

Programme specification

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

1. Overview / factual information

Programme/award title(s)	BA (Hons) 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	120
UCAS Code (if applicable)	
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 8th March 2023 Law 8th March 2023 Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies 30th March 2022 Finance 7th April 2025 Accounting 7th April 2025
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.
Professional/statutory/ accreditation recognition	N/A

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.

For apprenticeships fully or non-integrated Assessment. If fully integrated, EPAO being used.	
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship	FT, PT Mix of DL and Face to Face
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	1 Year Full Time 1.5 Years Part Time
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	N/A
Date of production/revision of this specification	February 2026

2. Programme overview

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

The programme aims to provide advanced theoretical, analytical and practical knowledge, enabling students to develop a critical understanding of innovative practices, sustainability, technological developments, leadership approaches and strategic planning relevant to the contemporary hair, beauty and barbering industry.

Through learning, it is hoped to develop industry-ready leaders capable of driving change, equipping graduates to lead teams, manage learning and professional development, and apply ethical and sustainable leadership approaches across diverse professional contexts.

A key objective is to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and commercial insight, developing the ability to critically evaluate new technologies, emerging trends, and evolving business models, and to translate innovation into commercially viable salon, beauty, aesthetic or wellness enterprises.

Promoting environmentally responsible and ethical practice is crucial to future business models, and the programme aims to provide learners with the skills to evaluate and

apply sustainable approaches within hair and beauty practice, supply chains, and business operations, encouraging responsible and future-focused industry leadership.

Students will strengthen research competence and academic professionalism, developing the critical thinking, research, and academic writing skills needed to undertake independent, industry-relevant research at honours degree level.

Enhancing employability and long-term career progression is a vital component, preparing graduates for roles in leadership, education, innovation, entrepreneurial enterprise, sustainability consultancy, and advanced aesthetic or hair practices.

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)

The Foundation Degree Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering forms the first two stages of a coherent higher-education pathway. It provides a robust academic and vocational platform that articulates directly into the BA (Hons) Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering, ensuring smooth progression for learners and continuity of curriculum design across Levels 4, 5 and 6.

The programme structure is intentionally sequenced so that Level 4 modules establish core academic, professional and digital capabilities, including communication, reflective practice, marketing awareness, leadership fundamentals, and foundational scientific knowledge. Modules such as *Professional and Academic Skills for Marketing*, *Leadership and Team Dynamics*, and *Social Media and Innovation* introduce students to the analytical, evaluative and research-aware practices that underpin honours-level study. Pathway-specific modules including *Physiology of Ageing* for Beauty and *Advanced Principles of Colour Correction* for Hair provide the technical and scientific grounding that is later expanded upon in Level 6 modules focused on innovation, sustainability and advanced sector development.

At Level 5, students deepen their specialist and professional competencies through applied practice, industry engagement and research preparation. Modules such as *Industry Engagement and Applied Research Skills* introduce learners to research methodologies, enquiry-based learning and evidence-led practice, directly preparing them for the independent *Research Project* at Level 6. Higher-level technical modules such as *Professional Skin Needling*, *Advanced Hair Smoothing and Strengthening*, and *Innovative Approaches to Hair and Scalp Health* extend students' understanding of contemporary treatments and sector developments, laying the foundation for the Level 6 module *Innovation and Developments in Hair, Beauty and Barbering*. Similarly, *Financial Literacy* and *Entrepreneurial Skills* provide the essential theoretical and

operational knowledge that feeds directly into the Level 6 *Advanced Small Business Enterprise Planning* module.

The *40-credit Work-Based Learning: Mastering Salon Techniques* module consolidates practical competence, reflective professionalism and industry readiness, ensuring that graduates entering Level 6 possess the autonomy, judgement and applied experience required for honours-level analytical and strategic work.

As a result, no bridging modules are typically required for progression to the BA (Hons), as the Foundation Degree has been designed to map seamlessly onto the learning outcomes and academic expectations of the Level 6 programme.

Students completing the Foundation Degree may therefore progress directly into the final year of the BA (Hons) Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering, or alternatively move into related Level 6 programmes within the wider HE sector (e.g., business, leadership, education, aesthetics, wellness).

The programme also supports articulation for students undertaking a Higher Level Apprenticeship pathway, ensuring that workplace learning and academic study remain fully integrated across all levels.

