAA Youth and Community Work Benchmark Statements.

**See additional notes on equality and diversity requirements in section four for further guidance.**

*Submissions must contain:*

the institution's current equality and diversity policy statement or that pertaining to the programme and evidence of its application

explanation of how the policy has been implemented in practice within the programme admissions, content and delivery

explanation of how the principles set out in the QAA Youth and Community Work Benchmark Statements have been adopted in practice within the programme.



## 2. Resourcing – staffing, services and facilities

### Essential documentation

- ✓ Narrative to cover evidence requirements
- ✓ Clear presentation of exact staffing allocation to show the requirements are met
- ✓ Core staff curriculum vitae
- ✓ Staff development programme

### Criteria

### Evidence

#### 2.1 Staffing

*The programme has:*

a well-balanced core of staff dedicated to the programme who are able to support the professional formation of youth workers

a wider team of staff contributing to the programme team, with a range of specialist skills and knowledge, and field experience

a minimum of **one** core full-time JNC qualified and experienced staff member for each full-time year group (or equivalent cohort)

a programme leader and staff member responsible for fieldwork who are JNC qualified and/or experienced;

*continued on page 36*

**See additional notes on JNC staffing requirements in section four for further guidance.**

*Submissions must contain:*

detailed information on:

core staff (those who normally dedicate the greater part of their time to the programme)

main support staff (who give between 25 and 50 per cent of their work to the programme, making a significant contribution to it)

this is to include curricula vitae of all of the core and main support staff, which clearly and specifically, where appropriate, identifies those who hold a JNC recognised qualification

and include information on the roles of staff:

*continued on page 36*



*continued from page 35*

a dedicated member of staff responsible for the management and implementation of each 'route' possible within the programme

a limit on the employment of external sessional teaching staff which should not normally exceed 30 per cent of the FTE quota for the programme

an appropriate student-staff ratio, usually no more than 20:1 for honours degree programmes and 16:1 for postgraduate programmes

future plans and contingencies to meet the above requirements if appropriate (see staffing requirements in section four)

opportunity for staff to engage in continuing professional development, with processes to gauge that outputs lead to enhancement of the programme of study for students.

*continued from page 35*

- modules/units for which responsible (including level of commitment)
- supervisory/tutorial role (institution or field-based)
- other roles within the programme
- the range of other duties held, including research commitments, especially in the area of youth and community work.

overview information on:

occasional staff (who normally only contribute to discrete areas of the curriculum on a restricted basis)

contributions by visiting lecturers (that are to be incorporated as an integral part of a programme of professional education and training). Such contributions should include input from fieldwork practitioners

staff/student ratios to ensure that the course can be delivered effectively. The proportion of staff delivering the programme from each of the four categories set out above (core, main support, occasional and visiting) should be clearly indicated

the group size and tutorial provision related to the programme content and mode of delivery. In particular, the NYA will require evidence that the deployment of staff allows for work with individuals and small groups of students

the current edition of the staff development programme.



## 2.2 Support resources

*The programme has:*

an identified physical base

accommodation that enables a full range of teaching and learning methods to be employed, including ICT

resources at a level and quality such that the programme can be delivered effectively

a diversity of resources to meet different learning needs.

*Submissions must contain:*

detail of the accommodation available to the programme and whether it has exclusive or shared use

a detailed breakdown of all other learning facilities and resources, including the level of resources for all learning facilities, ie written materials, information technology (blackboards, virtual learning environments), audio visual aids and access for staff and students to libraries

detail of the accommodation and resources for people with a range of different learning needs with a clear indication of those categories of need for which facilities are not appropriate

a strategy to deal with accommodation and resources that do not meet with current disability access legislation; and arrangements for childcare, if any.



### 3. Teaching and learning

#### Essential documentation

- ✓ Narrative to cover the evidence requirements
- ✓ Programme (student) handbook
- ✓ Module specifications (if not contained in above)
- ✓ Reading lists (if not contained in the above)

#### Criteria

#### Evidence

#### 3.1 Professional focus, coherence and structure

*The programme demonstrates:*

a coherent rationale for the programme as one, primarily, for professional formation in youth work

the inter-relationships of all elements of the programme to ensure that the rationale is met and the outcomes secured

how the programme includes youth work values, principles and ethics

how the programme addresses/includes, and an assessment of the extent to which, the programme covers curriculum content set out in

**QAA Youth and Community Work Benchmark Statements**  
**Professional and National Occupational Standards for Youth Work**  
**Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for Children and Young People's Workforce**  
**JNC Framework**

