



Introduction to Professional Validation and Curriculum Requirements (Book 1 of 3)

The National Youth Agency's Requirements for the Professional Validation of Higher Education programmes which are recognised by the Joint Negotiating Committee as conferring professionally qualified status for Youth Workers in England

The National Youth Agency



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Chief Executive's Introduction

Youth work is in a prime position to cement the importance and value of its role within the provision of services to young people. The developing landscape is one of potential and challenge, with emerging roles that are both new and traditional and a continuously widening employment field for youth work skills. In this regard, the opportunity to review and reinvigorate the education and training that leads to professional qualification could not be more appropriately timed.

As we look ahead to 2010 and the move toward youth work becoming an all-degree profession, we expect further change and development in education and qualification, not least with the development of the Integrated Qualification Framework for those working within the Children, Young People and Families Workforce. The interrelationship of professional qualifications across the whole workforce has the potential to open up career and professional development opportunities. In turn, this can support the enrichment of work undertaken with young people by professions working together and recognising and supporting the myriad but distinctive skills available.

So, what tasks for youth work? Well, to build on its long and successful history; to embrace development and opportunity; and continue to impact positively on outcomes for young people through its commitment to a social pedagogical approach to their personal and

social development. In order to do this, however, our workforce needs to be well equipped to meet this challenge – whatever its role or professional setting.

These requirements seek to ensure that professional qualification and personal development, and thereby the competence of practitioners, is based on the secure and robust formation of skills, knowledge and values. The processes detailed require those providing education and qualification opportunities to ensure it is of the highest quality and reflects today's context and tomorrow's possibilities.

The National Youth Agency (NYA) undertakes, on behalf of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers (JNC), the professional validation of training and qualification programmes conferring professionally qualified status on individuals.

This revision of the Requirements for such validation has been undertaken by a task group of The Agency's Education and Training Standards (ETS) Committee and in consultation with young people and professionals from the wider field. We thank all those who have contributed to this process. The new requirements are effective from 1 April 2007.

Tom Wylie

Chief Executive, The National Youth Agency

Foreword by Young People

Youth workers need to be good: they need to know about what's important to us and what affects us; they need to know how to relate to and work with us; and they need to know how to create and provide opportunities for us to get involved in a wide range of interesting and exciting things.

Youth work is about learning about yourself and others; about having the chance to choose whether to relax and have fun, focus on solving a problem or learning something new; and about being able to do something with your time that makes a difference.

Of all the adults who work with young people, youth workers have a special role and one that we value. It is important to us that youth workers can work in different ways with different young people, and can work in different places where young people's lives and experiences are different.

Having a university qualification does not necessarily mean that a youth worker will be good, so it is important that universities and courses are monitored and have to meet standards if we want their students to be able to be good workers. Courses need to have the right amount of learning in a classroom and then chances to try it out with young people. Young people are probably the most diverse generation and specialised skills are required to work with them. So only training of the highest standard can provide the greatest benefit to young people.

We are pleased to have been asked to take part in the consultation about these Requirements, and want to fully support the professional validation process. We hope that our involvement will be the first of many, and that young people will continue to have the chance to say what they think about this very important area: The Training and Qualification of Youth Workers.

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Emily Waddell – 16	Sammy Peters – 20	Laura James – 15

Introduction to the Requirements

The *Requirements* describe the process through which Higher Education Institutions can seek formal professional validation of their programmes of education and training in youth work in England. Such programmes would then confer professionally qualified status for Youth Workers in England under the terms and conditions of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers.

The *Requirements* outline the principles adhered to by The NYA in respect of its work in the development and approval of qualifications for all those who work as Youth and Community Workers (hereafter referred to as Youth Workers).

- This document sets out the historical background to the professional validation process and The NYA's curriculum requirements for programmes of professional formation in youth work.
- The process of professional validation, including that for new and existing programmes, modifications to programmes, procedures for mutual recognition of qualifications within the UK and recognition of qualifications obtained outside the UK, are set out in the document entitled: *Professional Validation and Monitoring Process* (Book 2). That document also includes guidance on writing and submitting a proposal for professional validation, and an explanation of the principles and process of annual monitoring by The NYA for the continuing success of its professionally validated programmes.
- The specific criteria and evidence requirements for professional validation of qualifications in Youth Work and, therefore, details of what must be contained within submission documentation, are set out in the document entitled: *Professional Validation Criteria and Evidence Requirements* (Book 3).

