

Code of Practice on the addition, modification and withdrawal of taught programmes

Document control grid

Quality Assurance Document Control		
Document owner: Head of Academic Quality	Responsible office: EQED	Approved by: Senate
Version: 1	Last review date: Spring 2026	Approved date: tbc
	Effective from date: August 2026	Superseded version: COP PDAM
Location of master document: https://le.ac.uk/policies/codes-practice		

Quality Assurance Version Control Log			
Version	Author/reviewer	Date	Highlighted updates/changes
1	EQED	June 2026	Creation of a new Code to replace the previous Code of Practice on PDAM, and to ensure alignment with new processes agreed through the Portfolio and Curriculum Management Project

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Introduction

Purpose and Scope

1. This Code of Practice sets out the strategic and operational principles underpinning the process of making amendments to the University's portfolio of taught programmes. It articulates the processes that the University operates to develop and approve new programmes, considering their commercial viability and ensuring their overall academic quality. It covers the process and considerations when modifying, suspending or withdrawing taught programmes.
2. The principles and processes in this Code are informed by the University's obligations under the conditions of registration with the Office for Students and other relevant legislation such as consumer rights and freedom of speech, relevant sector guidance and good practice and, above all, the mechanisms needed to ensure an excellent academic experience for our students.
3. The processes set out in this Code apply to all taught programmes that lead to an award of the University, at all levels of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and including Foundation Certificates. The Code also applies to the taught elements of Professional Doctorates. Where taught programmes are delivered in partnership with other organisations additional requirements apply under the Code of Practice for Managing Higher Education with Others. Similarly, where a taught programme is delivered as part of a degree apprenticeship additional requirements apply under the Code of Practice for Apprenticeships.
4. This code does not apply to individual PhD studies, studies which lead to the intended award of credit only or non-credit bearing short courses.

Principles of the programme development, suspension and withdrawal process

5. The following principles underpin the decision-making processes with regard to the development, modification or withdrawal of taught programmes of study.
 - All new developments, major modifications to programmes and programme suspension and withdrawal will be considered in line with strategic portfolio priorities
 - All new developments or major modifications to programmes will be subject to robust scrutiny regarding financial and market viability
 - The detailed resource implications of taught provision will be identified within the process
 - All programme development will be tested against relevant academic quality benchmarks such as Sector Agreed Standards, Subject Benchmark Statements and, where relevant, the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
 - All new developments or major modifications to programmes will be subject to appropriate quality assurance processes at College and University level, determined by the academic risk associated with the proposal
 - Approval processes will ensure that inclusive teaching and assessment is at the heart of the University's portfolio, based upon Universal Design for Learning principles

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- Programme development, modification and withdrawal will be informed by the needs of external stakeholders such as employers
 - Appropriate external academic scrutiny will be applied to programme development
 - All programme development and approval will be managed through the University's Portfolio and Curriculum Management System
 - Student voice will be reflected within approval mechanisms
 - Training will be available to colleagues developing programmes on the process itself, with training on the pedagogic considerations for programme design, delivery and assessment available through the University's [Academic Professional Development Bookcase](#).
6. The Code is informed by the QAA Guiding Principles set out in the QAA Quality Code, replicated at the end of this code.

Regulatory Compliance

7. The processes set out in this Code will have due regard to:
- The regulatory conditions set by the Office for Students for quality and standards, including the B Conditions and associated requirements;
 - The requirements of the Equality Act, 2010;
 - The University's obligations with regard to student protection and consumer rights, as articulated in the CMA Guidance to Universities, May 2023;
 - The commitments of the University set out in its Student Protection Plan, as required under Condition C3 of the Office for Students Regulatory Framework.¹
8. In all programme development, approval, modification and withdrawal processes the University will take reasonably practical steps to secure freedom of speech within the law, in line with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act, 2023.
9. This Code should be read in conjunction with the Policy on Consumer Rights with respect to taught programmes. The process that the University will follow for informing and, where necessary, consulting with students regarding programme changes is set out in the section of this code on Curriculum Modification
10. The circumstances under which the University may alter, withdraw or suspend programmes are set out in the Terms and Conditions of Offer.

¹ Note – subject to change dependent on OfS consultation

Section 1: Framework for Programme Development, Approval, Modification and Withdrawal

Roles and responsibilities

Governance groups

11. Portfolio and Recruitment Management Board (PRMB) is responsible for setting overall strategic portfolio direction for the University, identifying strategic opportunities and setting course viability protocols.
12. Senate is the academic authority of the University with overall authority for academic quality and standards. Senate will undertake this role through the initial approval of this Code, receipt of an annual report on the operation of the Code and an Annual Assurance Statement on compliance with the B Conditions of Registration. Senate delegates its authority for the operation of the programme development, approval, modification, withdrawal and suspension processes as set out in the following sections. Senate will receive such reports as may be necessary to ensure the effective operation of delegated authority.
13. The Education Committee has delegated authority from Senate for developing and approving policy for curriculum design and management. Education Committee will receive an annual report on the operation of this Code, receive and endorse the Annual Assurance report and consider issues of policy and principle relating to curriculum design and management as may be required. Education Committee will approve the pool of members of Programme Approval Panels. Education Committee can approve amendments to the Code of Practice on behalf of Senate.
14. The Curriculum and Quality Sub-Committee (CQSC) is a Sub-Committee of the Education Committee with responsibility for operational oversight of the Code of Practice. CQSC represents the final point of academic approval for new programme development, major amendments above the threshold set out in the risk based framework, programme suspension and programme withdrawal. CQSC establishes Programme Approval Panels to provide University scrutiny of high risk proposals where required. CQSC will recommend amendments to the Code of Practice to Education Committee and consider potential operational amendments to the development and approval process as may be required.
15. College Education Committees (CECs) are responsible for considering and approving proposals for minor curriculum modifications, typically via sub-groups. CECs may also provide input into College strategic portfolio development planning.
16. Portfolio and Programme Development Groups (PPDGs) are established at College level and provide advice and guidance to programme teams going through curriculum development processes. PPDGs provide college level academic approval to new programme development and certain major amendments to proceed to Programme Approval Panel. In line with the risk based framework, PPDGs may establish individual Panels for the academic approval of certain types of major amendments for recommendation directly to CQSC.
17. College Business Groups, or equivalent, are responsible for considering and approving the full business case for new programmes or major amendments.