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

BA (Hons) Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering

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

Programme Structure - LEVEL 6					
Compulsory modules	Credit points	Optional Modules	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Semester runs in
Sustainable Practice	20	-		No	Y1 S1
Leading, Learning and Professional Development	20	-		No	Y1 S1
Innovation and Developments	20	-		No	Y1 S2
Advanced Small Business Enterprise Planning	20	-		No	Y1 S2
Research Project	40	-		No	Y2 S1

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 6 are listed below:

<u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6</u>	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
Students will be able to: A1. Critically evaluate contemporary developments, innovations and emerging technologies shaping the global hair and beauty industry. A2. Demonstrate advanced understanding of sustainability principles, regulatory frameworks, ethical supply chains, and their implications for industry practice. A3. Analyse theories of leadership, professional development, and curriculum design relevant to commercial, educational, and creative sectors. A4. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of strategic planning, market analysis, financial forecasting and business operations required for successful enterprise creation.	Knowledge and understanding will be assessed through a range of authentic, research-informed and industry-aligned assessments that require students to engage with contemporary industry developments, apply theoretical frameworks, critically interpret evidence and demonstrate conceptual mastery consistent with Level 6 study. Assessment methods are closely aligned with the programme's teaching and learning approach, which emphasises active enquiry, real-world analysis, independent research, sustainability-focused evaluation and professional communication. Teaching and learning on the programme are delivered through a blend of interactive lectures, seminars and guided discussions that introduce advanced theoretical concepts, alongside applied and experiential activities such as workshops, case-study analysis, innovation audits and business planning tasks that enable students to connect theory with real-world industry practice. Digital learning, research-informed enquiry and engagement with contemporary industry resources support the development of independent critical thinking, while online materials and virtual tools enhance students' digital competency and understanding of emerging technologies.

<u>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6</u>	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
	Collaborative learning through group work, peer feedback and professional dialogue fosters communication, leadership and teamwork skills, while structured reflective activities and professional development tasks encourage students to evaluate their practice and cultivate a mindset of continuous learning. Throughout the programme, students are supported to develop autonomy and academic independence, culminating in a substantial research project that strengthens their analytical, methodological and professional capabilities at Level 6.
3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
Students will be able to: B1. Critically analyse complex industry problems and apply evidence-based approaches to develop innovative solutions. B2. Synthesise information from academic, professional and technical sources to inform decision-making. B3. Apply critical judgement in evaluating the environmental, ethical, and commercial implications of industry practices. B4. Independently conceptualise and carry out a research project using appropriate methodologies, ethical considerations and data analysis.	Cognitive skills will be assessed through a range of authentic, rigorous and industry-aligned assessments that require students to demonstrate critical thinking, independent judgement, synthesis of evidence and advanced problem-solving appropriate to Level 6 study. Assessment methods include: • Critical Analytical Reports where students critically evaluate sustainability frameworks, leadership models or emerging

3B. Cognitive skills	
	technologies, demonstrating higher-order skills of comparison, critique and synthesis. • Case-Study Evaluations requiring students to analyse complex, real-world industry scenarios, apply theoretical models and propose evidence-based solutions. • Innovation Audits and Strategic Reviews in which students examine new technologies or innovative practices and evaluate their commercial, ethical and sustainability implications, exercising strategic reasoning and evaluative judgement. • Business Plan Analysis and Financial Evaluation, where students develop strategic business plans supported by market research, financial forecasting and operational analysis, evidencing analytical reasoning and decision-making capability. • Presentations and Professional Pitches that require students to construct, articulate and defend arguments, justifying strategic decisions using evidence-based rationale. • Research Project, where students design and conduct an independent study with methodological justification and analytical evaluation, demonstrating competence in research design, critical engagement with literature, data interpretation, evaluation of findings and formulation of reasoned conclusions. These methods collectively assess students' ability to interpret complex information, critically evaluate evidence, make informed and justified

