

Programme specification

(Notes on how to complete this template are provided in Annexe 3)

1. Overview / factual information

Programme/award title(s)	FD Innovative Practice In Hair, Beauty and Barbering
Teaching Institution	South West College
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	June 2021
Date of latest OU (re)validation	June 2021
Next revalidation	April 2026
Credit points achieved for the award	240
UCAS Code (if applicable)	N/A
HECoS Code (if applicable)	
LDCS Code (FE Colleges England only)	
Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.	September 2026
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	Business and Management Law Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies Finance Accounting Biosciences Chemistry
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes (including QAA Characteristics Statements). For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.	QAA Frameworks and Benchmark Statements UK Quality Code for Higher Education – specifically the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ Level 6), informing the required standards of knowledge, cognitive development, practical competence and transferable skills. QAA Subject Benchmark Statements Open University Validation Partnerships (OUVP) Requirements The programme adheres to all OUVP expectations, including: OU assessment regulations and academic standards OU Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

	OU guidance on programme specifications, module learning outcomes, and progression requirements External Examiner oversight requirements These reference points ensure robust academic governance and alignment with validated OU programmes delivered across the FE/HE partnership network. Sectoral and Industry Standards Programme outcomes are informed by: • National Occupational Standards (NOS) relevant to hairdressing, beauty therapy, barbering, aesthetics, customer service, leadership and management • Habia / industry professional guidelines on safe, ethical and sustainable practice • Current professional practices in digital innovation, sustainability, advanced treatments, business development and sector regulation • Employer consultation and feedback from Wella, Therapie Clinic, and local salon partners, ensuring outcomes reflect contemporary industry expectations and emerging trends. Northern Ireland Policy & Skills Frameworks Programme design aligns with: NI Skills Barometer 2023–2033 DFE Higher Education in FE Framework Programme for Government (PfG) objectives relating to skills development, employability and innovation Regional economic priorities for entrepreneurship, sustainability and digital capability. Internal South West College Reference Points Programme outcomes have been shaped by: SWC Higher Education Strategy 2025–2028 SWC Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy SWC Quality Assurance processes, Annual Programme Review (APR), and Self-Evaluation Reports Student and staff feedback gathered through programme committees and surveys Findings from industry advisory boards and employer engagement initiatives.
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Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the students handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Professional/statutory/ accreditation recognition	N/A
For apprenticeships fully or non-integrated Assessment. If fully integrated, EPAO being used.	N/A
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship	Full Time/Part Time Face -to-Face
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	2-year FT 3 years - PT
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	N/A
Date of production/revision of this specification	February 2026

2. Programme overview

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards

(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)

South West College promotes widening participation and inclusion, attracting learners from diverse industry, social and cultural backgrounds. Demand for higher-level skills within the Hair, Beauty and Barbering industries demonstrates a continued need for this Foundation Degree, particularly within a rural HE setting. The programme plays a key role in supporting local and regional workforce development by offering accessible,

high-quality higher education opportunities that respond to the evolving skills landscape within these innovative and creative sectors.

Students progress into the programme from a range of Level 3 technically skilled pathways to include Level 3 Diploma vocational qualifications in Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy or Barbering delivered across South West College campuses and other Further Education Colleges. This diverse range of entry routes ensures that learners with varying technical training can access a coherent progression pathway that develops their professional identity, academic capability and industry informed practice.

The Foundation Degree also forms part of a wider hierarchy of awards within the Hair, Beauty and Barbering provision at South West College. Upon successful completion of the Foundation Degree, graduates have a clearly defined progression route to the BA (Hons) Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering. This Level 6 top-up degree enables students to further extend their specialist skills, engage in advanced critical enquiry, and deepen their understanding of contemporary and emerging practices shaping the industry. Progression to the BA (Hons) programme supports learners in achieving a full honours degree, opening pathways to senior professional roles, entrepreneurial ventures, leadership positions, and opportunities within education, product development and the wider creative industries.

This articulation ensures that learners benefit from a cohesive and supportive educational journey, underpinned by strong alignment between Level 3, 4, 5 and 6 qualifications, and supported by South West College's commitment to widening participation, industry engagement and responsive curriculum design.

2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60 credit work-related learning takes place. For apprenticeships an articulation of how the work based learning and academic content are organised with the award.

N/A

2.4 List of all exit awards

Exit Awards

Within this foundation degree programme there will be a number of awards in-built.

Full Award Foundation Degree Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering

Upon successful completion of six 20c/pt Level 4 and 5 20c/pt & 1 40c/pt Level 5 modules (240 Credits) students will attain the award of Foundation Degree (Fd).

Cert HE

If a student is unable to complete the Foundation Degree, the student can be awarded a Cert HE Exit Award in Innovative Practice in Hair, Barbering and Beauty, if they have successfully completed all 6 20c/pt Level 4 modules (120 Credits).

3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)

Full time Delivery

The Foundation Degree Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering.

(Full Time) is a two -year programme comprising of two 15-week semesters (12 weeks Taught).

