

THE VALIDATION OF HERBAL MEDICINE COURSES

Introduction

Validating Herbal Medicine Courses

For the past two decades, the European Herbal and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association (EHTPA) has provided an accreditation process for degree (Level 6) courses offering training in herbal medicine that have been validated by universities. With the number of universities able to provide validation of herbal training now fewer than previously, the EHTPA is delighted to announce that ABC Awards through its *Quality Licence Scheme Plus+ (QLS+)* has agreed to validate herbal medicine courses to ensure that training in herbal medicine is at Level 6. The ABC scheme is independent of the EHTPA. Courses that have successfully undergone the ABC audit process described below will be able to apply for EHTPA Accreditation.

Validation and accreditation: what is the difference?

Validation confirms that the course's:

- academic level has been set appropriately for Level 6
- curriculum and structure meet the specified academic standard
- educational and intellectual demands are appropriate for a Level 6 award
- quality processes are in place to maintain academic standards
- standards and quality of assessment, learning and teaching are commensurate with Level 6
- learning resources are of appropriate standard and quality.

EHTPA Accreditation confirms that the course:

- Meets all the requirements of the EHTPA Core Curriculum, including the relevant tradition-specific 8th Module in Ayurvedic Medicine, Chinese Herbal Medicine, Tibetan Herbal Medicine or Western Herbal Medicine.
- Provides an overarching curriculum strategy for the course as a whole. This includes evidence that:
 - all EHTPA Learning Outcomes are assessed at an appropriate level
 - on successful completion of the course graduates will be fit to practise
 - there is both formative and summative assessment of theory and clinical practice at key stages throughout the course
 - there is at least one summative clinical assessment which incorporates the application of theory to practice towards the end of the course.

EHTPA Accreditation and ABC Awards QLS +

By achieving the ABC Awards QLS + and, thus, Validation of Level 6 Equivalency, a course offering training in herbal medicine will have satisfied the EHTPA requirement that all accredited courses must be independently validated as a Level 6 course. Validation by itself does not lead to EHTPA accreditation. Validated courses have to meet all the other EHTPA accreditation criteria, details of which are available at <http://ehtpa.eu>.

For details of the EHTPA's Accreditation Processes and initial discussions about validation, contact Harvey Woolf, Independent Chair of the EHTPA Accreditation Board at info@ehpa.eu.

The following section describes the *ABC Awards Quality Licence Scheme Plus+(QLS+)*.

The ABC Awards Quality Licence Scheme Plus+

The value added from working in partnership with ABC Awards is the benefit gained from drawing on its specialist knowledge and expertise in the field of independent validation, assessment and quality assurance; ABC Awards has a reputation for high quality as an Ofqual¹ regulated Awarding Organisation. The ABC Awards Quality Licence Scheme for Herbal Medicine courses has been developed in conjunction with the EHTPA. This comprises the following:

1. ABC Awards QLS +.
2. Validation of Level 6 Equivalency. This is the Level required to apply for EHTPA Accreditation. The QLS+ Validation Process is impartial, independent and conducted by qualified and competent educationalists. The process of validation is independent of the EHTPA accreditation process.

The ABC Awards QLS +, therefore, provides an independent Quality Mark for courses seeking EHTPA accreditation and confirms the academic level of the course.

The QLS + evaluates and recognises high quality providers and courses measured against the requirements of the Standard and Guiding Principles, and the Ofqual and QAA² Level 6 descriptors. This enables providers offering training in herbal medicine to demonstrate their commitment to the quality and level of the course being offered. It will permit a course to obtain independent recognition with externally endorsed certificates of achievement from ABC Awards.

The Standard and Guiding Principles have been developed taking into account high quality practice across providers as well as drawing on ABC Awards' knowledge and experience as a long established Awarding Organisation. ABC Awards will review participating Providers against the requirements of the Standard and the course approval criteria set out in the Annex.

The Standard consists of the following elements:

- Leadership and Management.
- Resources.
- Quality of Courses.
- Delivery and Quality Assurance.
- Academic level and Content.

Once a course has been approved, it will then have access to the ABC Awards QLS Logo, marketing text, Online Portal and will be included on the ABC list of Approved Providers.

On completion of a validated course, ABC will issue the learners who have passed the course with ABC Awards with Certificates of Achievement which will carry both the provider's and ABC Awards' logos.

ABC Awards has a simple and transparent pricing model that provides the flexibility for courses in herbal medicine to meet national and international

¹ The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

² Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

learners' needs regardless of the locality of the course, the size of the organisation, the number of courses offered or the number of learners on the course (see **What does it cost?** below).

For information regarding The Standards and Guiding Principles of QLS+ please email coletteh@abcawards.co.uk

The Validation and Review Process

Validation entails an Initial Approval Audit and Review an Annual Monitoring Audit.

Audits are:

- Undertaken on site.
- Completed by a Quality Licence Auditor against the requirements of the Standard and the course approval criteria. They will include the following:
 - Agreeing an Audit Plan with the Provider.
 - Selecting the courses to be sampled.
 - Identifying areas where a) the Provider is not meeting the requirements of each criterion and/or b) only partially meeting the requirements of the criteria within the Standard and c) any appropriate actions required.
 - Highlighting strengths and areas for improvement and making appropriate recommendations to achieve these changes.
 - Completing a Formal Audit Report.