The *Requirements* provide a comprehensive description of the professional validation criteria and processes that are applied rigorously by The NYA in its scrutiny of submissions and which form the basis on which all submissions will be judged.

Nature and Purpose of Youth Work

- 1** Youth work is distinctive educational processes adapted across a variety of settings and approaches. The purpose of the work undertaken by Youth Workers is to facilitate and support young people's growth through dependence to inter-dependence, by encouraging their spiritual, personal and social development and enabling them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and society. Youth Work offers both planned and spontaneous opportunities for people to learn through experience about self, others and society. Youth Work occurs when young people learn by interacting with their peers and others, share a range of new experiences which extend, challenge and excite the individual, and have opportunities for reflection, planning and action.
- 2** The task of the Youth Worker is to plan, provide, manage and evaluate appropriate experiences of learning, challenge and reflection; to take advantage of opportunities for learning, challenge and reflection that arise spontaneously; and to foster the benefits of these experiences by employing a range of interpersonal skills such as building

relationships, mentoring, advocacy and group work. Relevant themes and issues such as health, housing and employment are incorporated as appropriate. This task, and the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to deliver it, form the bedrock of all education and training programmes for Youth Workers.

- 3** Such work, primarily with young people aged 13 to 19, is the principal concern of The NYA. It has responsibility to ensure that individuals who work as informal educators with young people are properly trained and prepared. The NYA's responsibility is enshrined within the *Requirements for the Professional Validation of Higher Education Programmes* which are recognised by the Joint Negotiating Committee as conferring professionally qualified status as a Youth Worker in England. The NYA's criteria and processes for professional validation of Youth Work qualifications focus on the fitness for purpose of programmes for the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to carry out the core task.

Underlying Principles and Values

'Youth workers need to understand young people's rights and respect them.'

- 4** The values underpinning work with young people are reflected in two statements:

Ethical Conduct in Youth Work (The NYA; 2000): a statement of values and principles developed following wide consultation and adopted by The NYA's Executive Board, and providing a sound basis in which to ground training programmes in work with young people at all levels of qualification.

Ethical Principles

All those engaged as Youth Workers have a commitment to:

'I want to be respected for who I am and what I know.'

- treat young people with respect, valuing each individual and avoiding negative discrimination;
- respect and promote young people's rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless the welfare or legitimate interests of themselves or others are seriously threatened;
- promote and ensure the welfare and safety of young people, while permitting them to learn through undertaking challenging educational activities; and,
- contribute to the promotion of social justice for young people and in society generally, towards encouraging respect for difference and diversity and challenging discrimination.

Orientation to Work with Young People

All those engaged as Youth Workers:

'The best youth workers are empathic, they don't judge, and they help you to make your own decisions.'

- recognise the boundaries between personal and professional life and are aware of the need to balance a caring and supportive relationship with young people with appropriate professional distance;
- recognise the need to be accountable to young people, their parents or guardians, colleagues, funders, wider society and others with a relevant interest in the work, and recognise that these accountabilities may be in conflict;

'Lots of skills are important but good youth workers need the people type skills to make the others work.'

- develop and maintain the required skills and competence to do the job – at whatever level they are working; and
- strive for conditions in employing agencies where these principles are discussed, evaluated and upheld.

Youth Work Values (Appendix One; DfES, 2003): a policy review containing the following definition of Youth Work Values:

- Young people choose to be involved, not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun.
 - The work starts where young people are – with their view of the world and their interests.
 - It seeks to go beyond where young people start, in particular by encouraging them to be critical and creative in their responses to their experience and the world around them and supporting their exploration of new ideas, interests and creative ability.
 - It takes place because young people are young people, not because they have been labelled or categorised as deviant.
 - It recognises, respects and is actively responsive to the wider networks of peers, communities and cultures which are important to young people.
 - Through these networks it seeks to help young people achieve stronger relationships and collective identities – for example as black people, women, men, disabled people, gay men or lesbians – and through the promotion of inclusivity, particularly for minority ethnic communities.
 - It is concerned with how young people feel and not just with what they know and can do.
 - It is concerned with facilitating and empowering the voice of young people.
 - It is concerned with ensuring young people can influence the environment within which they live.
 - It respects and values individual differences by supporting and strengthening young people's belief in themselves and their capacity to grow and change
 - It works with other agencies which contribute to young people's social and personal development.
 - It complements and supports school and college-based education by encouraging and providing other opportunities for young people to achieve and fulfil their potential.
- 5** The ethical and professional principles and set of values imply that the ethical Youth Worker will demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to, equality and diversity and the importance of choice, freedom, responsibility and justice. It follows that the educational programmes created by Youth Workers will reflect the understanding and commitments set out in the preceding paragraphs.