Part time Delivery

The part time route will require students to infill into the same modules as the full-time students in Semesters 1 and 2. The students will complete two modules in semesters 1 and 2 whilst attending the college one day per week. The part-time structure will be completed in three years.

Successful completion of this programme, at FD Level 5, will allow for students to apply to a range of undergraduate courses at regional and national universities.

Level 4

Modules

1. Marketing and Academic Skills (20c)
2. Leadership and Team Dynamics (20c)
3. Physiology of Ageing (20c)
4. Advanced Principles of Colour Correction (20c)
5. Social Media and Innovation (20c)
6. Sustainable Quality Management (20c)
7. Financial Literacy (20c)

At Level 5 learners will undertake five Level 5 compulsory 20 credit modules &

Level 5 Compulsory 40 credit module.

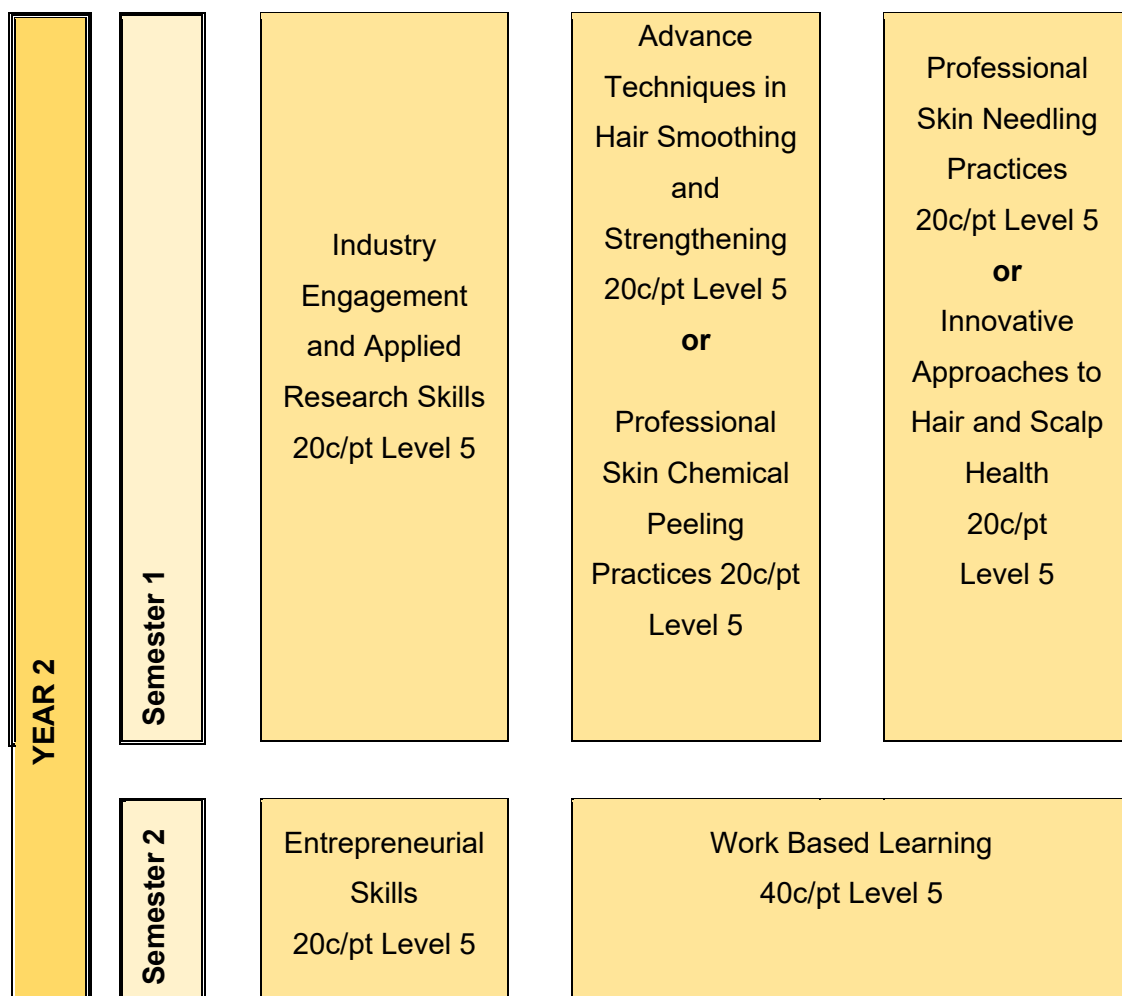
1. Industry Engagement and Applied Research Skills (20c)
2. Advanced Techniques in Hair Smoothing and Strengthening (20c)
3. Professional Skin Chemical Peeling Practices (20c)
4. Professional Skin Needling Practices (20c)
5. Innovative Approaches to Hair and Scalp Health (20c)
6. Entrepreneurial Skills (20c)
7. Work Based Learning (40c)

Programme Structure

Foundation Degree Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering Full Time

YEAR 1	Semester 1	Marketing and Academic Skills 20c/pt Level 4	Leadership and Team Dynamics 20c/pt Level 4	Physiology of Ageing 20c/pt Level 4 or Advanced Principles of Colour Correction (20c) 20c/pt Level 4
	Semester 2	Social Media and Innovation 20c/pt Level 4	Sustainable Quality Management 20c/pt Level 4	Financial Literacy 20c/pt Level 4

Exit Award – Cert. HE



Exit Award - Foundation Degree (Fd)

3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)

Please adjust 'levels' to reflect SCQF if applicable

Note. Once a student registers on the programme, they will choose a Beauty or Hair / Barbering Pathway. At that stage modules will be confirmed depending on the pathway chosen, in addition to the 4 compulsory modules as listed below.

