Information Sheet

Professional Validation of degree programmes is completed through the Education and Training Standards Committee, a sub-committee of the NYA Board. The Education and Training Standards Committee, referred to as ETS, brings together representatives from across the Youth Work sector including Higher Education, the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth Workers, and practitioners from local, regional and national youth work organisations. The collaborative process of the Education and Training Standards Committee ensures professional youth work degrees are scrutinised by sector specialists from academia and youth work practice.

Benefits of validated degree

A validated degree is recognised through the Joint Education and Training Standards Committees in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland. Other benefits to offering a validated programme include:

- Ensuring the programme is promoted through the National Youth Agency to prospective practitioners wishing to undertake professional development in youth and community work
- Demonstrating the programme meets the standards required by the recognised professional, statutory, and regulatory body (The NYA) for best practice in youth and community work
- Demonstrating that your programme is in line with the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Youth and Community Work used in Higher Education across the UK
- Enabling practitioners to progress in their career with a professional programme of learning that combines theory and practice
- Clearly demonstrating that the programme subscribes to nationally recognised, ethics, values and principles for youth and community work education
- Confers professional status for graduates and confirms they are competent with regards to the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work
- Connects programme leaders to supportive colleagues and national organisations that can help enhance learning provision through co-operation, networking, and collaboration.
- Recognition by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers as a professionally qualified youth worker.

Process

There are four stages to the process for achieving professional validation and these are outlined below. At any stage the process may be halted, paused, or progressed. During this process a Higher Education Provider can market their degree programme but must state that validation from the NYA is pending. The whole process will take a minimum of eight months with some validations taking longer.

Expression of interest

The purpose of this stage is for the provider to share their interest in seeking validation and detail what progress has been made. Using the Expression of Interest [included link] form

the provider can detail their current position and plans to meet the initial requirements of validation. An NYA Officer will provide feedback on the Expression of Interest to guide and support the provider to continue in the development of their degree programme. It may be appropriate for an NYA Officer to meet with the provider online or in person to provide further support. A decision to progress to the next stage will be agreed along with a timeline for submissions and the validation event. Higher Education Providers are welcome to seek informal support from the Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work (PALYCW) at this initial stage.

Draft submission

The provider completes Submission: Draft [link to be added] to demonstrate how they are planning to meet the Professional Validation Requirements [include link]. Feedback will be provided to give guidance and support for how the submission can be improved to meet the Professional Validation Requirements.
There is a charge at this stage [validation charge details to be confirmed].

Final submission

Using Submission: Final [link to be added] the provider will submit all documents to demonstrate meeting the Professional Validation Requirements. This submission will be shared with the validation panel and therefore support will be given to ensure the submission is at an appropriate standard before it is shared with the validation panel members. Providers will only progress to the Validation Event once the NYA Officer is satisfied that the baseline requirements have been met.

Validation event

The validation event is both a rigorous and celebratory event as it brings the documentation of the final submission to life and ends (hopefully), with the programme being validated. The validation panel usually has four members including an NYA Officer who takes notes and directs the panel to ensure questions are linked to validation requirements. The validation panel is led by a Chair who is a member of the ETS committee, the remaining members of the panel represent academia and youth work practice. The wider-field rep will have a focus on understanding how the programme relates to the field of youth work and supports employers and placement providers. Academia is represented by the Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work, and they will have a focus on ensuring the programme is enabling students to connect theory and practice.
Throughout the validation event the panel will question different people involved in the degree programme including students, senior leadership, teaching staff, employers and placement providers.
At the end of the validation there are five possible outcomes:

1. Unconditional approval of the programme – where the programme meets the validation criteria fully
2. Approval of the programme with conditions – where additions or amendments are necessary to fully meet the validation criteria prior to the start of the programme commencing. Conditions must be met before the programme can begin to teach a new cohort
3. Approval of the programme with requirements – where the programme needs to make some changes to fully meet the validation criteria which may not be required immediately but will need to be in place within the first year of operation

4. Approval of the programme with recommendations – these are recommendations based on best practice and professional wisdom, above the minimum requirements of the validation criteria. They are for the provider to consider, and providers may decide whether to implement them or not

Programmes can receive a combination of conditions, requirements, and recommendations along with commendations that recognise innovation or areas of excellence.

5. Require the provider to resubmit for validation – the panel thinks there are too many concerns following the validation event and require the provider to resubmit for a validation event in the future.