*Submissions must contain:*

a comprehensive description of the nature of the programme, its main emphases and orientations, structures and systems

critical and detailed reflection on the concept of professional development and its goals, in respect of the curriculum requirements

demonstration of how the programme content meets the curriculum requirements

well-balanced and up-to-date indicative reading lists drawing upon broader theoretical literature and specialist publications

an explanation of how more extensive lists of references are identified to students and an explanation of processes in place to ensure regular review and revision of references and resources drawn on within the programme

*continued on page 39*

*continued on page 39*



*continued from page 38*

how the programme is reflective of changes and developments in youth related legislation and social policy

professional practice elements are integrated within the overall programme structure and how this and other approaches to study provide for the development of highly skilled interpersonal and intervention work with both individual, and groups of, young people

that all the above is articulated to students within a current and comprehensive student handbook, made available to all students at the commencement of each year of the programme.

*continued from page 38*

separate presentation of the detailed curriculum which must include reference to key contemporary development and publications in youth policy and practice. Details of the modules must be presented as an accompanying document

A copy of the student handbook, which is expected to contain:

- a curriculum outline
- information on assessment responsibilities, procedures, methods and deadlines
- relevant administrative and managerial information
- information about sources of formal and informal assistance
- advice and support for students with a disability and those from minority groups, for example BAME students, those from cultural and religious minorities and lesbian and gay people
- information on student rights, including the formal academic appeals procedure.



### 3.2 Programme delivery

*The programme:*

uses resources optimally

utilises various forms of good practice of working in groups

ensures students have an appropriate level of competence in ICT

identifies and meets the needs of students with learning difficulties or disability

secures student access to ICT resources, at appropriate levels and convenient times.

*Submissions must contain detailed information on:*

the teaching and learning methods employed on the programme and how these support students' development in the areas identified in the curriculum requirements

the sizes of groups, the amount of individual and small group tutorial time

the support mechanisms for students with learning difficulties

the extent and nature of student-led teaching and learning

the methods employed to ensure that students are confident and competent users of ICT.



## 4. Professional practice arrangements

### Essential documentation

- ✓ Narrative to cover the evidence requirements
- ✓ Placement handbook
- ✓ Programme (student) handbook
- ✓ Examples of placement paperwork if not in the previous documents
- ✓ Example briefing/training/support materials for supervisors

### Criteria

### Evidence

#### 4.1 Placement structures

##### *The programme*

has periods of professional practice that meet the minimum requirements of:

- 24 weeks or 888 hours over a programme whose minimum length is three years full-time
- 16 weeks or 592 hours on a postgraduate programme whose minimum length is one year full-time.

has practice commitment for a 37 hour week (or equivalent for part-time modes), however expressed, and must require students to devote at least 50 per cent of their committed time to direct engagement with young people aged 13 to 19

the remainder 50 per cent (or less) of available practice placement

*continued on page 42*

##### *Submissions must contain:*

a clear specification of the professional practice allocation/structure within the programme

a rationale for the distribution of time and scheduling of block or concurrent practice

the aims of professional practice placements including specific aims, objectives and learning outcomes for the various practice elements

detail on how the alternative placement will enable students to broaden their professional practice experience and how the structure of the placement will ensure the student:

- follows a programme of work which is new and challenging

*continued on page 42*



*continued from page 41*

time is spent on youth work related activity that contributes to reflective practice and professional formation

has practice that enables the student to demonstrate in different ways a range of competencies including management, as referred to in the curriculum requirements

has professional practice arrangements structured to ensure students undertake at least two placements in different locations and that the alternative placement/s takes place in a location which ensures that students experience different working models, organisational cultures and management styles

alternative placement/s is a minimum of 6 weeks or 222 hours for undergraduate programmes and 4 weeks or 148 hours on a postgraduate route

contains appropriate quantities of assessed youth work practice on each level of the programme and seeks to integrate the academic aim of an honours degree/postgraduate qualification with the aims of professional formation, and that all placement practice must be passed to allow a student to gain the professional award.

*continued from page 41*

- has a different supervisor and line manager
- wherever possible, moves to a different employer, although there may be occasion when a move within a large organisation (a local authority or national voluntary organisation) is justifiable and the only feasible alternative.

a policy available to students, fieldwork agencies and employers explaining the requirements pertaining to the second (alternative) placement

a clear statement, within programme documentation, describing the requirement that students must pass all professional practice assessment to gain the professional award.