Level 4

Compulsory modules	Credit points	Pathway specific modules	Credit points	Is the module compensatable	Semester runs in
Marketing and Academic Skills	20			Yes	Yr 1 S1
Leadership and Team Dynamics	20			Yes	Yr 1 S1
Physiology of Ageing		Beauty Pathway	20	Yes	Yr 1 S2
Advanced Principles of Colour Correction		Hair and Barbering Pathway	20	Yes	Yr 1 S2
Social Media and Innovation	20			Yes	Yr 1 S2
Sustainable Quality Management	20			Yes	Yr 2 S1
Financial Literacy	20			Yes	Yr 2 S1

Programme Structure – Single Registerable Modules				
Compulsory modules	Credit points	Pre-Requisite as SRM	Is module compensatable?	Semester runs in
N/A				

Intended learning outcomes at Level 4 are listed below:

<u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4</u>	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
A1. Explain foundational theoretical concepts relevant to hair, beauty, and barbering practice. A2. Describe sector-specific factors influencing service quality, client experience, and safe practice. A3. Demonstrate understanding of consultation, assessment, and analysis processes that inform professional decision-making. A4. Explain how innovation, creativity, and evidence-based approaches contribute to industry development and professional practice.	Teaching and learning methods combine structured theoretical input with applied, industry-relevant activity. Lectures, seminars and guided digital study introduce foundational theory while case studies, industry examples and quality-focused discussions develop understanding of sector-specific factors influencing service quality, client experience and safe practice. Practical workshops, demonstrations and role-play consultations support the development of assessment, analysis and decision-making processes, while innovation and evidence-based thinking are fostered through research-informed sessions, creative tasks and engagement with emerging industry trends. Ethical, sustainable and responsible practice principles are embedded through critical discussions, scenario analysis and exploration of real-world operational models.

<u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4</u>	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
A5. Identify principles of sustainability, ethics, and responsible practice within hair, beauty, and barbering sectors. A6. Describe how communication, teamwork, and organisational behaviours support effective professional practice.	Assessment methods are aligned to applied professional expectations, using written assignments, research papers and knowledge checks to test theoretical understanding, alongside scenario-based evaluations, case-study analysis and reflective logs to measure consultation and decision-making proficiency. Creative portfolios, presentations and research-informed evaluations assess learners' ability to integrate innovation and evidence-based practice, while audit-style tasks and analytical reports measure understanding of sustainability and ethics. Group projects, reflective journals and observed collaborative activities assess communication, teamwork and organisational behaviours essential for effective professional practice.
3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
B1. Analyse information, scenarios, and data to support informed decision-making in hair, beauty, and barbering contexts. B2. Evaluate problems, challenges, and opportunities using relevant theoretical frameworks and sector-specific knowledge. B3. Apply structured reasoning, critical thinking, and judgement to interpret evidence and justify decisions. B4. Compare approaches, models, and frameworks to identify appropriate solutions within industry contexts.	Cognitive skills are developed through a blend of analytical lectures, case-based seminars, problem-solving activities and enquiry-led tasks that require learners to interpret information, evaluate scenarios and justify decisions. Interactive workshops and guided discussions strengthen critical thinking and structured reasoning, while research-informed learning encourages comparison of models, synthesis of evidence and reflective judgement. Assessment methods emphasise applied analytical ability through scenario-based evaluations, structured written analysis, timed assessments and evidence-informed tasks that require learners to

3B. Cognitive skills	
B5. Synthesize information from multiple sources to propose evidence-based improvements or solutions.	interpret data, justify decisions and propose solutions. Reflective commentary and evaluative work support the development of metacognitive awareness and continuous improvement in reasoning and decision-making.
B6. Reflect on analytical processes and recognise areas for improvement in reasoning and decision-making.	
3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
C1. Apply foundational practical techniques, sector-specific procedures, and safe working practices appropriate to Level 4 hair, beauty, and barbering environments.	Practical and professional skills are developed through demonstrations, workshops, and supervised salon-based activities, enabling learners to practise sector-specific techniques, safe working procedures, and professional behaviours in realistic environments. Learners engage in guided practice, client-focused tasks, and use of industry tools and resources to build competence, supported by feedback, reflection, and opportunities to refine technique. Assessment is carried out through direct observation, practical assessments, documented service processes, and applied scenario tasks that require safe, ethical, and accurate execution of treatments or procedures. Learners also produce supporting evidence, such as treatment plans, justifications, reflective logs, or professional documentation, demonstrating judgement, organisation, and industry-standard practice.
C2. Use appropriate tools, resources, and techniques to gather, record, and interpret client, business, or technical information to inform practice.	
C3. Demonstrate safe, compliant, ethical, and sustainable professional practice in line with industry standards and organisational expectations.	
C4. Produce professional documentation, plans, or outputs demonstrating accuracy, organisation, and industry-appropriate standards.	
C5. Apply problem-solving and practical judgement to deliver appropriate, client-focused solutions within service environments.	