3B. Cognitive skills	
	decisions, synthesise theoretical and practical insights and demonstrate independent cognitive autonomy, fully addressing the cognitive learning outcomes at Level 6.
3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
Students will be able to: C1. Plan, lead and evaluate professional development and learning within a salon, education, or commercial environment. C2. Produce strategic business plans and proposals aligned with industry standards, market needs and sustainability expectations. C3. Apply innovative and emerging technologies to enhance client services, operational efficiency, and business growth. C4. Demonstrate professional conduct, ethical awareness and leadership competence aligned with industry expectations.	Practical and professional skills are developed through a combination of applied workshops, industry-focused tasks, experiential learning activities and supervised practice that enable students to translate theoretical knowledge into professional performance within the hair, beauty and barbering sector. Learning is supported through hands-on exploration of real-world scenarios, innovation audits, sustainability planning exercises, curriculum design tasks, business planning workshops and professional development activities, ensuring students gain confidence in applying advanced techniques, leadership approaches, and operational skills relevant to industry contexts. These skills are assessed through authentic, practice-based methods such as professional portfolios, business plans, sustainability strategies, curriculum design projects, innovation evaluations, reflective practice analyses, presentations and the final research project.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
	Collectively, these assessment approaches measure students' ability to apply theory to practice, demonstrate professional competence, justify decisions, evaluate industry challenges, manage projects effectively, and operate with autonomy and accountability at Level 6.
3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
Students will be able to: D1. Communicate effectively through academic, digital and professional formats to diverse audiences, including clients, teams and stakeholders. D2. Manage projects, tasks and independent learning with autonomy, initiative and professional responsibility. D3. Use digital tools and data to support analysis, communication and decision-making. D4. Work collaboratively, demonstrating leadership, negotiation, and problem-solving skills suitable for dynamic industry environments.	Transferable skills are developed through a combination of collaborative learning, digital engagement, independent study and reflective professional practice embedded across the programme. Teaching activities such as group discussions, team-based tasks, presentations, peer feedback sessions and blended learning support the development of communication, teamwork, digital capability and critical thinking. Students further enhance autonomy, organisation and research skills through directed reading, independent enquiry, problem-solving workshops and the planning and management of their own learning, particularly within the Research Project. These skills are assessed through a range of authentic methods including group presentations, digital portfolios, professional pitches, reflective analyses, research reports, written assignments and project-based assessments, all of which require students to communicate effectively, work

3D. Key/transferable skills	
	collaboratively, utilise digital tools confidently, manage tasks independently and demonstrate professional behaviours aligned to Level 6 expectations.

On successful completion of the programme, students will exit with a BA (Hons) 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 BA (Hons) Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering has a number of distinctive structural features that reflect the needs of the sector, the progression route from the Level 5 Foundation Degree, and the requirements of learners undertaking the programme either through the traditional academic route or as part of a Higher-Level Apprenticeship.

The programme is delivered over one year full-time or one year plus one semester part-time, with a clear and coherent progression route from the Foundation Degree Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering. All modules at Level 6 are compulsory, and therefore there are no elective modules and no pathway choices within the structure. This ensures that all students achieve the full breadth of advanced theoretical, professional and strategic knowledge required to operate as leaders and innovators within the sector.

Although the programme does not include a professional or placement year, the structure integrates industry-focused learning through applied projects, innovation audits, sustainability planning, leadership practice and the major research project, all of which require students to engage with contemporary industry issues and, where appropriate, real workplace environments. This ensures students develop practical and professional competencies without the need for an additional placement year, and it avoids disruption to progression between Level 5 and Level 6.

Where students are undertaking the programme as part of a Higher-Level Apprenticeship, the structure aligns closely with apprenticeship requirements. The academic award is delivered alongside the apprentice's main employment role, with modules designed to complement workplace learning. Learning from the employer setting feeds directly into assessments such as business planning, leadership practice, professional development portfolios, sustainability audits and the Level 6 research project, ensuring meaningful integration of on-the-job and off-the-job training.

The academic modules provide theoretical and analytical depth, while the workplace provides the practical context in which apprentices apply, test and refine these concepts.

Assessment for apprentices therefore naturally incorporates workplace activity, enabling the academic award to underpin and contribute to the skills, knowledge and behaviours required by the apprenticeship standard. This integrated approach supports holistic development, ensuring the programme functions effectively both as a standalone Level 6 qualification and as part of a dual academic–apprenticeship pathway.

5. Support for students and their learning

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

Students benefit from a comprehensive and structured package of academic, digital, and pastoral support across all South West College campuses. Learning is supported from induction onwards by a designated Course Tutor/Studies Advisor, who acts as the primary point of contact for academic guidance, personal development planning, and progression support, as evidenced in existing SWC programme specifications. Students also have access to the Higher Education Academic Support service, which provides workshops and one-to-one assistance in academic writing, referencing, critical evaluation, and study skills, reinforcing the development of independent learning expected at Levels 4–6.