- 6** Programmes leading to professionally qualified status will be duly cognisant of developments towards a 'Licence to Practise'/Professional Registration scheme for youth work, and be able to provide a declaration of the worker's professional suitability.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

- 7** Youth Workers are committed to the principles of equality and diversity, and to the promotion of human rights. Their work recognises that there is widespread unjust direct and indirect discrimination against many individuals and groups of people. Many individuals and groups experience this discrimination as oppression – a systematic process whereby more powerful individuals, groups and institutions unjustly limit the lives, experiences, opportunities, choices and material wellbeing of those with less power. Effective Youth Work can play a part in redressing such disadvantage and discrimination and encourage a culture that celebrates equality and diversity.
- 8** A diverse society, committed to social justice, should seek to remove unjust discrimination in all aspects of life, including those not covered by legislation.
- 9** The Equality Act (2006), Human Rights legislation, the Disability Discrimination Act (1995 and 2005), the Special Education Needs Disability Act (2001), the Race Relations Act (1976, 2000 and 2003) and UN Declarations on the Rights of the Child (1989) give added emphasis to the concerns of Youth Work.
- 10** Moreover, Youth Work values and celebrates the contributions made by different individuals, groups and communities and is committed to their support and promotion. Education and training for Youth Work is committed to challenging oppression and unjust discrimination and to promoting equality of opportunity for all involved.

Training, Qualifications and Employment

- 11** Professional qualifications for Youth Work are available on a national basis. All workers should be required to hold, or to be working towards, one of these qualifications. Professional qualifications entitle the holder to work at recognised levels of responsibility and independence. Employers will expect a professionally qualified worker to be able to perform duties appropriate to their job role and status. More senior and management posts are available to individuals who have the necessary experience and/or enhanced professional qualification. The programmes leading to professional qualification in Youth Work vary greatly, both in name and type. Information on the range of available programmes can be found on The NYA's website at www.nya.org.uk

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

- 12** All programmes in Youth Work are assessed for level against the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The main purposes of the FHEQ are:
 - a** to enable employers, schools, parents, prospective students and others to understand the achievements and attributes represented by the main qualification titles;
 - b** to maintain international comparability of standards, especially in the European context, to ensure international competitiveness, and to facilitate student and graduate mobility;
 - c** to assist learners to identify potential progression routes, particularly in the context of lifelong learning; and

- d** to assist higher education institutions, their external examiners, and The Agency's reviewers, by providing important points of reference for setting and assessing standards.

13 Currently, professional qualifications in youth work are:

- i** Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE): two years full time or part time equivalent, some employment based.
- ii** Foundation Degree: two years full time or part time equivalent, employment based.
- iii** Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BAHons): three years full time or part time equivalent.
- iv** Graduate/Post Graduate Certificate (PGCert)/Graduate/Post Graduate Diploma (PGDip): one year full time or part time equivalent.
- v** Master of Arts/Master of Science (MA/MSc): full time or part time equivalent.

14 From 2010, Honours Degree level will be the minimum requirement for conferring professional status for Youth Work in England. In this regard, completion of a DipHE or FD programme for students matriculating after April 2010 for courses that begin in September 2010 will not confer professional status.

National Qualifications Framework (England)

15 Qualifications on the FHEQ are also mapped against qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Currently Youth and Community Work qualifications that have been achieved on a validated, JNC recognised programme and which map to the NQF at level 4 or above confer professional status, depending upon the year in which qualifications were commenced/completed.