3C. Practical and professional skills	
C6. Reflect on practical performance to improve technique, professional behaviours, and future practice.	
3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
D1. Communicate clearly and professionally using appropriate terminology, formats, and channels for academic, creative, and industry settings. D2. Collaborate effectively within teams, contributing constructively to shared tasks, discussions, and decision-making. D3. Demonstrate self-management, time-management, and independent learning skills to meet academic and professional expectations. D4. Use digital tools, data, and technology responsibly to support communication, analysis, and professional practice. D5. Demonstrate ethical, inclusive, and responsible behaviour when engaging with clients, colleagues, and learning activities. D6. Reflect on personal performance, identifying strengths, limitations, and opportunities for development across academic and professional tasks.	Transferable skills are developed through collaborative learning, digital literacy activities, reflective practice, and independent study, enabling learners to build communication, problem-solving, entrepreneurial thinking, and self-management abilities across varied learning contexts. Teaching integrates research tasks, industry-aligned activities, and guided use of digital tools to strengthen adaptability and lifelong learning competences. Assessment emphasises applied, reflective, and communication-focused tasks, including reflective journals, digital artefacts, group work, presentations, and research-informed assignments. These methods require learners to demonstrate professional behaviours, effective teamwork, digital capability, and independent learning, evidencing their readiness for progression and employment.

Exit Award: Level 4 Certificate in Higher Education Innovative Practice Hair, Beauty and Barbering

Programme Structure - LEVEL 5					
Compulsory modules	Credit points	Pathway specific modules	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Semester runs in
Industry Engagement and Applied Research Skills	20			Yes	Yr 2 S2
Advance Techniques in Hair Smoothing and Strengthening		Hair and Barbering Pathway	20	Yes	Yr 2 S2
Professional Skin Chemical Peeling Practices		Beauty Pathway	20	Yes	Yr 2 S3
Professional Skin Needling Practices	20			Yes	Yr 3 S1
Innovative Approaches to Hair and Scalp Health	20			Yes	Yr 3 S1
Entrepreneurial Skills	20			Yes	Yr 3 S1
Work based learning	40			No	Yr 3 S2

Programme Structure – Single Registerable Modules				
Compulsory modules	Credit points	Pre-Requisite as SRM	Is module compensatable?	Semester runs in
N/A			No	

Intended learning outcomes at Level 5 are listed below:

<u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5</u>	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
A1. Evaluate current sector trends and professional challenges, and explain how applied research methods and evidence-informed enquiry contribute to innovation and informed decision-making in hair, beauty and barbering A2. Interpret the anatomical, physiological and structural principles of diverse hair types and analyse how smoothing and strengthening systems function to support scientifically informed treatment planning and product selection. A3. Critically evaluate the anatomical, physiological and wound-healing responses underpinning chemical peeling and microneedling procedures, and synthesise advanced scientific, legal and safety principles to inform safe, ethical and evidence-based planning and justification of non-medical aesthetic treatments. A4. Critically evaluate common and complex hair and scalp conditions and apply advanced anatomical and physiological knowledge to understand how body systems, environmental factors and scientific innovations influence assessment and treatment planning.	Teaching and learning will combine targeted lectures, applied workshops, case-based learning and guided independent study to develop advanced theoretical understanding across scientific, regulatory, entrepreneurial and sector-specific domains. Learners will engage with industry research, emerging technologies, and evidence-informed enquiry to interpret anatomical, physiological, structural and commercial concepts that underpin professional decision-making in hair, beauty and barbering. Learning activities will use scenario analysis, diagnostic interpretation, problem-solving tasks and industry-aligned case studies to support the evaluation of treatment systems, aesthetic procedures, workplace expectations and sector challenges. Applied research tasks and reflective learning will deepen understanding of how scientific, legal and commercial principles guide safe, ethical and innovative practice. Assessment will measure knowledge and understanding through a balanced combination of closed-book assessments, applied written tasks, case-based portfolios, research-informed assignments and industry-aligned projects. These assessments require learners to

<u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5</u>	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
A5. Evaluate entrepreneurial theories, market intelligence and feasibility principles, and explain how research-driven insight informs the development of innovative and commercially viable salon services. A6. Explain professional standards, workplace expectations and legislative frameworks relevant to sector practice, and analyse how workplace experience contributes to advanced technical competence and professional identity.	evaluate, interpret, synthesise and explain concepts across sector trends, scientific principles, regulatory frameworks, entrepreneurial insight and professional workplace practice, ensuring achievement of all programme learning outcomes.