Learners have full access to the College's Learning Resource Centres (LRCs), which offer extensive print and digital resources, including e-books, journals, industry publications and online databases. Students are directed to use these resources alongside the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Google Classroom and Canvas to access learning materials, engage in discussion forums, and complete independent study tasks. These platforms also support collaborative learning, blogging, peer engagement and formative feedback opportunities, ensuring an inclusive and consistent learning experience across all campuses.

Pastoral, wellbeing and careers support are provided through SWC's dedicated Learner Services. This includes confidential counselling delivered by external professional counsellors, financial advice, safeguarding and welfare support, and access to a Careers Development Centre with specialist Careers Officers based on each campus.

These services support learners' personal and professional development and enable informed decision-making regarding progression and employment. Students with additional learning needs receive tailored support and reasonable adjustments to

ensure full access to learning and assessment in line with SWC's inclusive practice commitments.

Part-time learners and those balancing professional or personal commitments benefit from flexible digital support, including remote academic assistance via platforms such as MS Teams, Google Hangouts and Skype, enabling regular engagement with staff and peers regardless of mode of attendance.

Support for Apprentices in the Workplace

For students enrolled as part of a Higher-Level Apprenticeship, learning is further supported through a coordinated framework involving the employer, workplace mentor and College tutor. Academic modules are deliberately designed to complement workplace activity, ensuring that theoretical content is applied in live professional contexts, such as sustainability planning, leadership practice, technical skill development and innovation projects. This integrated approach aligns on-the-job and off-the-job training with the apprenticeship standard, enabling apprentices to meet both academic and workplace competency requirements.

Workplace learning is monitored through structured progress reviews, employer feedback, and joint evaluation meetings, ensuring that apprentices receive comprehensive guidance, consistent supervision and opportunities to relate academic study directly to industry practice. This dual support model ensures that apprentices achieve the full range of knowledge, skills and behaviours required for successful completion of both the academic award and the apprenticeship.

6. Criteria for admission

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

Academic Requirements

Applicants must normally hold **one of the following Level 5 qualifications** (or equivalent):

- **Foundation Degree in Hair and Beauty Innovation / Innovative Practice in Hair, Beauty and Barbering**
- **Foundation Degree in Hair and Beauty Management (with Specialisms)**
- An equivalent **Level 5 vocationally relevant qualification** in hair, beauty, barbering, aesthetics, salon management, or a closely related discipline.

Essential Skills in English and Mathematics

All applicants must possess:

- **GCSE English at Grade C/4 or above** (or Essential Skills Level 2 Literacy)
- **GCSE Mathematics at Grade C/4 or above** (or Essential Skills Level 2 Numeracy)

Vocational Background

Applicants must demonstrate evidence of prior **technical and professional experience** appropriate to study at Level 6. This is normally satisfied through the vocational content of the Level 5 Foundation Degree, which includes:

- Advanced technical modules
- Industry-specific pathway modules
- Work-based learning components

This ensures adequate preparation for the innovation, sustainability, leadership and enterprise focus of the Level 6 programme.

Work Placement (for Apprentices Only)

Applicants entering through a **Higher-Level Apprenticeship** must:

- Be employed in a relevant hair, beauty, barbering or aesthetics setting
- Have employer support for the integration of on-the-job and off-the-job training

Non-Standard Entry / APEL

Applicants who do not meet the formal academic criteria but can demonstrate **substantial relevant professional experience** may be considered for entry via **Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)**.

Age Requirement

Applicants must normally be **18 years old** at the time of admission.

International Applicants

International applicants must satisfy:

- UK ENIC equivalency of Level 5 study
- English language proficiency at CEFR **B2** or above (or equivalent qualification recognised by the OU).

7. Language of study

The language of study for this programme is English. All teaching, learning materials, assessments, and student support services are delivered in English, in accordance with Open University Validation Partnerships (OUVP) requirements. Students must therefore demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency to engage fully with academic content and meet the learning outcomes of the award.

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

This programme adheres to the standard assessment regulations of The Open University for validated awards, and no additional Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply to this qualification.