The table below compares original and revised NQF levels with broad indications of FHEQ levels.¹

National Qualifications Framework		Framework for Higher Education Qualification levels (FHEQ)
Original levels	Revised levels (2004)	
5 Level 5 NVQ, Level 5 Diploma	8 Specialist professional awards	D (doctoral) doctorates
	7 NVQs, Level 7 Diploma, Level 7 Fellowship Level 7 Advanced Professional Certificate	M (masters) masters degrees, postgraduate certificates and diplomas
4 Level 4 NVQ Level 4 Diploma	6 NVQs, Level 6 Diploma, Level 6 Certificate	H (honours) bachelors degrees, graduate certificates and diplomas
	5 NVQs, Level 5 Diploma, Level 5 Certificate, Level 5 BTEC Higher National Diploma	I (intermediate) diplomas of higher education and further education, foundation degrees, higher national diplomas
Level 4 BTEC Higher National Diploma Level 4 Certificate	4 NVQs, Level 4 Diploma, Level 4 Certificate	C (certificate) certificates of higher education

¹ www.qca.org.uk

16 Government policy, regulated by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (www.qca.org.uk), demands that all the programmes recognised on the NQF are referenced to the relevant National Occupational Standards.

17 At the time of writing these revised Requirements QCA is undertaking, jointly with the regulatory authorities in Wales (DELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA), a substantial review of the NQF: *The aim is to reform the current NQF and develop a simple and effective structure that allows for the accumulation and transfer of credit achievement over time.*² This framework will be known as The Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) and will be tested between September 2006 and July 2008.

Integrated Qualifications Framework

18 The Government identified in its publication *Building a World-class Workforce for Children, Young People and Families* (February 2006), that an Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) for all those working in Children, Young People and Families workforce would be developed by 2010.

19 The framework has been developed with full cognisance of developments of the QCF and was launched on 1 November 2006. Work will begin to develop process and procedure to populate the IQF during the period December 2006 to October 2007, with the first qualifications expected to be approved by January 2008 and population thereafter continuing up to and beyond 2010.

20 The NYA expects that courses are designed and developed to reflect this development, and thereby enable students to realise maximum benefits in terms of career opportunity, progression and choice.

Subject Benchmarks

21 Level descriptors have been developed³ which describe the general academic attainment levels expected at each different level of academic qualification.

Level 4/ Certificate Level	The holder of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. He or she will be able to communicate accurately, and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.
Level 5/ Intermediate level	Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. They will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.
	<i>continued on page 12</i>

² www.qca.org.uk: 'Building a credit and qualifications framework' fact sheet.

³ www.qca.org.uk

<p>Level 6/ Honours level</p>	<p>An Honours graduate will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the graduate will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The graduate will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgments, and to communicate effectively.</p> <p>An Honours graduate should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.</p>
<p>Level 7/ Masters level</p>	<p>Much of the study undertaken at Masters level will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems.</p> <p>They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgment, personal responsibility and initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments.</p>
<p>Level 8/ Doctoral level</p>	<p>Doctorates are awarded for the creation and interpretation of knowledge, which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research. Holders of doctorates will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding.</p> <p>Holders of doctorates will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the ability to make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, and innovation in tackling and solving problems.</p> <p>The titles PhD and DPhil are commonly used for doctorates awarded on the basis of original research. Doctoral programmes, that may include a research component, but which have a substantial taught element lead usually to awards that include the name of the discipline in their title (eg EdD for Doctor of Education). A doctorate normally requires the equivalent of three years' full-time study.</p>

- 22** Academic Benchmark Standards defining the desired outcomes of graduates within different academic disciplines have been developed by representatives of the academic community and are approved by the Quality Assurance Agency.
- 23** The development of Youth Work specific Benchmark Statements is presently being explored, and at such time as these become available, The NYA would expect to see their use in the design and management of professionally qualifying programmes. Until this time The NYA expects to see clear evidence of which other subject benchmarks (eg Education Studies and Social Policy) have been used. (www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/honours/default.asp)

National Occupational Standards for Youth Work

- 24** National Occupational Standards for Youth Work were established in January 2000 following wide and comprehensive consultation and have a review period of five years. Lifelong Learning UK, as the Sector Skills Council within which youth work sits, hold responsibility for reviewing the standards, and it is expected that revised standards will be available from the summer of 2007. (www.lluk.org)
- 25** National Occupational Standards (NOS) seek to capture and define the skills, knowledge and competences used within a work sector and form an agreed set of aspects, units and elements that are used to describe what work with young people entails in terms of understanding, skill and competence levels. The NOS may also be used in drawing up job descriptions, development and monitoring of practice, contract specification and as a means of developing and evaluating training.
- 26** The NYA expects the NOS to be used to inform the design of all qualifications for individuals who work with young people.

