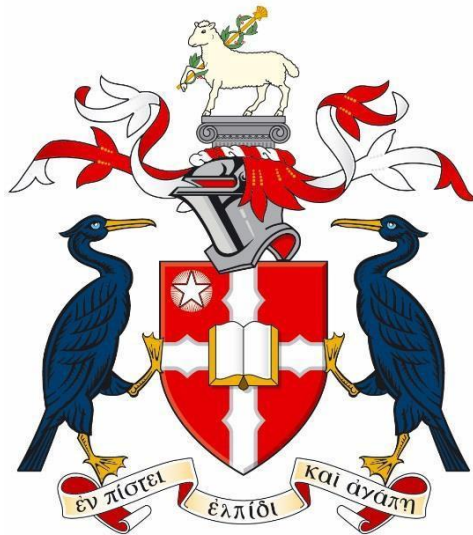


Liverpool Hope University



Academic Quality Handbook 7 (QH7a): Professional Learning and Development Handbook (Approval of courses leading to the award of University credit up to a maximum of 60 credits)

A. Introduction

This Handbook forms a part of Liverpool Hope University's overall academic quality framework and is to be seen in that wider context. All the University's Academic Quality Handbooks are approved by Senate upon recommendation by the University's Academic Committee (AC).

Academic teams may wish to offer Professional Learning and Development (PLD) courses for a variety of reasons, often following a request by an external body such as an employer or in response to wider local, regional, national, international, or professional initiatives. A successful offering of PLD can enhance the University's reputation and profile and constitute an important building block in terms of promoting the University to external communities.

Two kinds of PLD are recognised, credit-bearing and non-credit bearing. This Handbook addresses the approval of **credit-bearing provision only**. Please refer to Academic Quality Handbook 7b (QH7b) for the approval of non-credit bearing provision.

B. Definition

Liverpool Hope University defines PLD as: "a range of short and long courses, that may be credit-bearing or non-credit bearing, designed, developed and delivered to enhance the skills, knowledge, understanding and capabilities of professionals throughout their careers".

These include courses that are:

- designed to develop employment-related skills and/or knowledge, where employment-related includes, but is wider than, professional or vocational training;
- designed to meet the needs of employers and their workforce and/or individuals who share a work-related interest. This may be profession-specific or develop generic professional skills, which may be credit or non-credit bearing;
- are designed, developed, and delivered¹ by University staff and/or a partner²;
- may flexible in timing or mode of delivery and
- which should normally generate a profit³.

Examples of PLD courses may include:

- Students taking a credit-bearing module from a formal course of a University (at whatever level of study) without the intention of completing the related qualification;
- A short course developed for a specific client or group of clients;

¹ This does not preclude the occasional use of guest speakers

² PLD courses that are offered under the terms of a partnership agreement are subject to the quality assurance procedures of the University

³ Each School/Department will have its own approach to and targets for income generation and enterprise, which may in turn link to PLD activity

- An academic course based in or around work-place practice, designed for a specific employer/sector/external body;
- Post-qualification PLD;
- Career development courses designed to allow employees to attain a new professional status.

The requirements of this Handbook **do not** apply to such research-focused activities as conferences, symposia, or colloquia.

It is recognised that the University may, on occasion, wish to enter into an agreement with an external partner to deliver courses. In such cases, the provision will be subject to a separate approvals process and legal arrangements, taking into account the requirements of the external partner. Please refer to the Academic Quality Handbook 8 (QH8): Partnerships Guide.

It is also recognised that the University may, on occasion, wish to accredit PLD courses. In such cases, the provision will be subject to a separate process taking into account the requirements of the Professional Body. Please refer to the Academic Quality Handbook 10 (QH10): Seeking and Maintaining Professional Accreditations.

C. Principles of Credit-bearing PLD

Any credit-bearing PLD must reflect the University's expectations for standards and quality:

- The academic standards of courses must meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework and QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (if appropriate|) and be in line with sector-recognised standards.
- Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed. From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in, and benefit from higher education.

All credit-bearing PLD must meet the University's expectations for the approval, delivery, monitoring and review of its academic provision, following all relevant and [applicable guidance and associated policies](#).