3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
B1. Analyse complex client, service, and industry data, interpreting diagnostic or research information to inform evidence-based professional decisions across hair, beauty and barbering contexts. B2. Apply structured, evidence-informed reasoning to evaluate treatment, service, operational, or entrepreneurial options, and justify decisions when working with complex, unfamiliar or variable scenarios. B3. Critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative evidence, including industry research, case studies, service evaluation data and scientific literature, to assess credibility, identify insights, and inform practice, innovation and continuous improvement. B4. Synthesise theoretical, scientific, commercial and industry-specific knowledge to create coherent, justified solutions, treatment plans, or business proposals that respond to client needs and sector trends. B5. Critically reflect on personal performance, service outcomes and workplace evidence to identify strengths, limitations and development needs, forming reasoned conclusions to support ongoing professional growth.	Teaching will use problem-based learning, case analysis, scenario evaluation, and research-informed discussions to develop learners' ability to analyse complex situations, interpret evidence, and apply critical judgement across technical, aesthetic and commercial contexts. Lectures will introduce core analytical frameworks, with seminars and workshops providing structured opportunities to apply, compare, evaluate, and justify decisions using real and simulated industry examples. Learning activities will include diagnostic interpretation tasks, industry case studies, evidence appraisal exercises, and collaborative problem-solving, enabling learners to synthesise information from scientific, commercial, regulatory and workplace sources. Guided independent study will deepen analytical capability through engagement with academic research, industry reports, and reflective enquiry. Assessment will test cognitive skills through applied written assignments, case-based portfolios, research-driven projects, and scenario-based exams requiring students to analyse data, evaluate options, formulate justified decisions, and synthesise evidence to produce coherent, defensible conclusions. These assessment methods ensure alignment with Level 5 expectations for autonomy, critical evaluation and informed professional reasoning.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
C1. Apply and demonstrate advanced technical skills across hair, beauty and aesthetic contexts, performing treatments or services safely, consistently and to industry standards within both simulated and real working environments. C2. Conduct comprehensive consultations, gathering and interpreting assessment data to justify treatment or service decisions, adapting methods appropriately to meet individual client needs, workplace expectations and professional boundaries. C3. Implement safe working practices aligned with legislation, ethical frameworks, regulatory standards, infection-control procedures, and organisational policies, demonstrating accountability and professional judgement in all service delivery. C4. Design, deliver and adapt evidence-informed treatment or service plans using advanced professional knowledge, responding appropriately to client presentations, treatment reactions, and workplace conditions. C5. Demonstrate effective professional communication, using clear verbal, non-verbal and written approaches to manage client expectations, deliver aftercare advice, and collaborate confidently with colleagues, stakeholders and industry partners. C6. Create and maintain accurate, ethical and legally compliant documentation, including consultation records, treatment data, workplace evidence and reflective logs, using digital tools and professional formats.	Teaching will use demonstrations, supervised practical workshops, industry-standard simulation, and real working environment (RWE) practice to develop advanced technical competence, safe working practices, and professional behaviours across hair, beauty and barbering specialisms. Learners will apply underpinning theory through hands-on skill development, client-focused tasks, and tutor-led coaching, with progressive opportunities to practise, refine and justify treatment or service decisions. Learning will be reinforced through consultation practice, risk assessment activities, treatment-planning exercises, and scenario-based decision-making, enabling learners to adapt techniques, demonstrate professional judgement and work to sector standards. Engagement with workplace expectations, including communication, documentation, compliance, and ethical conduct, will be embedded through industry placements, simulated service delivery, and collaborative professional tasks. Assessment will measure practical competence and professional standards through observed practical assessments, work-based portfolios, treatment case studies, and professional evidence logs, requiring learners to demonstrate safe, effective technique, accurate decision-making and adherence to legal and organisational requirements. Written and reflective components will evaluate learners' ability to justify approaches, interpret outcomes, and critically review their own practice to support continuous development.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
C7. Critically evaluate personal performance in professional environments, using feedback, practice evidence and reflective models to identify strengths, development needs and strategies for continuous improvement.	
3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
D1. Communicate clearly and professionally across written, verbal, digital and client-facing formats, adapting style and tone to suit diverse audiences, professional contexts and industry standards. D2. Use digital tools confidently to source, analyse and evaluate information, manage records and present professional outputs, applying numeracy and data skills to support evidence-based decision-making. D3. Work effectively with peers, colleagues, clients and industry partners, demonstrating teamwork, respect for professional roles, ethical behaviour, confidentiality and adherence to professional standards. D4. Manage workload, responsibilities and deadlines efficiently, responding constructively to challenges, changing conditions and unexpected situations with flexibility and problem-solving capability. D5. Critically evaluate personal performance, integrating feedback and evidence to identify strengths, development needs and actions that support ongoing academic, technical and professional growth.	Teaching will embed transferable skill development through integrated learning activities, including group discussion, collaborative problem-solving, client-facing communication tasks, and digital learning exercises. Professional communication, teamwork and ethical conduct will be modelled and reinforced through seminars, workshops, and industry-engagement activities, while structured use of digital platforms will strengthen digital literacy and information-handling capability. Learning will be supported through peer collaboration, role-play, professional documentation tasks, and scenario-based activities that cultivate adaptability, time-management and organisational skills within realistic service and workplace contexts. Learners will engage in reflective practice, using feedback, logs and self-evaluation to build awareness of strengths, development needs and professional behaviours.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
	Assessment will evaluate transferable skills through professional portfolios, group projects, presentations, digital communication outputs, and reflective evaluations that require learners to demonstrate effective communication, collaboration, digital competence, ethical practice, and self-directed professional development. These methods ensure alignment with Level 5 expectations for autonomy, professionalism and workplace-ready transferable capability.