DfES 'Common Core' of Skills and Knowledge

- 27** The DfES published the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge in 2005 following consultation on the Green Paper: *Every Child Matters* (www.cwdcouncil.org.uk).
- 28** The DfES Common Core reflects a set of common values for practitioners working in the children and young people's workforce in England and is aimed at improving life chances for all children and young people with a view to providing more effective and integrated services.
- 29** It is expected that the Common Core will be used to support the design of training and qualifications for all of those working within the children and young people's workforce in England. It is worth noting that the themes of the common core will be articulated within the revised National Occupational Standards document (2007).

The Learning Process

- 30** The learning process must recognise, incorporate and promote a set of principles. These are expressed as follows:
- Youth Work with young people is primarily an educational process, entered into voluntarily and delivered informally across a wide range of settings.
 - Learning is a lifelong developmental process of observation, listening, reflection, analysis, action and collective learning including discussion and dialogue with peers and others.
 - All practice is informed by theoretical, research, experiential, practical, emotional and biographical knowledge. The effective practitioner is therefore reflective and able critically to synthesise the differing influences on their work and thus determine appropriate action.
 - Prior learning and experience must be valued within the learning process.

- Participants in the learning process must be actively involved at all points of the learning process.
- A range of models, styles and approaches for work with young people and adults should be addressed.
- Those models of practice that encourage positive action leading to greater equality and social justice are to be valued.

31 Professional qualification as a Youth Worker will enable an individual to work with young people in a wide range of occupational settings. Depending on their specialist knowledge, experience and supplementary qualifications, individuals can take on specialist roles – for example, in local authority youth work, youth justice and youth offending teams, health authorities, leisure and arts departments and an extremely diverse range of voluntary sector organisations. Training programmes leading to professional qualifications will demonstrate cognisance of the occupational demands of the variety of settings. The primary concern of The NYA is that Youth Work is of the highest quality.

The Role of the Joint Negotiating Committee

The Role of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers

- 32** The Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers originated from recommendations in the Albemarle Committee review of the Youth Service in 1960. It developed into its current form and structure following a major review in 1987, when it was renamed the JNC for Youth and Community Workers.
- 33** The formation of the JNC represented a landmark in the emergence of Youth and Community work as a profession. It combined a commitment to securing high quality provision of training and qualifications with a responsibility for negotiating salaries and terms and conditions of service related to those qualifications.
- 34** The JNC's first report in 1961 set out the various qualifications recognised as leading to the award of professionally qualified status and it is the JNC that still holds the ultimate responsibility for professional validation of programmes leading to this award.
- 35** The JNC has now incorporated into its negotiating process (2003 agreement) a means of formally recognising the salaries, terms and conditions of service, and eligibility for work of Youth Support Workers at the youth support worker grade. However, these *Requirements* are written in relation only to those training and qualification programmes which confer professional qualification as a Youth Worker.

The Role of The National Youth Agency

- 36** From 1961 to 1982 the JNC both agreed the categories of qualification for recognition and scrutinised the programmes offered by the various higher education institutions and other bodies providing awards. After 1982 the detailed scrutiny of awards on behalf of the JNC passed to the Council for Education and Training in Youth and Community Work (CETYCW) and, in 1991, to The National Youth Agency.
- 37** The NYA's Education and Training Standards Committee considers and recommends (or not)

professional validation of programmes of study that confer qualifications as professional youth workers. Those programmes that are granted professional validation are included in the JNC report and published on The NYA website.

Principles of Collaboration

- 38** The NYA sets out the criteria and operates the process for professional validation and quality assurance of qualifications. However, the criteria, process and subsequent engagement in the associated work is progressed in collaboration with a cross-section of stakeholders in and representatives of, the Youth and Community Work field. The principle of collaboration ensures that standards of training achieved are agreed, supported and comparable across the country, and ensures that there is collective responsibility and accountability for the formation of Youth Workers.
- 39** Institutions that award professionally qualifying programmes for Youth Workers have representation on The NYA's Education and Training Standards (ETS) Committee through the Training Agencies Group (TAG), together with employers, trades unions and other key stakeholders. Through their membership of the ETS Committee, representative individuals are collectively responsible for professional validation in respect of:
- the design and application of the *Requirements*;
 - scrutinising submissions for recognition and ensuring that programmes meet nationally agreed standards;
 - ensuring that the practice of professional validation is implemented in accordance with agreed values and principles; and
 - making recommendations for strategic development arising out of observations and analysis of trends in validation activity.