## 4.2 Placement management and supervision

*The programme has:*

a well-managed system for organising professional practice placements and assuring its quality

arrangements for students in employment-based placements clearly detailed in written agreements

professional placement opportunities available in a range of different organisational settings including statutory, voluntary and faith based provision

arrangements in place for input from the programme team, and tutors, in approving the quality of the fieldwork agency and supervision and supporting the student throughout the placement

a high quality supervision approach that ensures all supervisors:

- are JNC qualified or alternatively and appropriately professionally qualified and experienced in working with young people
- understand informal education
- are non-judgmental in approach
- assist a student identify theory to practice links
- enable, support and develop a student's effective reflective

*continued on page 44*

*Submissions must contain:*

a budget for the overall fieldwork programme

the roles of all partners and individuals involved in the management of the professional practice element

administrative arrangements and responsibilities for setting up placements – role of student, tutor and others involved, the latter to include (where applicable) contractual procedures with employers, procedures for conflict resolution, procedures for establishing placement contracts including payment

details and guidelines for students' placement reports and other required assignments

emergency procedures available to both students and supervisors in the event of difficulty – personal, professional, financial

detail on how the quality of professional practice placements is assured on a continual basis, including procedures for profiling locations and keeping them under review to ensure that the development of students' skills and experiences is delivered in suitable settings, and procedures for vetting or removing unsuitable locations

*continued on page 44*



*continued from page 43*

- practice and professional formation
- receive support and training for their role
  - receive clear guidance on the use of assessment tools for development and judgment of student performance.

where a supervisor is not JNC qualified, one person involved in supporting a student's development within the placement setting is JNC qualified

measures for achieving consistency in the assessment process and assessment tools are used that enable judgment of a student's progression and performance

procedures for the supervision and assessment of placements undertaken outside the normal catchment area.

*continued from page 43*

arrangements for ensuring the appropriate qualification of supervisors used, with criteria for recruitment, selection, monitoring and training of professional placement supervisors

provide a rationale for use of any supervisors who are not JNC qualified, and further detail of their recruitment, selection, training and support to ensure the requirements stated are met

briefing procedures, liaison with, support and training offered to the fieldwork agencies and supervisors used

assessment methods and balance of assessor responsibilities between supervisor and academic programme team

the latest external examiner and other annual evaluation report on the operation of the professional practice aspects of the programme

the latest handbook detailing the fieldwork arrangements, which must be compiled annually and distributed to field staff, tutors and students.



## 5. Assessment, quality assurance and development

### Essential documentation

- ✓ Narrative to cover the evidence requirements
- ✓ Schedule of assignment tasks
- ✓ Module specifications
- ✓ Institutions policy/procedure around quality assurance practice, or example/weblink
- ✓ Reference to procedures for attendance
- ✓ Example certificate and letter to students to show JNC status

### Criteria

### Evidence

#### 5.1 Assessment of student learning

*The programme has:*

a range of tasks commensurate with the learning needs for professional formation

a range of tasks that are effective in testing that students have developed the competences outlined in the curriculum requirements

a manageable schedule of assignment tasks

measures to ensure fairness and consistency within and between modules and between students

*continued on page 46*

*Submissions must contain:*

a detailed description of the structures and system for assessment, to include:

an assessment schedule containing information about:

- nature of assignment(s)
- length/amount of work required to complete a module
- range of modes of presentation
- assignment submission dates for each level of the programme
- weighting/contribution to the overall total of credits
- clearly stated criteria for assessing work of all types
- arrangements relating to compensation, late submissions and appeals

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*continued from page 45*

a system of compensation (if any) which excludes failures in fieldwork practice.

*continued from page 45*

- procedures for securing consistency in assessment standards
- the extent, if any, of self and peer assessment.

the institution's formal arrangements for assessment, ie committees, boards.

## 5.2 Programme monitoring, review and evaluation

*The programme has:*

a robust external examining process that secures academic and professional competence and comments on:

- how well the programme serves as a basis for professional formation
- the strengths and weaknesses of the programme aims, process, content and management
- from the field external examiner's report, how well the immediate field-partners are involved in, and satisfied by the programme.

at least two external examiners, one of whom:

- holds a senior post in a field-based organisation
- holds a JNC recognised qualification in youth and community work.

