

Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation

**CURRICULUM VALIDATION   
HANDBOOK & APPLICATION**

Version 4.1. 2021



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HANDBOOK

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# Introduction

The following Curriculum Validation stands within a wider context of international benchmarking of public health education activities through the use of experience and expertise of academic and sectoral peers. Please refer to APHEA website for helpful tips, instructions and videos [here](http://www.aphea.be/Pages/A2.CURRICULA/advice.html). This document consists of two parts. The first, pages iii to vii form the introduction, discussing the nature, goals and process of curriculum validation. The second part, pages 1 through to 10, is the Curriculum Validation application form.

The Curriculum Validation is both a standalone award as well as the first stage of APHEA's Programme and Institutional Accreditation. As a standalone award, the Curriculum Validation grants to a programme a public quality stamp and official certification from APHEA that the curriculum adheres to European and global standards for a modern comprehensive degree offering containing the basic structure and core competences expected from a Public Health degree[[1]](#footnote-1). The Curriculum Validation is also a prerequisite for those who may wish to continue through to full accreditation. If an applicant does not successfully acquire subsequent programme or institutional accreditation the Curriculum Validation will remain intact. Applicants are reminded that this application has been structured in a way to help them organise, coordinate, review and reflect upon their curricula. Only programmes which are legally recognised by respective national authorities will be considered for validation.

Of crucial importance is that the curricula contents should reflect a modern and comprehensive public health approach containing: methods in public health; population health and its determinants; health policy, economics, and management; health education and promotion (see section 3 below). The Curriculum Validation criteria contain further detail of these areas and prospective applicants are encouraged to consider these criteria before applying. If an applicant remains uncertain, they are advised to contact the APHEA secretariat as well as refer to the reviewer report structure to understand how they will be reviewed.

The period covered by the Curriculum Validation is 6 years as part of an accreditation process and 4 years as a stand-alone award, beginning from the date of formal written acceptance. During this period, if the curriculum undergoes a substantive change it is obligated to provide written notification to APHEA and provide the necessary adjustments to the curriculum and module specifications.

An institution which wishes to have its curriculum validated must submit an application to APHEA summarising the ability of the curriculum to meet the Curriculum Validation criteria as outlined on the following pages of this document.[[2]](#footnote-2) The document is organised in such a way to aid the applicant through the use of templates (pages 6 to 12).

Once complete please return signed application to [office@aphea.be](mailto:office@aphea.be)

Glossary of Terms

Please refer to website:https://www.aphea.be/Pages/A6.MORE/Glossary\_of\_Terms.html

# General Instructions

A new application must be completed for each curriculum to be validated. If the curriculum includes specialisations, a written or graphical explanation of the pathways students are expected to follow should be attached. If an applicant wishes to pursue **Programme** **Accreditation**, an individual Curriculum Validation is required for each educational programme seeking accreditation.

For institutions seeking **Institutional Accreditation**, the applicant has various options which include either: (i) one or more Curriculum Validations (ii) one Curriculum Validation and two CTEE accreditations or (iii) a range of specialisations within one programme. The agreement on the range of Validations and / or supplementary accreditations undertaken by the Institutional applicant will form part of the initial application process and enquiry.

Helpful advice can be found here: <https://www.aphea.be/Pages/A2.CURRICULA/advice.html>

*Language*

The application should be written in English.

*Templates to be used*

The Curriculum Validation application included as the second part of this document (pages 1 to 10 below) includes templates which should be used to submit an application for validation of a curriculum.

*Submission format*

Applicants are invited to submit their applications electronically either as a Word document (preferred) or pdf.

*Period of Validation*

The period of Curriculum Validation is 6 years as part of an accreditation process and 4 years as a stand-alone award. Any curriculum seeking programme accreditation through the use of the Curriculum Validation should apply around 24 months before the end of the validation period. Any substantive change to the curriculum validated requires that the applicants inform APHEA of the relevant changes.

*Award*

If successful, the applicant will be authorised to use the APHEA Validated Curriculum logo on their publicity material and will also receive a physical certificate from APHEA.