There are no derogations, variations, or programme-specific exceptions to OU assessment regulations. All modules are compulsory and must be successfully completed to achieve the award, and there are no optional or compensatable modules at Level 6 in line with the programme's professional and applied nature.

Assessment regulations follow the principles outlined in the OU Handbook for Validated Awards, including requirements relating to progression, reassessment, academic integrity, marking, moderation and the operation of Examination and Award Boards. External Examiners appointed by the OU oversee standards to ensure alignment with sector expectations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

Although the programme is vocationally orientated and informed by industry practice and professional expectations, the hair, beauty and barbering sector does not operate under any statutory PSRB accreditation framework. As such, there are no mandatory licensing, professional examination or competency-based regulatory requirements that impact assessment design or student progression on this award.

Where learners undertake the programme as part of a Higher-Level Apprenticeship, assessment regulations for the academic award remain governed solely by the OU validated programme regulations. Apprenticeship requirements, such as evidence of workplace competency or employer verification, complement but do not alter the academic assessment regulations.

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

N/A

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

The quality and standards of teaching, learning and the overall student experience are maintained and enhanced through a comprehensive set of internal and external quality-assurance processes, implemented in accordance with both South West College quality policies and the requirements of The Open University Validation Partnerships (OUVP).

Teaching quality is monitored through regular internal moderation, peer observation of teaching, and annual staff appraisal, ensuring that teaching practices remain current, inclusive and aligned with sector expectations. Module delivery is reviewed annually through structured module evaluations, incorporating student feedback, assessment analysis, and recommendations for enhancement, as evidenced across SWC programme specifications.

The programme undergoes an Annual Programme Review (APR) process, which includes analysis of student performance data, progression and achievement rates, external examiner comments, student evaluations, and employer/industry feedback. Outcomes of the APR feed into the College's wider Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan and inform strategic enhancements to curriculum, assessment design and learning resources.

Quality and standards are externally assured through the involvement of Open University External Examiners, who review assessment briefs, marking standards, moderation processes and student work to confirm alignment with national expectations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). External Examiners' reports are formally considered at Programme Committee meetings and actioned as part of continuous improvement.

Student feedback plays a central role in quality enhancement. Learners contribute views through formal Student-Staff Consultative Committees, mid-module evaluations, end-of-module surveys, online forums and informal feedback channels. Pastoral and academic support services including counselling, careers advice and academic skills development also collect and act upon student experience data to inform improvements in learner support provision.

Digital learning quality is monitored through review of VLE usage, accessibility of online materials, and consistency of blended-learning approaches across campuses, supported by Learning Resource Centre (LRC) teams and digital learning staff. The College ensures equitable access to high-quality resources, as highlighted in programme specifications referencing VLE engagement, LRC support and digital communication platforms.

For apprenticeship pathways, the quality of workplace learning is evaluated through collaborative mechanisms involving the employer, the apprentice, and the College. This

includes tripartite reviews, monitoring of on-the-job competence development, employer feedback, and alignment with the apprenticeship standard, consistent with the approach described for workplace-integrated provision in OUVF-validated programmes.

Continuous improvement is further supported through formal Programme Team Meetings, College-wide Higher Education Review Boards, feedback from industry partners, and engagement with external reference points such as QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, the OU Handbook for Validated Awards, and SWC's Higher Education Strategy.

Together, these evaluative processes ensure systematic monitoring, enhancement and assurance of academic standards, teaching quality, and the overall student learning experience across all delivery modes and campuses.

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

Since the previous validation, the Level 6 BA (Hons) programme has undergone a significant and purposeful redesign to ensure stronger alignment with contemporary industry practice, employer expectations, and the progression needs of graduates from the revised Foundation Degree.

The new programme structure reflects enhanced emphasis on innovation, sustainability, leadership, enterprise, and advanced research skills—areas highlighted as central to the evolving hair, beauty and barbering sectors. These changes also strengthen coherence across the full Level 4–6 pathway, ensuring clear academic progression and alignment with sector developments identified in the revalidation documentation.

A comparison of the previous Level 6 modules and the newly revalidated modules illustrates the shift from broadly business-orientated content toward more sector-specific, future-focused and professionally applied learning.

The new modules are designed to better equip graduates for leadership, entrepreneurship, and innovation-driven roles within salons, aesthetics, education, wellness, and the wider personal care industry.