Exit Award: Foundation Degree Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering

4. Distinctive features of the programme structure

- **Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features such as:**
 - where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression
 - any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules
 - where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route
- **Additional considerations for apprenticeships:**
 - how the delivery of the academic award fits in with the wider apprenticeship
 - the integration of the 'on the job' and 'off the job' training
 - how the academic award fits within the assessment of the apprenticeship

The FD Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering provides a dynamic and professionally focused learning experience designed to equip students with the advanced practical skills, creative capability and industry insight required in contemporary Hair, Beauty and Barbering environments.

Professional practice is embedded throughout both levels of study, enabling students to develop competence and confidence through regular engagement in real working contexts. Industry placements are integrated in a way that complements academic study, allowing students to apply theoretical learning directly to professional scenarios while maintaining consistent progression through the programme.

Alongside local placements, students may also have opportunities to participate in overseas work-based learning or short international study experiences, broadening their cultural awareness and enhancing their understanding of global industry trends.

The programme is informed by the extensive professional experience of the teaching team, who bring specialist backgrounds in hairdressing, beauty therapy, barbering, salon management, product innovation and sector-specific education. Their expertise ensures that teaching remains current, commercially relevant and aligned to employer expectations. Strong industry liaison is a central feature of the programme, with regular contributions from employers, external specialists, product houses and guest demonstrators. These partnerships support curriculum relevance, provide insight into emerging sector developments and facilitate additional opportunities for enrichment, networking and professional growth.

Flexibility is embedded into the programme structure to support the needs and aspirations of a diverse student community. While the curriculum ensures the development of core sector-wide competencies, the structure also provides space for students to pursue areas of individual interest and to begin shaping their professional identity.

Depending on resource availability, staffing and student demand, learners may explore specialist areas within hair, beauty or barbering as they progress. Delivery methods are designed to accommodate a range of learning preferences and experience levels, combining practical workshops, studio-based sessions, theoretical exploration, independent study and industry engagement. This flexible approach allows students to build their skills progressively and confidently, supporting their transition into employment or further study within the wider Hair, Beauty and Barbering industries.

5. Support for students and their learning

(For apprenticeships this should include details of how student learning is supported in the workplace)

With small cohorts of approximately 30 learners, the Hair, Beauty and Barbering team places a strong emphasis on high-quality pastoral care to support students throughout their qualification.

Our student-centred approach has consistently proven effective, as evidenced in External Examiner, Annual Review, and OUVF reports from 2021–2025.

Given the varied entry qualifications and practical experience of learners entering the programme, our teaching and learning strategies are designed to ensure that every student has the opportunity to achieve the programme's learning outcomes. Delivery methods are adapted to provide additional guidance and scaffolded learning for those who require it, while offering increased independence and challenge for more experienced or academically confident students, enabling all learners to fulfil their potential and achieve their personal and career aspirations.

Teaching and learning approaches include practical demonstrations, industry-standard salon activities, tutorials, academic skills workshops, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) integration, lectures, seminars, directed study, peer observation, presentations, professional discussions and plenary activities.

Assessment strategies reflect both the academic and vocational nature of the sector and include essays, reports, case studies, research tasks, presentations, practical competency assessments, vlogs, digital resource design, class debates, formal interviews, academic posters and reflective practice tasks.

Learners are supported in a range of ways:

- **Induction sessions** introduce students to the course, the team, and key college services. Delivered by course staff and Learner Support, they provide essential information on programme structure, assessment expectations, health and safety within professional salon environments, and how to study successfully in further and higher education settings.
- A **course handbook** outlines all essential information, including staff contacts, module overviews, programme structure and regulations, and the course calendar.
- **Module handbooks** provide detailed content for each module, including teaching schedules, assessment timelines and recommended reading.
- **Learning resources** at South West College—including the VLE and Google Classroom—support students in accessing lecture content, supplementary readings, digital resources and independent study materials. Learners use online databases and e-books through the SWC LRC, and Turnitin software is used to develop academic integrity and referencing skills. Online platforms such as Google Classroom facilitate collaboration, peer learning and reflective

engagement. Part-time learners receive additional online support through tools such as Teams.