*Fees*

The fees for Curriculum Validation can be found on the APHEA website [here](http://www.aphea.be/docs/APHEA.FEE.STRUCTURES_09.12.2016.pdf).The process for Curriculum Validation:

1. A formal, one page application request is made to APHEA either for a standalone curriculum or as part of a curriculum or institutional accreditation application. See www.aphea.net "how to apply" in the relevant sections.
2. An application form (found below) is completed and forwarded to the APHEA secretariat.
3. The Agency secretariat scrutinises the application form to ensure that all parts are clear and present.
4. If the application form is either unclear or incomplete the Agency secretariat will communicate with the applicant until all parts are deemed complete.
5. A short report is by the Agency is generated and sent to two external reviewers.
6. Two external reviewers review the curriculum validation application based around a report template.
7. A short report from external reviewers and Agency report is submitted to the Board of Accreditation (BoA) which will include both Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement aspects.
8. The BoA will make a Yes/No decision. Positive decisions allow for the curricula to receive an award and to pass through to the next stage of accreditation.
9. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed and are allowed one re-application after a 24-month period.
10. Successful applicants will receive a certificate from APHEA along with APHEA logo permissions as well as their programmes being publicised and promoted.
11. APHEA's [Conflict of Interest policy](https://www.aphea.be/Pages/A5.REVIEWERS/COI.html) applies to decision making on validation.

# Guidelines for re-application (periodic cycle)

Programmes wishing to maintain their validation status beyond the previous validation cycle are required to follow the standard procedural framework by re-submitting the relevant Curriculum Validation documentation. Initial documents can be resubmitted highlighting substantive changes made since the previous round of validation. The objective of the re-validation cycle is to encourage improvement and programmes are requested to explicitly address the comments and recommendations for quality improvement resulting from the first validation cycle under the relevant criteria.

To highlight any changes in their programme(s) since the previous submission, applicants should use a different coloured font, preferably red, to change the text of the original application (see figure 1). Applicants should not submit with tracked changes or comments as this creates difficulties in clarity when reviewing the documents (see figure 2).

If applicants have any questions, they are advised to address the APHEA secretariat.

