

# UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCEDURES (previously CPD approval process)

### Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – now more commonly termed “Professional Development” - can be defined as a structured approach to learning, helping to ensure competence to operate in a professional context and encompassing the development of knowledge, skills and practical experience. Professional Development can involve any relevant learning activity, whether formal and structured or informal and self-directed and may be accredited by the University. In some cases, course participants may undertake professional development activity which has been credit-rated but will choose not to present themselves for assessment as they are looking to gain the skills and knowledge covered by the module(s), but do not require the formal accreditation.

The University currently offers Professional Development activity which is both credit-rated and non-credit-rated, depending upon the needs of its stakeholders. University-accredited Professional Development is also offered by our partners.

Professional Development activity, whether credit-rated or not, must provide a personally valuable, professionally credible and economically viable experience for participants and the institution. In addition, it must be able to be brought on-stream quickly so as to respond effectively to market needs. Provision which is credit-rated (which would be included in any external review of the institution) must be subject to institutionally agreed approval and review procedures in order to ensure that academic standards are being met. Good governance practice would suggest that provision which is not credit-rated should also be quality assured in an appropriate way.

It is an important guiding principle that where an award, or credit which might subsequently be used towards an award, is given in the University’s name, the same standards must apply as for the University’s other qualifications: i.e.

- Aims and learning outcomes should be established for each module
- The University’s Assessment Policy should be applied. Assessment should be moderated through the usual process of Assessment Panels, and, where appropriate Award Boards
- The minimum course credit value is 10 credits but 5 credit modules may be approved providing there is a sound rationale for doing so (e.g. in response to a particular employer’s requirements). The maximum course credit value is 60 credits at levels 4, 5 and 6 and 7. It should be noted that those completing a course of 60 credits at level 7 will only be eligible for credit and a transcript. If a named postgraduate certificate is to be awarded a full approval event for the introduction of the award will be required.

2018 – 2019 Edition
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## **Revised procedures**

Until 2012-13 academic year Professional Development activity had been approved by the CPD Sub-Committee, acting on delegated authority from the Academic Development & Partnerships Committee (ADPC).

In terms of its main full-time and part-time portfolio, the University has operated a devolved procedure for the approval of new programmes for some years, with institutional oversight provided by ADPC and Teaching, Learning & Quality Committee. An initial risk assessment of the feasibility of the proposal and the associated business case (the outcome of which is either reported to, or considered by ADPC) is followed by an approval event. Teaching, Learning & Quality Committee in May 2013 agreed the adoption of a parallel procedure for the consideration of Professional Development provision which would remove the need for a separate CPD Sub-Committee; Professional Development provision being proposed within a Faculty will be approved locally. The maximum Professional Development course credit value will continue to be 60 credits at levels 4, 5 and 6 and 7.

### **Approval of Professional Development within a programme**

- Credit-rated provision may be incorporated into a proposal for a new full-time or part-time programme at the time of approval. This may be identified during the initiation and business case stages preceding approval; the 'New programme proforma document' and 'Resource Planning form' required by Academic Development & Partnerships Committee (ADPC) should give outline details of the module(s) to be considered within the programme for Professional Development purposes.
- The approval event for the new full-time or part-time programme will need to explicitly address the delivery of the content for Professional Development purposes.
- Highlight in approval documentation and provide separate section (possibly as an appendix) in the programme specification. Where a module is to be adapted for Professional Development purposes (eg if the learning outcomes are affected, there is a different form of assessment) then a separate module record must be included to support this.

### **Approval of stand-alone (credit-rated) Professional Development**

- For stand-alone credit-rated Professional Development within Faculties the proposals will be considered by the Head of School, the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) and one other academic staff member (e.g. a Programme Leader, ADTL or Associate Head) with final sign off by the Dean of Faculty. The views of the Subject External Examiner must be sought as has been the case in the past.

- The **proposal form** should be completed for the purposes of approval
- Professional Development approved via this process will be recorded at School and Faculty level and reported to Faculty Executive.

#### Approval of stand-alone (non-credit-rated) Professional Development

- For stand-alone non credit-rated Professional Development within Faculties the proposals will be considered by the Head of School, the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) and one other academic staff member (e.g. a Programme Leader, ADTL or Associate Head) with final sign off by the Dean of Faculty.
- The **proposal form** should be completed for the purposes of approval
- Professional Development approved via this process will be recorded at School and Faculty level and reported to Faculty Executive.
- Certificate of completion/attendance from the Faculty may be appropriate to issue

#### Annual Review

- Consideration of Professional Development provision should be reported within the School Action Plan of the Annual Review process. In addition an annual report of each School's Professional Development provision (both credit-rated and non-credit-rated) will be considered at School Teaching, Learning & Quality Committee and further reported to Faculty Teaching, Learning & Quality Committee. Faculties should ensure that they hold a local list of all Professional Development activity and indicate (to Central Quality Office) where that list is held.

#### Approval of Academic Partnerships Professional Development provision

- Professional Development Provision being proposed by a partner will be approved via Academic Partnerships. Again, credit rated Professional Development may form part of a standard programme and will therefore be considered at approval events. This should be highlighted in approval documentation, with a separate section (possibly as an appendix) in the programme specification. Where a module is to be adapted for Professional Development purposes (eg if the learning outcomes are affected, there is a different form of assessment) then a separate module record must be included to support this.
- For stand-alone provision within partners, it is suggested that proposals are considered by Faculty Partnership Managers and Head of UK HE Partnerships, and another University academic staff member (usually Academic Liaison Person (ALP) but going to a Programme Leader, ADTL or Associate Head where no obvious ALP exists) with final sign-off by the Dean of Academic Partnerships. The views of the Subject External Examiner must be sought as has been the case in the past.

- An annual overview report of Professional Development activity would also be considered by the Academic Partnerships Board.
- Consideration of Professional Development provision will, as now, be incorporated within the Annual Programme Monitoring procedures within Academic Partnerships and a local list of all Professional Development activity must be held (indicating to Central Quality Office where that list is held).