- Each cohort is assigned a **course tutor/studies advisor**, who acts as the first point of contact for personal, academic and career guidance and supports learners in identifying progression pathways within the Hair, Beauty and Barbering industries.
- A **counselling service** is available for students experiencing personal difficulties. Where issues affect academic progress, the course tutor and wider team work collaboratively to signpost appropriate support. This service is provided by an independent external counsellor and the SWC Student Officer.
- Learners have access to a **full programme of college enrichment activities**, including sports and wellbeing initiatives supported by academic staff.
- Strong collaboration exists with **Student Services**, including health and wellbeing support, financial guidance, counselling, careers advice and support for additional learning needs.
- The **Careers Service** helps learners explore future pathways, including employment in the hair, beauty and barbering sectors, self-employment, or progression to higher-level study. This is further supported through tutorials and one-to-one meetings with the course tutor/studies advisor. The student/staff consultative committee provides a platform for students to voice feedback and contribute to course enhancement.
- Students have full access to **Learning resources**, IT support, email and Internet facilities, as well as online communication and resource platforms.
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Pastoral support within the Hair, Beauty and Barbering programmes is further strengthened by a **personal tutor system**, where each learner is allocated a dedicated tutor from the course team. This tutor monitors learner development, supports wellbeing and acts as the main link between students and the course director. Larger cohorts may have additional tutors to ensure a high level of individual support.

6. Criteria for admission

(For apprenticeships this should include details of how the criteria will be used with employers who will be recruiting apprentices.)

Applicants must have reached the age of 18 years on admission. Successful applicants must have normally reached their 18th birthday by 31 August in the year of entry. All applications will be individually considered.

Successful applicants must have normally studied at Level 3 or above and have completed one of the following: Level 3 Diploma in Beauty Therapy, Level 3 Diploma in

Barbering or Level 3 Diploma in Hairdressing or equivalent recognised qualifications in hairdressing, beauty or barbering.

Applicants must also possess grade C or above in GCSE English and Maths or other equivalent qualifications, such as Essential Skills Level 2 in Literacy and Numeracy.

A work placement in a salon is compulsory.

Where an applicant does not hold the formal academic requirements for entry to the programme but can demonstrate relevant experiential learning, they may apply for admission through the College Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) process. In such cases, contact the Programme Director for the programme who will advise further.

Entry Requirements for International Students:

English Language Requirements:

Any applicant whose first language is not English should demonstrate their competence in written and spoken English. Usually, the minimum English language entry requirement is IELTS (academic) of 6.0 (with no band score of less than 5.5 in all four elements of the test).

We accept a wide range of alternative English language examinations and tests so please contact us for an updated list of other accepted tests.

7. Language of study

English

8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including Professional Statutory Recognised Body requirements)

Not applicable

9. For apprenticeships in England, summary of how the End Point Assessment (EPA) links to the academic award

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Not applicable

10. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning including the student experience

Evaluation of the Foundation Degree Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering is carried out through both informal and formal mechanisms. Informal feedback is gathered routinely through classroom discussion, reflective dialogue and ongoing learner engagement. Formal feedback is collated through structured quality assurance processes, including course committees and institutional reporting frameworks.

All Higher Education programmes at South West College (SWC) operate under the Quality Management and Enhancement procedures, and in line with FHEQ Benchmark Statements (2014). The following processes ensure continuous monitoring, enhancement and academic integrity:

- Cross-marking, internal verification and external examining ensure the reliability, validity and consistency of assessments across the programme.
- The Course Committee systematically reviews learner feedback for each module, ensuring the student voice informs programme development.
- Student/staff consultative meetings allow students to highlight any issues relating to programme delivery, resources or support.
- Annual Course Review (ACR) processes incorporate both quantitative data and qualitative feedback across all modules within the subject area.
- Teaching performance is monitored annually to ensure high-quality and up-to-date delivery.
- Learner evaluations are completed at the end of each module, annually, and at programme completion, providing rich feedback on the overall learner experience.
- Staff appraisals, undertaken on a two-year cycle, identify and support the development needs of individual team members.
- The College completes Open University annual course review and evaluation documentation, where applicable.
- A structured Staff Development Programme provides targeted training opportunities relevant to the evolving needs of the Hair, Beauty and Barbering sector.
- All staff are encouraged to undertake Information & Learning Technology (ILT) qualifications to enhance digital pedagogy and support innovative practice.
- External examiner reports are reviewed and acted upon in accordance with SWC and OU quality reporting requirements.
- Employer input, both informal and formal, contributes to programme enhancement and ensures alignment with industry standards and expectations.
- Student performance data and progression outcomes are monitored annually to evaluate learner achievement and career pathways.
- The Course Director participates in annual Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee meetings and workshop days with the Open University, ensuring programme alignment with codes of practice and sector-wide developments.

- Peer observation and assessment are embedded within the assessment matrix to promote reflective teaching practice and collaborative improvement.

All members of the teaching team participate in programme-specific team meetings throughout the year, each structured around a pre-determined agenda. Course Directors also attend Higher Education Committee meetings, which focus on quality management, policy updates and cross-college HE development.