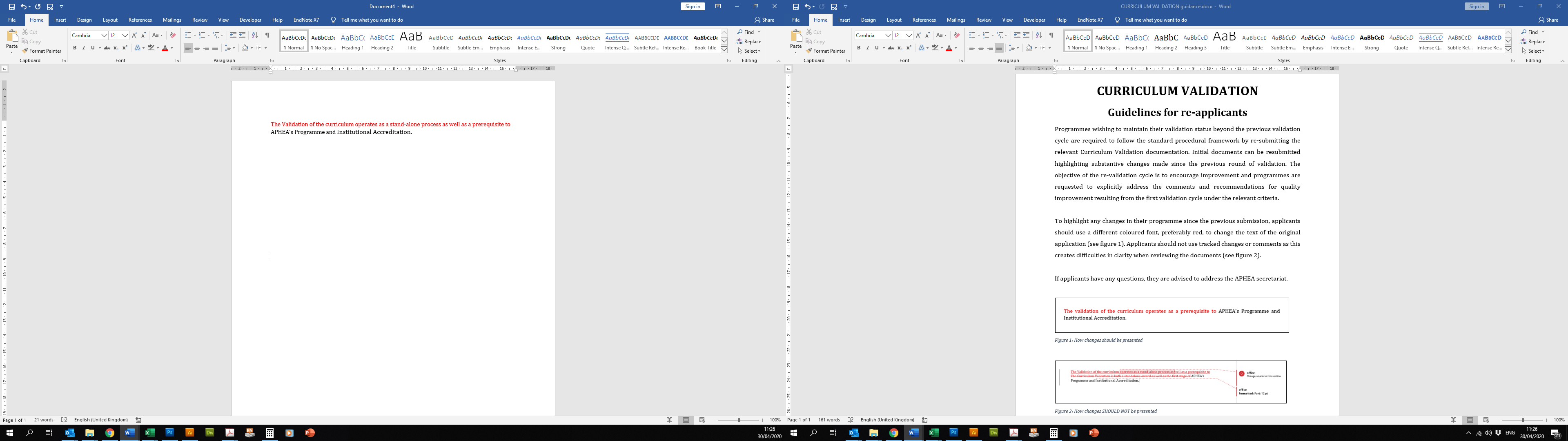


Figure 1: How changes should be presented

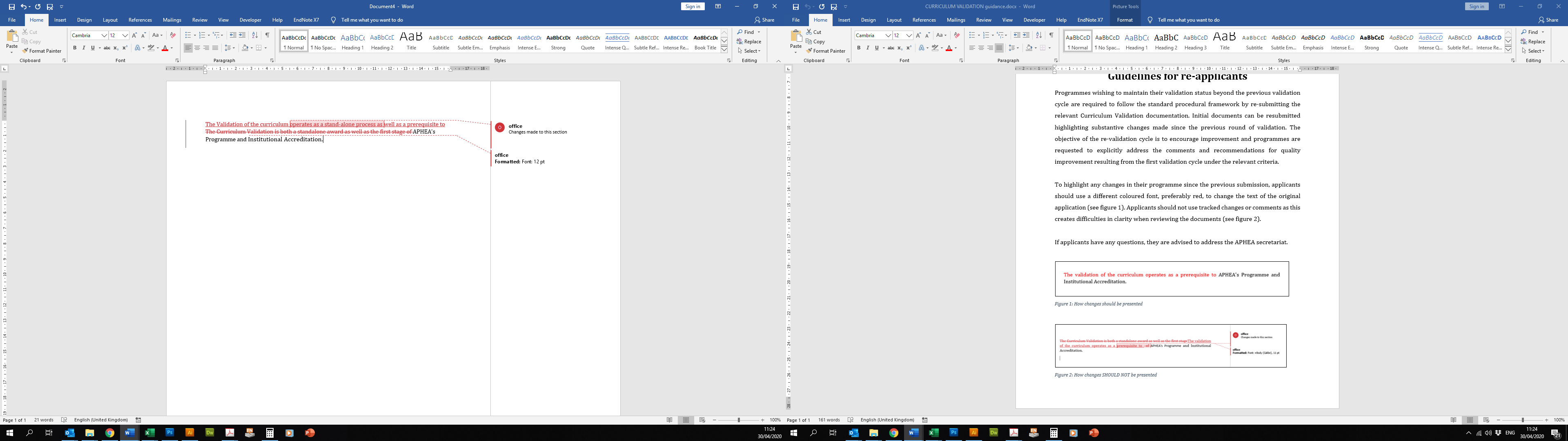


Figure 2: How changes SHOULD NOT be presented

****

**CURRICULUM VALIDATION APPLICATION**

## SECTION 1: NAME AND ADDRESS DETAILS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Institution name: |  |
| Programme title |  |
| Address line 1: |  |
| Address line 2: |  |
| Address line 3: |  |
| Town / City: |  |
| Country: |  |
| Name and position of person completing this document: |  |
| Contact email: |  |
| Website address for programme: |  |
| Date: |  |

Signed by institutional representative

Printed name:

Position:

*(stamp if appropriate)*

## SECTION 2: CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Please provide a brief overview of the curriculum including any distinctive features, for example, target groups, curriculum focus. Please also include any areas which differ from information required, for example, credit usage or calculations and explain why it is so. This section is to orientate the reader (*500 words maximum*).

## SECTION 3: TIMETABLE & STRUCTURE

Please provide a timetable or study plan for the programme as an Appendix. Applicants should provide a figure and / or a table which clearly demonstrates the course structure. This should include the module titles, credit points, level of study and indicate the compulsory elements of the route or pathway leading to the qualification. If your programme incorporates specialisations (for example, through the use of electives), please either: (i) ensure that the timetable for each specialisation is clear in the programme timetable, or (ii) submit a separate timetable for each specialisation. The timetables, or study plans, should be concise and be clear enough for the reviewers to be able to see a clear overview of the curriculum.

## SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT

APHEA guidelines for curriculum content are based on the core competences expected from a public health curriculum and are outlined in the following table. For generalist awards most of the competences will need to be present. Specialist public health programmes may find only a few of the core competences are present in their curriculum. In this case the applicant is asked to add, and code, the additional competences within the box entitled X "Other / additional competences and learning areas" and to refer to these within the last column in the matrix in Appendix A.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CORE SUBJECT AREAS** | **CURRICULUM COMPETENCES & LEARNING AREAS** |
| 1. **Introduction** | 1. Introduction and/or essentials in public health |
| 1. **Methods in public health** | 1. Epidemiological methods, 2. Biostatistical methods, 3. Qualitative research methods, 4. Survey methods |
| 1. **Population health and its determinants** | 1. Environmental sciences (considering exposures to physical, chemical and biological factors), 2. Communicable disease 3. Non- communicable disease, 4. Occupational health, 5. Social and behavioural sciences, 6. Health risk assessment, 7. Health inequalities along social gradient |
| 1. **Health policy, economics, and management** | 1. Economics, 2. Healthcare systems planning, 3. Organisation and management, 4. Health policy, 5. Financing health services, 6. Health programme evaluation, 7. Health targets |
| 1. **Health education and promotion** | 1. Health education, 2. Health promotion, 3. Health protection and regulation, 4. Disease prevention |
| 1. **Other/Cross-disciplinary themes (mandatory or elective courses)** | 1. Biology for public health, 2. Law, 3. Ethics, 4. Ageing, 5. Nutrition, 6. Maternal and child health, 7. Mental health, 8. Demography, 9. IT use, 10. Health informatics, 11. Leadership and decision- making, 12. Social psychology, 13. Global public health, 14. Marketing, 15. Communication and advocacy, 16. Health anthropology, 17. Human rights, 18. Curriculum planning and development, 19. Public health genomics, 20. Technology assessment |
| 1. **Integrating Experience, practicum/Internship/ final project /thesis/ dissertation/exam /memoire** | 1. Supervised by faculty (full time and/or adjunct) |
| **X. Other / additional competences and learning areas** | The list above is drawn from previous work in ASPHER. To keep our processes pertinent, we ask you to include here any competences that you believe are missing from the list but which are used by yourselves. These can be discipline related or "soft" / transversal skills for example, problem solving, conflict resolution etc. They can apply to all curriculum/module and integrating experience elements.  Please try to use concise terms which will be universally understood and code them up using X.(plus a number) in the same way as above so the reviewers can clearly see these as self-generated. Place the list in this box and reference within the table in Appendix A. Applicants are advised to refer to the European Core Competences for Education booklet found [here](https://www.aphea.be/docs/aspher_core_competences.pdf). |

In order to check the curricular content of your curriculum, please provide evidence that the curriculum contains elements of the above reference subject areas by classifying the required courses (plus introductory and cross-disciplinary categories) in the matrix below and listing the disciplines and/or specific topic areas covered in those modules which fall into the given areas. Please ensure that modules are clearly identified as either compulsory or optional. While programmes may define the public health core requirements more broadly, elements from each specified core area must be present in the curriculum. **(*Applicants will find this matrix as appendix A at the rear of this document which has been orientated to landscape to give more space for the full module titles.*)**

## SECTION 5: PROGRAMME LEVEL DETAILS

If you have produced the following elements for your national accreditation or elsewhere and they are in English and include the following areas then they will be accepted.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Title of degree (in English and in national language as appears on certification). |  | | | |
| 1. Level of degree (Bachelor or Master). |  | | | |
| 1. Awarding body/institution. |  | | | |
| 1. National accreditation (mandatory or voluntary accrediting body if exists). | Body name | |  | |
| Date of expiration | |  | |
| Curriculum or Institutional level (or both) | |  | |
| 1. Mode (full time &/or part time). |  | | | |
| 1. Mode of delivery (e.g., onsite, online, blended). |  | | | |
| 1. Number of students in last cohort[[3]](#footnote-3). |  | | | |
| 1. Off-campus locations (if applicable). |  | | | |
| 1. Language of the curriculum (include language admission pre-requisites if required). |  | | | |
| 1. Admission criteria. |  | | | |
| 1. Curriculum aims. |  | | | |
| 1. Programme final outcomes[[4]](#footnote-4) |  | | | |
| 1. Duration of curriculum in months, nominal study time for students. |  | | | |
| 1. Number of terms (semesters, modules etc.) per academic year. |  | | | |
| 1. Number of credits required for completion of degree. |  | | | |
| 1. Total credits in core courses. |  | | | |
| 1. Total credits in elective courses. |  | | | |
| 1. Total credits for integrating experience. |  | | | |
| 1. Total student workload hours. | Total workload hours | Contact hours | | Self-study hours |
|  |  | |  |
| 1. Curriculum coordinator (or group). |  | | | |

## SECTION 6: MODULE LEVEL DETAILS

The template found on the following page is to help organise the relevant details of the individual modules / courses which comprise the curriculum. Once again, if you have produced such module elements for your national accreditation or elsewhere and they are in English and include the following areas then these will normally be accepted but please confirm with the agency secretariat first. **Please copy template for each one of the modules in the curriculum.**

For information on pedagogic / training methods, avoid using simple one-word answers such as "presentations," "lectures" as this will not allow the reviewers to understand fully how the methods are being used. You should give a small elaboration on the different types to give the reviewers an insight (see web reference [here](http://www.aphea.be/Pages/A2.CURRICULA/advice.html)).