All Audit Reports are quality assured prior to being released by ABC Awards to the provider and will contain guidance and information on any appropriate next steps.

Benefits of the Scheme

Benefits that the Scheme offers include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Endorsement from a leading national awarding organisation
- Review and feedback on the attainment of the agreed level of training (in this case Level 6) of the course being validated utilising good practice descriptors
- Annual audit by a dedicated specialist who will provide feedback on your areas of good practice and suggestions for improvement
- Expert Quality Licence Scheme Manager who will support you with your application and continue to work with you once you are a Provider
- Use of the ABC Awards Quality Licence Scheme logo
- Inclusion in a list of Approved Providers on the ABC Awards website
- The facility to order jointly branded learner certificate of achievements instantly using our easy-to-use secure online portal, which we will post on the same working day
- Supporting statements to help you advertise your status to your learners
- Use of the portal to produce management information reports to help you analyse your provision
- An open and transparent pricing model
- Friendly and efficient customer service
- Ability to include additional courses that do not require Equivalency Validation (see **Additional courses** below)

Once approved, providers will receive an ABC Awards Quality Licence Scheme Approval Certificate.

What does it cost?

Initial Costs are £3,000 which includes an initial Validation of Equivalency and Review against the QLS + Standard and the Course Approval Criteria.

Ongoing Costs are £8 per certificate and an Annual Review and Annual Licence Fee of £2,000.

All prices quoted above are fully inclusive and there are no additional fees.

It should be noted that EHTPA Accreditation fees are charged separately at the time of accreditation.

Additional courses

Because the ABC is endorsing the organisation, the inclusion of new courses onto the provider's individual Online Portal is a simple and efficient process that does not attract any additional fees for the addition of courses that a) do not require EHTPA independent validation as the pre-requisite for accreditation or b) do not meet the course approval criteria set out in the Annex. Such courses cannot use Diploma in the course or award title and any publicity or advertising must make it explicit that the course has not been validated as a Level 6 equivalent course.

International

ABC welcomes applications from providers working in both the UK and Internationally. The fees above are applicable to providers in the UK and relate only to the ABC Awards. ABC's fees for International providers may vary.

It should be noted that EHPTA does not currently accredit international providers.

For specific and tailored information, please contact ABC Awards using the contact details below.

Contact Details

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Annex**Course Approval Criteria****Introduction**

This Annex covers:

Section	Content
A	The descriptor for Level 6
B	The content and minimum number of curriculum hours that must be delivered for a validated award
C	Minimum proportion of the course to be delivered at Level 6 to qualify for an award at that Level
D	The requirements for the title of the Award
E	The requirement relating to the course's assessment regime.

A) *Level descriptor*

1. In the table below the criteria in the normal font are common in substance, though not language, to both the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).
2. The two QAA criteria that are not explicit in the Ofqual list are italicised.
3. Courses will be expected to demonstrate that the validated course meets **all** the QAA and Ofqual criteria.

QAA Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6 on the FHEQ	Ofqual Level 6
<p>Level 6 students have demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline • an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline • conceptual understanding that enables the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or advanced scholarship, in the discipline • an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge • the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline). 	<p>A Level 6 student:</p> <p>Has advanced practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors.</p> <p>Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them.</p> <p>Determines, refines, adapts and uses appropriate methods and advanced cognitive and practical skills to address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors.</p>
<p>Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects 	<p>Uses and, where appropriate, designs relevant research and development to inform actions.</p> <p>Can critically analyse, interpret</p>

QAA Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6 on the FHEQ	Ofqual Level 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem • <i>communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.</i> 	<p>and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas. Evaluates actions, methods and results and their implications.</p>
<p><i>And holders will have:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility</i> - <i>decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts</i> - <i>the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.</i> 	

B) *Content and minimum number of hours*

The course must demonstrate coverage of the content and outcomes of the EHTPA Core Curriculum.

The course must deliver at least 2,810 hours of learning. The only exception to this is for courses designed to accept students with accredited Acupuncture degrees. These courses must deliver a minimum of 1,656 hours of learning.

C) *Minimum proportion of the course to be delivered at Level 6*

Based on Ofqual and QAA specifications for Level 6, in order to qualify for Level 6 Equivalency the validated course must be designed so that learners can achieve at least 25% of the course at Level 6.

D) *Award titles*

ABC will normally validate the following titles:

Diploma in a Specific Herbal Medicine tradition (for example, Diploma in Ayurvedic Herbal Medicine, Chinese Herbal Medicine, Tibetan Herbal Medicine, Western Herbal Medicine).

Diploma in Herbal Medicine - for courses that span more than one Herbal Tradition. (It should be noted that such courses may not satisfy the EHTPA accreditation criteria.)

Other titles may be validated on a case by case basis.

To be validated as a Tradition-specific Diploma, at least 40% of the course must be devoted to the named Tradition.

E) Assessment

The validated course must make provision for the external moderation of the assessment regime.