New staff joining the programme receive a comprehensive induction, including allocation of a dedicated mentor and enhanced supervision throughout their first year. This includes structured peer observations and ongoing professional support to ensure confidence and consistency in delivering the FD Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering.

11. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation

The Foundation Degree in Hair & Beauty Management has undergone significant redevelopment since its original validation, resulting in a modern, restructured programme now titled the FD Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering. This new programme introduces a fully revised and expanded module suite at both Level 4 and Level 5, replacing earlier management-focused content with modules that emphasise innovation, technical advancement and contemporary industry practice.

The new structure includes modules such as Marketing and Academic Skills, Leadership and Team Dynamics, Physiology of Ageing, Advanced Principles of Colour Correction, Social Media and Innovation, Principles of Sustainable Quality Management and Financial Literacy at Level 4, offering students a broader and more relevant knowledge base. At Level 5, substantial updates include Industry Engagement and Applied Research Skills, Advanced Hair Smoothing and Strengthening, Chemical Peeling and Skin Needling Practices, Innovative Approaches to Hair and Scalp Health, Entrepreneurial Skills and a revised 40-credit Work-Based Learning module.

Another major enhancement since validation is the strengthening of pathway-specific options, allowing learners to follow distinct Hair, Beauty or Barbering routes. This ensures that students gain specialised technical expertise in areas such as advanced skin rejuvenation practices, colour correction, trichology-linked hair and scalp health, and industry-relevant technologies. These pathway choices represent a move away from the broad, management-heavy orientation of the original programme toward a more practical, skills-focused curriculum aligned with evolving sector needs.

In addition to structural changes, the programme now incorporates sustainability and artificial intelligence (AI) into module content and assessment design. Meeting records show a clear requirement for teams to embed sustainability practices relevant to salon operations and industry trends, while also addressing the growing influence of AI and digital technologies in professional settings. These additions reflect both employer expectations and current sector direction, and they were not part of the original validated programme.

Assessment strategies have also evolved. The team has moved to reduce over-assessment, remove repetitive methods such as unnecessary multiple-choice

questioning, and introduce more authentic, creative assessment approaches linked directly to intended learning outcomes. This includes potential shared assessments across modules, designed to better reflect real-world practice and industry expectations.

Supporting materials have been updated, with revised reading lists, clearer distinctions between required and recommended sources and the inclusion of newer editions, journals and industry texts. These updates ensure learners engage with current academic and professional literature.

There have also been significant enhancements to programme documentation and quality processes, including adoption of updated Open University (OUVP) templates, standardised module specifications and aligned formatting requirements. Emails confirm that staff are now required to complete new module review templates, supply revised CVs reflecting specialist practice, and submit updated sample assessments to ensure consistency across the programme team in preparation for revalidation.

Employer engagement has been strengthened through the introduction of tools such as the Habia QR Code, enabling the programme to capture current industry trends and reflect them in programme development. This ensures the curriculum continues to meet employer expectations and broader sector developments.

Finally, quality assurance processes have been deepened. The team has undertaken detailed reviews of rationales, aims, intended learning outcomes and assessment alignment, with Siobhán and Tanya leading technical and non-technical scrutiny to ensure readiness for revalidation. Updated internal review timelines, increased collaboration among module leads and ongoing support mechanisms all indicate a more rigorous quality cycle now in place compared to the original validated programme.

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Curriculum mapping against the apprenticeship standard or framework (delete if not required.)

Annexe 3: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes. Please amend this mapping to suit frameworks used within the different nations if appropriate.

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes																												Available as single registerable module?				
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	D1	D2	D3	D4		D5	D6	D7	
4	Financial Literacy	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	✓					✓		✓	✓				
	Leadership and Team Dynamics	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
	Marketing & Academic Skills	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓			✓		
	Social Media and Innovation	✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓			
	Sustainable Quality Management	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓				✓		
	Physiology of Ageing	✓			✓					✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓				
	Advanced Principles of Colour Correction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓		

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes																												Available as single registerable module?				
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	D1	D2	D3	D4		D5	D6	D7	
5	Industry Engagement and Applied Research Skills	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Advance Techniques in Hair Smoothing and Strengthening		✓		✓				✓	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
	Professional Skin Chemical Peeling Practices			✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓				
	Professional Skin Needling Practices			✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓				
	Innovative Approaches to Hair and Scalp Health				✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
	Entrepreneurial Skills	✓				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓									✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Work based learning	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				

Annexe 2 - Curriculum mapping against the apprenticeship standard

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Please amend this mapping to suit Frameworks used within the different Nations if appropriate.

Level	Study module/unit	Apprenticeship standard																							
		K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6	K7	K8	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8
4																									

Level	Study module/unit	Apprenticeship standard																							
		K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6	K7	K8	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8
5																									

Level	Study module/unit	Apprenticeship standard																							
		K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6	K7	K8	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8
6																									

Annexe 3: Notes on completing programme specification templates

- 1 - This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.
- 2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx>
- 3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>
- 4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.
- 5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.
- 6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.
- 7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.