

Education for Health offers complete programmes of study, as well as giving students the opportunity to undertake single modules.

Validation is the process by which Education for Health proposes a programme of study for approval that leads to a validated award. The validation process culminates in a judgement by a panel of peers about whether or not a proposed programme of study meets the requirements for that award. Revalidation is the process by which approved programmes of study are re-approved.

Modules are validated as part of the programme validation. Although students can undertake modules independently of a programme of study, all Education for Health modules are validated as part of a programme rather than as stand-alone modules.

11.1 Principles for validation and revalidation

The following principles must be met for each programme leading to a validated award:

Standard of awards

Each validated award must be comparable in standard to awards granted and conferred by other higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. This will take account of appropriate external reference points, including the UK's QAA Code of Practice, the National Qualifications Frameworks for higher education, subject benchmark statements, and the requirements of professional or statutory bodies and employers.

The structure of programmes of study

The structure of a programme of study must be related to its intended learning outcomes and the requirements of intended learners.

A programme must demonstrate progression from the knowledge and skills required at entry to the level of outcome for the award. Programmes must demonstrate the criteria for the attainment of intermediate awards that can be gained within the programme.

A programme must demonstrate balance, for example, in relation to academic and practical elements, to personal development and academic outcomes, and to breadth and depth in the curriculum. It must also demonstrate coherence to ensure that the overall experience of a student has a logic, and an intellectual integrity, that are related to a clearly defined purpose.

A programme may include a variety of forms of learning, taking place in a variety of contexts.

Aims and learning outcomes: the intended attainments of students

Validated programmes must have aims and learning outcomes related to the intended attainments of students which the curriculum, structure, teaching and learning methods and forms of assessment are designed to fulfil. The aims may also be related to the institution's academic goals.

The intended learning outcomes will include the development, to the level required for the award, of a body of knowledge and understanding appropriate to the field of study and reflecting academic, professional and occupational developments in that field. Learning outcomes will be determined with appropriate reference to relevant external reference points, such as subject benchmarks and professional body requirements.

The intended learning outcomes in terms of student attainment for each of the Open University's validated awards will also include generic transferable intellectual and practical abilities and skills, appropriate to the level of the proposed award, for example:

- cognitive skills (description, application, analysis, and synthesis of knowledge)
- ability to see relationships within what has been learned and to perceive the field of study in a broader perspective.
- communication (including interpersonal skills, collaborative and group working)
- problem solving
- information technology
- information literacy (finding, critically evaluating and using information)
- application of numbers
- professional skills and awareness of relevant ethical issues.

The skills relating to a specific programme will be included in the programme specification. Each programme of study must stimulate an enquiring, analytical and creative approach, encouraging independent judgement and critical self-awareness. It should enhance potential contributions in the workplace and to society and provide a contribution towards lifelong learning.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality and effectiveness of strategies for teaching and learning support on an approved programme must be appropriate to the programme.

Staff must be properly and appropriately qualified and experienced, and their teaching must be invigorated and informed by their active participation in research or relevant scholarly, professional or consultancy activities.

There must be adequate levels of staffing to support the proposed programme.

There must be effective staff appraisal and development mechanisms to review and enhance the proficiency of staff.

Development and evaluation of programmes of study

An approved programme must be subject to arrangements for on-going monitoring, evaluation and enhancement in order to maintain its currency in the light of relevant developments within and outside higher education.

Monitoring should consider the effectiveness of the programme in achieving its stated aims and the continuing appropriateness of such aims. Monitoring should also consider the success of students in attaining the intended learning outcomes, whilst ensuring that appropriate action is taken where necessary.

Students and teaching staff should have appropriate opportunities to contribute in an informed way to programme monitoring and development.