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*Submissions must contain:*

material explaining the institution's systems and procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme and its structures

detail of the mechanisms for regular structured involvement and consultation by representatives of the field, representatives of field-work agencies used and employers with respect to the quality and development of the programme's curriculum, structures and practices

detail of other consultation and involvement by the field within the programme

the opportunities for students to influence the curriculum content and process

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*continued from page 46*

- has a minimum of three years experience in a senior position within youth and community work, in either the statutory or voluntary sector
- has extensive practical experience of youth work training in statutory or voluntary sector settings
- has understanding and experience of the broad political, practitioner and policy context of education and training in youth and community work in England
- has an understanding of and commitment to the role of the professional body in the validation of education and training in youth and community work
- has a commitment to anti-oppressive practice and equal opportunities.

institution-wide procedures and systems for effective evaluation, review and approval of the programme

procedures and active involvement of the programme team, external examiners, students and field representatives in the development of the programme

approaches to monitor and ensure the required level of attendance and student engagement across all elements of the curriculum to meet the requirement of 80 to 100 per cent attendance necessary to secure professional formation

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*continued from page 46*

CVs for current external examiners

procedures for appointing and dismissing external examiners and the key functions of the role

an explanation of how the institutional, programme-specific and NYA validation feedback have been, and are used to inform programme development so that the programme continues to be relevant and up to date in respect of the programme curriculum and strategy for professional formation

details of policy and practice associated with student attendance and participation

details of policy and practice associated with a student's fitness for practice, including procedures to address concerns that protect the student, the programme and professional standards.

*continued on page 48*



*continued from page 47*

approaches to monitor and secure the development of professional conduct for individual students (covering academic and professional placement practice) and procedures to address issues as they arise.

### 5.3 Confirmation of professional recognition

*The programme:*

clearly names the award to reflect that it is a professional one, distinguishable from other academic or non-professional programmes.

**It is a requirement that the term youth work appears in the title of the award**

provides students with formal written notification from the institution of the professional recognition of their qualification by the JNC, without obligation on the part of the student to apply first for such notification. **Where possible it is also expected that professional recognition is included on the academic certification of the award provided to the student.**

*Submissions must contain:*

details of the institution's practices in this area and copies of examples of certificate correspondence.



## Section 4: Guidance notes to support the meeting of requirements

### Equality and diversity

The principles of equality and diversity are at the heart of the youth work ethos, ethics and approaches and as such programmes seeking validation and revalidation must demonstrate that these are applied rigorously to all aspects of a programme, from initial recruitment of students, recruitment of staff and across all elements of programme content, delivery and assessment. The QAA benchmark statements for youth and community work clearly articulate what these principles are and working groups will explore this area in depth to ensure equality and diversity principles are truly held, enshrined and embedded in all policy and practice relating to the programme seeking validation.

### Curriculum requirements

The curriculum must offer significant and challenging opportunities for personal, professional and academic development in order that students develop as effective reflective practitioners, with the understanding and skill required to create programmes of personal and social education with young people. The academic and fieldwork curriculum must introduce the student to a range of models of practice and enable the student to develop confidence and competence in planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the use of these models across different contexts and situations.

The curriculum for professional qualification in youth work must provide for effective professional formation such that the professionally qualified graduate can operate as a skilled and valued practitioner, colleague and member of the profession. The NYA will examine

submissions for professional validation for the extent that their curriculum provides for adequate professional formation.

All proposals for professional validation must demonstrate that the following key areas of work are central to the programme:

- work with young people and their communities
- work with staff and other agencies
- development of service provision
- management
- delivering the five outcomes for young people identified within Every Child Matters.

**The NYA expects to see evidence of the use of the following documents in the design and management of professionally qualifying programmes.**

#### Subject benchmarks

Academic benchmark standards defining the desired outcomes of graduates within different academic disciplines have been developed by the Quality Assurance Agency ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)). Youth work specific benchmark statements have been developed and were published in 2009.

The subject benchmarks describe the nature and characteristics of a youth work programme. It sets out the defining principles and ethics, including equality and diversity, which need to be enshrined in youth work programmes. The benchmarks describe the subject knowledge and understanding that are essential for a validated programme of youth work and should be used by all programmes seeking professional validation to develop and review the content.



**The QAA benchmark statements for youth work must be read in conjunction with this book. Programmes must reflect the principles, knowledge and skills set out.**

### **National Occupational Standards for Youth Work**

National Occupational Standards (NOS) seek to capture and define the skills, knowledge and competences used within a work sector and form an agreed set of aspects, units and elements that are used to describe what work with young people entails in terms of understanding, skill and competence levels. The NOS may also be used in drawing up job descriptions, development and monitoring of practice, contract specification and a means of developing and evaluating training.

National Occupational Standards for Youth Work were established in January 2000 following wide and comprehensive consultation. These have been reviewed in 2008 ([www.lluk.org.uk](http://www.lluk.org.uk)). The NYA expects the NOS to be used to inform the design of all qualifications for individuals who work with young people.

### **Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for all who work in children's and young people's services**

The DfES published the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge in 2005 following consultation on the Green Paper: Every Child Matters ([www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)). These have been refreshed in 2010.