Comparison of Previous and New Level 6 Modules

Previous Level 6 Module	New Level 6 Module	Nature of Change / Rationale
Personal and Professional Development (20 credits)	Leading, Learning and Professional Development	Expanded to incorporate leadership theory, reflective practice, learning design, digital pedagogy, and professional development. Strengthens preparation for managerial, teaching, and training roles.

Entrepreneurship: Principles and Practice (20 credits)	Advanced Small Business Enterprise Planning	Modernised to include strategic planning, market analysis, pitching, financial forecasting, and business model innovation tailored to sector-specific enterprise needs.
Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Ethics (20 credits)	Sustainable Practice	Repositioned from generic CSR to sustainability embedded in sector practice (ethical supply chains, product lifecycle, environmental responsibility, waste reduction). Reflects strong sector demand for sustainability literacy.
Strategic Marketing (20 credits)	Innovation and Developments	Major shift from general marketing to innovation-led content: digitalisation, emerging technologies (AI/AR), aesthetics trends, service innovation, and new professional practices.
Research & Dissertation (40 credits)	Research Project (40 credits)	Updated to emphasise applied research, ethical enquiry, methodological rigour, and dissemination of findings relevant to contemporary industry challenges.

The redesign represents a transformation from a traditionally business-centred framework to a curriculum fully entrenched in sector-specific innovation, leadership and sustainability, with the following enhancements:

1. Greater Industry Relevance and Future-Focused Content

The revised curriculum embeds technological, creative, and scientific innovations central to today's hair, beauty and barbering industries. The new *Innovation and Developments* module, for example, reflects the growing influence of AI, AR, machine-assisted diagnostics, personalised formulations, and advanced skin and hair technologies—areas absent in the previous validation.

2. Stronger Emphasis on Sustainability and Ethical Practice

The previous CSR module has been replaced by *Sustainable Practice* providing students with advanced understanding of environmental responsibilities, ethical product sourcing, sustainable salon operations and regulatory frameworks. This aligns the curriculum with sustainability priorities emphasised in revalidation documentation and industry feedback.

3. Enhanced Leadership and Pedagogical Preparation

The revised *Leading, Learning and Professional Development* module now prepares graduates for leadership, supervision, training roles and educational pathways by incorporating reflective practice, learning design, team development, and coaching principles areas that respond to employer need and emerging career pathways.

4. More Applied, Strategic Enterprise Education

The previous entrepreneurship module is replaced by *Advanced Small Business Enterprise Planning*, which focuses on actionable business planning, financial forecasting, market evaluation and investment readiness. This reflects the strong entrepreneurial orientation of the sector and better prepares graduates for self-employment and salon ownership.

5. Strengthened Research Capability

The updated *Research Project* emphasises applied industry research, ethical considerations, advanced methodology and professional dissemination. This strengthens academic progression from Level 5 and supports evidence-led practice in rapid-change sectors such as aesthetics and hair science.

6. Improved Alignment With Revised Level 5 Curriculum

The new Level 6 modules correspond directly to the revised FD content (e.g., Industry Engagement & Applied Research Skills, Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurial Skills), providing a coherent progression pathway and clear academic scaffolding from Level 4 through Level 6.

The new Level 6 programme represents a substantial and strategic enhancement of the previous curriculum. It is:

- **More contemporary** – reflecting the digitalisation, sustainability and innovation shaping the industry.
- **More academically robust** – with strengthened research and analytical expectations.
- **More vocationally aligned** – preparing learners for leadership, enterprise, education, and advanced technical roles.
- **Better integrated** – forming a seamless progression from Levels 4 and 5.

These changes ensure the programme remains current, competitive, and fully aligned with employer, industry and regulatory expectations identified during revalidation.

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		
6	Sustainable Practice	✓ ■	✓ ■							✓ ■		✓ ■	✓ ■					✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■					✓ ■	✓ ■								No
	Leading, Learning and Professional Development	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■						✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■					✓ ■		✓ ■	✓ ■					✓ ■	✓ ■		✓ ■					No	
	Innovation and Developments	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■						✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■							✓ ■	✓ ■						✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■					No	
	Advanced Small Business Enterprise Planning	✓ ■	✓ ■		✓ ■					✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■					✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■					✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■						No	
	Research Project	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■					✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■						✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■					✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■					No	

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
6																									
	N/A																								

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.