Curriculum Requirements

'Having a 'big' qualification doesn't make you a good youth worker. Universities have to make sure that youth workers have the right skills and qualities.'

- 40** The Government, in its Green Paper: *Youth Matters*, clearly identifies a vision 'to create an integrated system which is responsive to the needs of the individual, which supports all teenagers to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes, and which strikes an appropriate balance between supporting and challenging young people.'⁴
- 41** The social pedagogic approach of youth work, promoting and enabling spiritual, personal and social development in the context of young people within their own and the wider community is reflected in the amendment to clause 6 of the Education and Inspections Act (November 2006). The scope and potential of youth work to impact positively on the lives of individuals and groups of young people as they develop and recognise their potential through educational leisure time activities requires youth workers to understand and be able to employ a social pedagogy model effectively and constructively.
- 42** The curriculum must offer significant and challenging opportunities for personal,
- 4 DfES: *Youth Matters* Ch2 p19. July 2005. Enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, being healthy, staying safe and achieving economic wellbeing.

professional and academic development in order that students develop as effective reflective practitioners, with the understanding and skill required to create programmes of personal and social education with young people. The academic and fieldwork curriculum must introduce the student to a range of models of practice and enable the student to develop confidence and competence in planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the use of these models across different contexts and situations.

- 43** The curriculum for professional qualification in Youth Work must provide for effective professional formation such that the professionally qualified graduate can operate as a skilled and valued practitioner, colleague and member of the profession. The NYA will examine submissions for professional validation for the extent to which their curriculum provides for adequate professional formation. Book 3 provides detail on the criteria and evidence requirements for the content of submissions.

Key Areas of Work

‘While they’re training, youth workers should have to work in places and with young people that they are not used to, then they can work anywhere after they finish.’

- 44** All proposals for professional validation must demonstrate that the following key areas of work are central to the programme:

- a** work with young people and their communities;
- b** work with staff and other agencies;
- c** development of service provision; and
- d** management and leadership.

- 45** Important changes in employment patterns have resulted in newly qualified Youth Workers being appointed into more senior posts than was the case in the past. Professionally qualifying programmes should take into account the ‘Guidance on Allocation to Ranges’ in the September 2003 JNC agreement in the design and implementation of their curriculum. The assessment practices used within programmes must ensure that students have achieved a level of satisfactory attainment for each of these aspects of work for a post graded in the JNC Professional Range. Bearing in mind that graduates will be newly qualified Youth Workers, The NYA expects that youth work employers’ staff or workforce development policies will allow newly qualified staff further support and training in their first job and will examine organisations in this respect when undertaking endorsement of their staff or workforce development policies.

‘Things are rubbish if they’re not well organised!’

‘We did this big trip, and there were lots of problems with money and bookings and things, but our youth worker was fab, and knew how to sort everything out.’

Management Skills and Knowledge

- 46** The structural, organisational, policy and knowledge/skill contexts of youth work change rapidly. Professionally qualified Youth Workers must be able to undertake critical assessments on the influences on their organisations and on collective and individual practices in order to identify appropriate responses. One of the most important changes in the structure of the contemporary profession is the growing trend for professionally qualified youth workers to undertake management responsibilities at ever earlier stages in their careers. It is necessary that programmes of study leading to professional qualification in youth work address both the theoretical and practical basis of management of youth work, of others who work with young people and of youth work organisations. Research and current initiatives in this area show that notable skill areas are:

- a** health, safety and risk assessment;

- b** project management;
- c** people management, training and supervision;
- d** quality assurance and performance monitoring;
- e** financial planning and reporting;
- f** participation in the management of the organisation;
- g** management in the context of multi-professional and multi-agency settings;
- h** personnel issues and basic knowledge of employment law;
- i** awareness of external inspection regimes; and
- k** commissioning.

Disciplinary Fields

‘Our youth worker’s excellent; she does new stuff all the while so it’s always interesting.’

‘I want my youth worker to know about the things that are important to me, and understand the problems I face.’