Any course which requires effort on the part of the participant over a sustained period of time and which has assessment tasks included as part of the wider requirements of the course should normally carry credit. Provision which is to carry credit must be assessed. A typology is provided in Appendix 1.

Credit-bearing PLD may be offered at any of Levels 4, 5, 6 or 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (if appropriate) and must comply accurately and fully with all relevant expectations of the UK Quality Code, the FHEQ for the relevant level, the UK Credit Framework and any applicable Professional Statutory Regulatory Board (PRSB) requirements.

Currently, there are only three awards that may be offered⁴ under PLD which are:

- Postgraduate Certificate (Level 7) / International Postgraduate Certificate (Level 7)
- Professional Graduate Certificate (Level 6) / International Professional Graduate Certificate (Level 6)
- Certificate in Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) for Support Assistants (30 credits, Level 4)

D. Approval of Credit-bearing PLD

30 Credit PLD Approval Process:

Where PLD provision does not result in an award of the University but only the award of credit (i.e. 30 credits) School/Departmental Academic Committee has the authority to approve the provision and report actions taken to Academic Committee. All credit-bearing PLD must be approved before delivery begins.

STAGE 1: APPROVAL TO PROCEED (INITIAL PROPOSAL)

Meet with Head of PLD to discuss initial proposal
Complete PLD Strategic Approval Form 1 (Appendix 2)
Approval to proceed granted by Head of School/Department

STAGE 2: CURRICULUM DESIGN / BUSINESS CASE

Requires construction of a module specification and definitive document during a co-design event (if applicable), collation of other relevant material and final completion of a module
Relevant stakeholders are invited as appropriate
Business case, using PLD Strategic Approval Form 1, completed in partnership with the Head of PLD and Finance Representative

STAGE 3: APPROVAL TO DELIVER

PLD Strategic Approval Form 1 and Course Documentation to be submitted to the relevant University Executive Manager (UEM).
Documentation is reviewed and commentary acted upon if necessary
Approval granted through School/Departmental Management Committee and noted at Academic Committee

Stage 4 DELIVERY COMMENCES

Module included in course portfolio
Ongoing financial assessment
Periodic review
Completion and progression

Marketing of course and development on
SITS

⁴ Please note however that credit-bearing PLD may be offered at any of Levels 4, 5, 6 or 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (if appropriate|)

Stage 1: Approval to Proceed (Initial Proposal)

STAGE 1: APPROVAL TO PROCEED (INITIAL PROPOSAL)

Meet with Head of PLD to discuss initial proposal

Complete PLD Strategic Approval Form 1 (Appendix 2)

Approval to proceed granted by Head of School/Department

- (a) **Identification of new PLD:** Potential new PLD courses, both credit bearing and non-credit bearing may be identified through reflective meetings, by individuals (Heads, academic tutors), through cross School/Departmental collaborations, or as a result of identifiable gaps in the market. Once a potential new course has been identified the named lead/proposer of the identified PLD should meet with the Head of PLD. The Head of PLD will support the named lead throughout the process.

Subject teams are asked to ensure that an appropriate/reasonable timeline is used for the approval of each individual PLD course. Teams should bear in mind the timeline for applications and for appropriate promotional material to be prepared. Subject teams are also asked to take particular care that their documentation meets CMA Guidelines (see Hope QA website for more details).

- (b) **Initial Proposal:** The Head of PLD and named lead complete applicable sections of the PLD Strategic Approval Form 1 (Appendix 2) and submit to the Head of School/Department for review. A meeting may take place to discuss further. The Head of School/Department will sign the PLD Strategic Approval Form 1 to confirm approval to proceed. If approval is not given a follow up meeting should be arranged to discuss these reasons.

Please note: Where PLD is offered in conjunction with a partner organisation or Professional Statutory Body, the Academic Quality Handbook 8 (QH8): Partnerships Guide and QH10 Seeking and Maintaining Professional Accreditations must be followed in conjunction with this Handbook.