With regard to the assessments try to elaborate on the assessments and not use simple one-word answers such as "exams" or "presentation". The guiding principle is to demonstrate to the reviewer how they assess the intended learning competences/outcomes/objectives (see web reference [here](http://www.aphea.be/Pages/A2.CURRICULA/advice.html)).

|  |
| --- |
| Title of Module (*please add any codes used if these are identifiable in the timetable*): |

|  |
| --- |
| Coordinator(s) / organiser(s): |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Teaching Faculty | | | |
| Title | Name | Qualifications\* | Hours contributed |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

*\* PhD, Master, 20 years’ service (in practice) etc.*

*For faculty responsible for 20% or more of course load, please provide short bio-sketches / biographies (these can either be attached as appendix B or through using weblinks).*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Core /elective or optional: |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of credits allocated | Student's workload  in hours | Contact work hours\* | Self-study work hours |
|  |  |  |  |

*\* includes lectures, seminars, face-to-face, assessments*

|  |
| --- |
| Learning competences / objectives ("*what the student is expected to know and be able to do at the end of the module*") |

|  |
| --- |
| Syllabus content. Brief overview of syllabus using bullet points. |

|  |
| --- |
| Provide a short list of the reading materials associated with the module. |

|  |
| --- |
| Module level timetable - indicate the timing of the teaching sessions from the previous teaching year: |

|  |
| --- |
| Pedagogic/teaching methodology: |

|  |
| --- |
| Assessments used: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Weeks required and place  in academic calendar: | Number of weeks | Week number |
|  |  |

## SECTION 7: INTEGRATING EXPERIENCE

This section covers the "integrating experience" within the curriculum, such as, any practicum/internship, final projects, thesis, dissertation, memoire or final exam (*these names may be different throughout the region*). If there exists more than one type of integrating experience copy and paste this table for each.

|  |
| --- |
| Type of integrating experience: |

|  |
| --- |
| Description of integrating experience: |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Core /elective or optional: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of  credits allocated |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Learning competences / objectives ("*what the student is expected to know and be able to do at the end of the experience*") |

|  |
| --- |
| Assessments used: |

|  |
| --- |
| Weeks required and place in academic calendar: |

## SECTION 8: STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Please list any strengths and areas for improvement of your curriculum that you wish to highlight[[5]](#footnote-5).

## SECTION 9: DECLARATION

Declaration by Dean/Director of the institution hosting the programme applying for curriculum validation. Please sign electronically or scan and return complete Curriculum Validation application to: [office@aphea.be](mailto:office@aphea.be)

**RE: Curriculum Validation application from** *enter school and institution name***, regarding the Curriculum Validation of the** *enter curriculum name* **curriculum**

Please find herewith an invitation to the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA) to initiate the Curriculum Validation process of the above referenced curriculum. I testify that the information given in this application is true and accurate.

ADDITIONAL: We are willing for APHEA to use the information\* provided within this application for: (*delete as appropriate*)

a. Assisting other applicants to understand the process of validation yes/no

b. Research purposes to continually improve the validation criteria yes/no

Kind regards,

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Signatory 1*  *name*  *Position* |  | *Signatory 2*  *name*  *Position* |

\* *All information will be made anonymous and all personal data protected.*



Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation

APPLICATION | Curriculum Validation

## APPENDIX A: Core Competences Framework (Section 4)

*Matrix to be filled in by applicant:*

This matrix, may have already been completed as part of application stage. If so copy and paste from that document.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Methods in**  **public health** | **Population health and its**  **determinants** | **Health policy, economics and management** | **Health education and promotion** | **Other/cross- disciplinary themes** | **'X' Other** | **Total number of credits** |
| **CORE / Compulsory** | | | | | | | |
| **Module\* 1** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module 2** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module 3** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module X etc** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Integrating experience** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **ELECTIVE / Optional** | | | | | | | |
| **Module 4** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module 5** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module 6** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Module X etc** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Integrating experience** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

(\*Replace "Module" with the proper title of your modules. "Module" is often expressed as, for example, as course, block or unit).

Copy and paste table for specialisations / tracks / pathways.

1. *The titles of such awards vary widely and include terms such as, health sciences, public health care, public health management or public health epidemiology (non-exhaustive).* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Curricula supported /organised by more than one institution of higher education are eligible to seek validation as a single entity. The curriculum will be evaluated against the same set of criteria as curricula sponsored by a single institution.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. please add present or future expected cohort if curriculum not yet installed. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Can also be called qualifications, competences, final outcomes, final objectives (see glossary of terms) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This section is designed to help applicants self-reflect on their curriculum and to indicate changes they are considering to address which they have themselves identified. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)