- 47** Programmes of study must locate Youth Work in its historical, political, cultural and organisational contexts. Both academic and fieldwork aspects of the programme must be rooted in social scientific, educational and management theory. The programme should address the development of youth and community work since its early emergence in the late 1800s through to powers being granted to Local Education Authorities in 1921 and the impact of various Education Acts from 1945 onwards. It will also include a thorough grounding in current issues affecting the personal and social education of young people, in terms of their health, housing, employment, education and welfare, and the local, international and global context. Programmes must be fully abreast of historical policy, including the UN Declarations on Human Rights and the Rights of Children and also contemporary policy and practice initiatives. They must ensure that students possess the understanding and skills critically to analyse and translate these into programmes of spiritual, personal and social education with young people. Programmes also need to ensure sustainable literacy as a core competency for all professional graduates, as described in *Securing the Future: delivering UK sustainable development strategy*.
- 48** Current themes and priorities explored and used to inform programmes would include, for example: multi-agency and multi-professional partnership working; the full range of measures and initiatives to engage young people in education, training, work and society; sustainable development; youth justice and community safety; recognition of achievement, recording and accreditation of young people’s learning; and approaches to promote the participation of young people and facilitate voluntary action and active citizenship. Courses should reflect the growing recognition of the role that youth work has in addressing the health needs of young people, including providing students with a basic understanding of issues around mental and emotional health, sex and relationships issues, substance misuse and physical wellbeing. Programmes need to provide for the development of the capacity to plan, manage, reflect and record, and facilitate and deliver learning as an integral part of the programme.

Personal Suitability for Youth Work

Professionalism

‘I’ve had a youth worker who knew all about youth work but couldn’t actually do it, like he was scared of young people – so it’s important universities check this out.’

- 49** Whilst the foregoing paragraphs set out how prospective workers will make the transition from interested applicant to motivated student and thence to qualified reflective practitioner, there is a range of less tangible qualities that the Youth Worker must be able to demonstrate. These attributes must be evident at entry to a professionally qualifying programme and sustained during that education and training. The NYA expects institutions to have in place systems that ensure an applicant is positively disposed towards these attributes and that the programme enables them further to develop and promulgate such attributes in their practice subsequent to qualification. Aspects that define professionalism in youth work include:
- a** recognising the importance of integrity in all personal and social interactions and respecting the human rights of young people;
 - b** accepting the principles of *Ethical Conduct in Youth Work*;
 - c** commitment to an ethos of continuous professional development (the professional worker as reflective practitioner); leading to improvement in professional practice; and
 - d** commitment to work collaboratively providing the context for youth work practice and critical engagement in the development of that context.
- 50** The NYA expects the institution to have in place measures by which it can assure itself of, and verify, the professional suitability of students completing the course.

Criminal Records Disclosure

- 51** Institutions have a duty to ensure that students do not have a criminal record which would prevent them from working with children or young people. The NYA expects the institution to have systems in place by which it can assure itself of an applicant’s suitability in this respect. An enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau is one part of fulfilling that duty. Further advice is available at www.disclosure.gov.uk

Prior Experience

- 52** The NYA will require institutions with professionally qualifying programmes to have in place admissions systems and entry criteria that identify the applicant’s level of suitability at point of entry, and that ensure only those applicants with the required personal attributes are admitted to the programme. Criteria for suitability will include identified levels of prior knowledge and experience of youth work, and admissions systems which allow assessment of an applicant’s potential for further development in understanding, skill and professionalism.

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Glossary of Terms

APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ETS	Education and Training Standards
JNC	Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers
LLUK	Lifelong Learning Sector Skills Council for the UK
NTO	National Training Organisation
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NYA	The National Youth Agency
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SSC	Sector Skills Council
TAG	Community and Youth Work Training Agencies Group – Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Education.



The National Youth Agency

works in partnership with young people and with organisations and services to ensure better outcomes for young people. It is an independent, development organisation located between government and funding bodies on the one hand and service providers and their users on the other.

We strive to ensure that the work of services and organisations is:

- relevant to the lives of young people;
 - responsive to policy;
 - effective and of a high standard;
 - efficient and provides good value; and
- successful in securing the best outcomes for young people.

Our five strategic aims are:

- Participation: promoting young people's influence, voice and place in society.
- Professional practice: improving youth work practice, programmes and other services for young people.
- Policy development: influencing and shaping the youth policy of central and local government and the policies of those who plan, commission and provide services for young people.
 - Partnership: creating, supporting and developing partnerships between organisations to improve services and outcomes for young people.
- Performance: striving for excellence in The Agency's internal workings.

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