Stage 2: Curriculum Design / Business Case

STAGE 2: CURRICULUM DESIGN / BUSINESS CASE

Requires construction of a module specification and definitive document (This may be during a simple co-design event (if applicable), collation of other relevant material and final completion of a module

Relevant stakeholders are invited as appropriate

Business case, using PLD Strategic Approval Form 1, completed in partnership with the Head of PLD and Finance Representative

All credit-bearing PLD should be designed (possibly in conjunction with external stakeholders, as appropriate), and assessed by Hope staff. All credit-bearing provision should be delivered in accordance with the University's expectations and regulations for assessment. The final business case, using PLD Strategic Approval Form 1, must be completed by the Head of PLD and relevant Finance Representative.

Where PLD is offered in conjunction with a partner organisation a set of bespoke QA Guidelines are devised and operated. This is monitored by the Partnerships and Accreditations Committee. Please refer to the Academic Quality Handbook 8 (QH8): Partnerships Guide for further information.

Stage 3: Approval to Deliver

STAGE 3: APPROVAL TO DELIVER

PLD Strategic Approval Form 1 and Course Documentation to be submitted to the relevant University Executive Manager (UEM).

Documentation is reviewed and commentary acted upon if necessary

Approval granted through the School/Departmental Management Committee and noted at Academic Committee

PLD Approval (Credit-bearing) documentation is prepared by the subject team, in conjunction with the School/Department's Executive Manager and Head of PLD and is presented to the relevant School/Departmental Management Committee for approval; the School/Departmental Management Committee will approve the provision (after any required discussion and revision). To ensure that the University is aware of the provision being delivered in its name, the HOS/D will report this to the next meeting of Academic Committee and Senate.

Please note: Where a full award of the University contains one or more modules which the subject team wish to offer as stand-alone, credit-bearing PLD (normally Level 6 or 7) the Course Approval Panel should, in addition to their consideration of the main course, also be asked to consider and approve the specified module(s) for PLD. No further action regarding approval is required. Should a course team wish to offer an already approved module as PLD, a light-touch approval by the School/Departmental Academic Committee is required. This should include a short preamble which explicitly discusses the rationale and any wider pedagogical issues that might arise from such an approach.

Credit-bearing PLD may be applied towards an existing Liverpool Hope award. Any request to have such credit considered must be made in accordance with the University's approved APCL arrangements for such recognition. Students may also, if they choose, request that such credits are considered by another higher education institution under that institution's policies and procedures for APCL; Liverpool Hope has no role in this.

The nature of the University's undergraduate curriculum does not always lend itself to a straightforward extraction of part of an existing or proposed course for PLD purposes. If subject teams wish to explore this possibility, they should consult fully with all relevant colleagues and pay careful regard to the integrity of the provision and the student experience.

To provide assurance to the University that the assessment system is fair and is being operated equitably, all credit-bearing PLD must have an External Examiner appointed to it. This may be by an extension in the duties of an existing External Examiner, where appropriate. Alternatively, a School/Department may decide to appoint one or more dedicated PLD External Examiners, to be approved through the [normal procedures](#). Which of these two mechanisms will be used should be identified with the proposal of new PLD provision.

Stage 4: Delivery Commences

Stage 4 DELIVERY COMMENCES

Module included in course portfolio
Ongoing financial assessment
Periodic review
Completion and progression

All approved PLD will be included within the course portfolio and marketed by the PLD Team and associated School/Department. The PLD Team manages all aspects of the student life cycle from recruitment to completion and a dedicated administrator will be allocated once the PLD course is approved. The PLD Team will:

- Set and monitor recruitment targets
- Set and deliver marketing plans
- Set and monitor all financial aspects
- Deal with all student admissions from course enquiry through to registration on course
- Report on course related data
- Provide on course student and academic support
- Monitor student progress and completion
- Evaluations
- Coordinate assessment and exam boards
- Liaise with academic staff, process HPL claim forms, set up HPL staff and limited companies/sole traders
- Liaise with student administration over issuing of certificates
- Support with Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) process
- Advise students on progression opportunities

All PLD courses are subject to the University's standard processes for review and enhancement. Every course offered as part of the University's portfolio is subject to a yearly review under the

[Annual Review and Enhancement \(ARE\)](#) process. A full Course Review is usually conducted once every five years. However, a review may be triggered at any stage where there are concerns voiced by the HOS/D, Chair of Academic Committee (for instance, in response to ARE issues, or from analysis of key subject data sets) or from external examiner comments.