The Common Core reflects a set of common values for practitioners working in the children and young people's workforce and is aimed at improving life chances for all children and young people with a view to providing more effective and integrated services.

It is expected that the Common Core will be used to support the design of training and qualifications for all of those working within the children and young people's workforce. It is worth noting that the themes of the Common Core will be articulated within the National Occupational Standards document. The NYA expects the Common Core to be reflected within programmes.

### **JNC Framework**

Important changes in employment patterns have resulted in newly qualified youth workers being appointed into more senior posts than was the case in the past. Professionally qualifying programmes should take into account the 'Guidance on Allocation to Ranges' in the September 2003 JNC agreement in the design and implementation of their curriculum. The assessment practices used within programmes must ensure that students have achieved a level of satisfactory attainment for each of these aspects of work for a post graded in the JNC Professional Range. See [www.cywu.org.uk](http://www.cywu.org.uk) – select JESC 133.

## **Personal suitability and professional conduct**

### **Professionalism**

The Requirements do not set out entry requirements for youth work programmes. It is expected that they will recruit in line with the expectations of their own institution and with regard to the nature of the programme. Youth work programmes attract mature students as well as young and as such often have flexibility in entry requirements to enable access for non-traditional entrants. Whilst this is to be valued and encouraged it should be balanced with the appropriate assessment of candidates to ensure, that with appropriate support, they are able



to achieve and qualify as professional youth workers. Academic ability is one aspect of this. The assessment should also consider the less tangible qualities that the professional youth worker must be able to demonstrate. Only those applicants with the required personal attributes should be admitted to the programme.

These attributes must be evident at entry to a professionally qualifying programme and sustained during that education and training. The NYA expects institutions to have in place systems that ensure an applicant is positively disposed towards these attributes and that the programme enables them further to develop such attributes in their practice subsequent to qualification. Aspects that define professionalism in youth work include:

- recognising the importance of integrity in all personal and social interactions and respecting the human rights of young people
- accepting the principles of Ethical Conduct in Youth Work
- commitment to an ethos of continuous professional development (the professional worker as reflective practitioner) leading to improvement in professional practice
- commitment to working collaboratively providing the context for youth work practice and critical engagement in the development of that context.

It is expected that applicants can show a level of prior knowledge and experience of youth work that demonstrates an understanding and commitment to the profession that can be developed and enhanced through study on a professional level programme.

It is expected that an institution running a professionally validated programme should have in place a policy and procedure for issues relating

to fitness for practice. If a programme has concerns around a student's ability to conduct themselves as professional youth workers, despite academic achievement, they need to be able to address these in line with procedures that protect the students, the university and the profession.

#### **Criminal records disclosure**

Institutions have a duty to ensure that students do not have a criminal record which would prevent them from working with children or young people. The NYA expects the institution to have systems in place by which it can assure itself of an applicant's suitability in this respect. A check via the Criminal Records Bureau is one part of fulfilling that duty. Further information at [www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk)

#### **JNC staffing requirements**

The requirements state that key staff and supervisors should be JNC qualified and set an expected level of JNC staff within a programme. Core staff should possess a JNC qualification and be knowledgeable about and familiar with current youth and community work practice, and committed to its promotion and development. The NYA expects these requirements to be met in full. However, for programmes failing to meet the JNC levels in full

- a clear rationale must be presented that clearly states how the staffing within the programme and on professional placements will ensure that the professional formation of students is developed and supported
- a description of the strategies and timescale, as appropriate, it proposes to adopt to secure practice in line with the requirements.



For new and emerging programmes the full-time member of staff per cohort can be a full-time equivalent. As the programme establishes, it is expected that this is reviewed and full-time staff are employed within the programme.

## Accreditation of prior learning

APL refers to the accreditation of prior formal learning including assessed fieldwork practice.

APEL refers to the accreditation of prior experiential learning that has not been formally assessed within credit bearing programmes but is the result of work and life experience. This is not permitted for advanced standing at level 2 and 3 of JNC validated programmes.

Admission to the beginning of professionally validated programmes through the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) is valid, valuable and encouraged.



## Glossary of terms

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APL	Accreditation of prior learning
APEL	Accreditation of prior experiential learning
ETS	Education and Training Standards
JNC	Joint Negotiating Committee
LLUK	Lifelong Learning Sector Skills Council for the UK
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NYA	National Youth Agency
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
SSC	Sector Skills Council
TAG	Community and Youth Work Training Agencies Group – professional association of lecturers in youth and community education



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## How to find out more

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

Please contact us to find out more about working together to get it right for young people.

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