Upon successful completion of PLD, the University will issue a formal transcript together with a certificate of completion. Where more than one module forms part of a coherent whole, the individual module transcripts may be consolidated into a single document as part of the certificate of completion.

60 Credit PLD Approval Process:

Where PLD offers credit-bearing provision that result in the award of a University certificate, the PLD course must follow the standard course approval process which can be found in the [Academic Quality Handbook 1: Principles of Course Design and Approval \(QH1\)](#).

E. Monitoring of Academic Standards, Student Experience and Enhancement

- All credit-bearing PLD is monitored alongside all other provision as part of the Annual Review and Enhancement process. In addition, a quarterly report should be written by the Head of PLD for School/Departmental Academic Committee purposes to update on PLD developments.
- External Examiners should review provision in line with the University's procedures for External Examining as set out in the relevant [External Examining Handbook](#).
- Credit-bearing PLD should also be included in the documentation supporting the host School/Department's Five-yearly Review, bearing in mind the principle of scale expressed above.
- The Head of PLD and/or or named academic lead or equivalent, should report on key metrics associated with PLD activity within the School/Department. This may include data such as PLD course opportunities identified, number of new courses developed and approved, number of PLD delegates, student feedback, income and surplus from PLD activity. The nature of such reports shall be determined by the Head of School/Department.

6. Admission and Registration

Admission to credit-bearing PLD is on the basis of the University's standard [admissions requirements](#).

7. Costs

Financial matters will be considered as part of the process of giving initial approval, with due consideration given to the staff costs associated with the development, delivery and management of the course together with projected income.

Appendix 1 Typology of (Bespoke) PLD Provision

	Type A	Type B	Type C
Credit	Yes	No	No
Assessed	Yes	Yes	No
Approval	Where the PLD leads to a Qualification of the University, approval is as per Course Design and Approvals process (for any course over 30 Credits)	School/ Departmental Academic Committee	Head of School/ Department's Approval
	OR School/Departmental Academic Committee (for any course up to a maximum of 30 Credits)		

Appendix 2

QF7a: School/Departmental Level PLD Strategic Approval



SCHOOL/DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLD STRATEGIC APPROVAL	
PROPOSED PLD COURSE TITLE	
NAME OF SCHOOL /DEPARTMENT	
PROPOSED START DATE	

CHECKLIST - The proposed PLD course as listed above:

			Yes/No
Supports achievement of the School/Department's Strategic Plan			
Can be funded either via School/Departmental Resources or via fees			
Has been endorsed by the relevant Head of School/Department			
Will be delivered by Hope staff* ⁵			
Will be approved in line with the table below (extract from PLD Handbook v.4)			
PLD Course	Type A	Type B	Type C
Credit	Yes	No	No
Assessed	Yes	Yes	No
Approval	Where the PLD leads to a Qualification of the University, approval is as per Course Design and Approvals process (for any course over 30 Credits)	School/ Departmental Academic Committee	Head of School /Department
	OR School/Departmental Committee (for any course up to a maximum of 30 Credits)		

⁵ With the exception of occasional guest speakers

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PLD COURSE	
Title of Proposed Course:	
School/Department/Other:	
PLD Lead/Project Management: Academic/Quality Assurance Lead:	
Proposed start date (year and month):	
Length and status and mode of study (<i>e.g. 10 weeks part time, at 2 hours a week</i>):	
Details of proposed student numbers and the number of times that the course will be run. Please also indicate where the majority of participants will originate (<i>e.g. public sector/private sector/specified other</i>).	
A brief outline of the course including credit value, FHEQ Level and details of any assessment, as applicable.	
Entry requirements	
The rationale for the course <i>You may wish to consider whether: (i) the course has been</i>	

<i>developed in response to external prompting or pressure e.g. from professional bodies or industrial organisations, and (ii) whether the course will lead to increased registrations on other courses offered by the University</i>	
Relationship to other courses / PLD courses offered.	
Course development and marketing.	
Staff involved In Managing/Delivering the Course:	
Library Resources	
Quality Assurance Arrangements	
Proposed Funding Arrangements	
Head of School/Department Endorsement	

Head of School/Department Approval
<p>As Head of School/Department, I can confirm that the following details have been considered and the provision as listed above (and as per the attached Overview Form) is approved for development</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>