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18. Programme Approval Panels are responsible for detailed academic consideration of high risk developments, making recommendations on approval to CQSC.
19. The CMA Steering and Working Groups are responsible for ensuring that the University approach towards advertising programmes, entering into contract with students and modifying or withdrawing programmes is in line with consumer rights legislation.

Individuals

20. Heads of College are responsible for providing stage 1 approval for proposals for new programmes or major amendments to proceed. This judgment should be informed by appropriate considerations of University level strategic portfolio alignment, market, financial viability, recruitment timelines and resourcing. Heads of College may also instigate a programme suspension or withdrawal process.
21. The Chair of CQSC is responsible for ensuring that the Committee provides appropriate oversight of the operation of this Code and considers final academic approval of proposals. The Chair of CQSC may take action on behalf of CQSC to give final stage approval directly, where appropriate.
22. Heads of School are responsible for identifying a formal Programme Lead for each new programme or major amendment. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate school level portfolio and resourcing considerations are addressed within the development of the proposal. Heads of School may also instigate a programme suspension or withdrawal process.
23. Programme Leaders are responsible for the academic leadership of the development and modification of programmes. This incorporates planning, developing and submitting the required information, representing the proposal at relevant governance meetings and responding to conditions that may be set by relevant approval bodies.
24. School Directors of Education are responsible for supporting Programme Leaders as may be required, particularly in terms of school level strategy that may apply to new developments. Directors are also responsible for the academic co-ordination of the annual Curriculum Planning process, working with module and programme leads, as well as Professional Services to ensure that academic changes are appropriate, coherent, ensure the ongoing currency of programmes and are clearly reflected within the change submission.
25. College Deans of Education are responsible for chairing PPDGs which consider the academic case for new or modified provision at College level. Deans have authority to approve submissions directly on behalf of PPDG where appropriate. Deans will chair PPDGs considering minor or major modifications in line with the risk based approval framework, and may be authorised to take action to directly approve individual change processes via the Late Change process. Deans may delegate elements of this to their deputies as appropriate.
26. Education Quality, Enhancement and Development (EQED) within Education Services is responsible for providing expert procedural and pedagogic advice on the development of new programmes. EQED acts as secretariat to PPDG, Programme Approval Panels and CQSC. EQED is responsible for determining the level of academic risk associated with individual proposals and the appropriate route of approval. EQED is responsible for ensuring that the final set of documentation and approvals associated with each proposal is retained within the PCM system. EQED is responsible for providing training to staff undertaking programme

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development processes. EQED is responsible for University level co-ordination of the annual Curriculum Planning process, operating relevant approval stages within the PCM system and ensuring appropriate academic scrutiny is applied to requests for curriculum change within the main window, or where submitted late. Educational Developers within EQED are responsible for providing pedagogic support to teams developing or revising programmes for providing relevant reports to inform the development process.

27. The External Relations Division is responsible for providing market insight and commercial intelligence to inform programme development decisions. As part of this the Future Students Office advises on entry requirements and fee levels. The Division also advises on launch timing in line with market conditions and recruitment cycles. College Marketing and Recruitment Managers within the Division support promotion of new programmes.
28. Other services such as the Library, Centre for Academic Achievement, Student Records, Student Support Services, Careers and Employability and Timetabling and Examinations are responsible for inputting into the programme development process as may be required.
29. Members of academic staff are responsible for conducting reviews of their modules in line with University and local requirements, engaging with curriculum development processes at local and University level as may be required, and for entering proposed changes to their modules into the Portfolio and Curriculum Management system.
30. Professional Services staff in Colleges are responsible for co-ordinating the operational processes that support curriculum development and review in academic schools, such as communication of curriculum planning, co-ordination across teams and management of school governance.
31. Education Services is responsible for providing broad advice and guidance with regard to programme design in line with the University's Education Strategy.

Principles of Curriculum Design

32. The following principles will apply to the design of taught programmes:
 - All programmes will ensure alignment with relevant sector benchmarks, including Sector Recognised Standards and the FHEQ, QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and, for level 6, the Degree Classification Descriptors.
 - The currency, coherency and academic challenge of programmes will be in line with the requirements of OfS Condition B1
 - The resources and support for students are appropriate to support success and will meet the requirements of OfS Condition B2
 - The format, processes and standards for assessment will be robust to ensure valid and credible outcomes in line with the requirements of OfS Condition B4
 - The learning outcomes at programme and module level, and the means of demonstrating these, will be in line with sector agreed standards
 - All programmes should be designed according to the principles of Universal Design for Learning, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity in delivery and assessment is at the core of all taught provision, including:
 - o Teaching materials, whether physical or digital, are designed in line with accessibility requirements such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the University's obligations under the Equality Act, 2010;

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- Assessments are designed to be inclusive, with alternative methods of demonstrating ILOs where appropriate;
 - All programmes will align with the University strategic commitment to ensure Research Inspired Education;
 - All programmes will deliver transferable skills in line with the University's framework;
 - All programmes will address relevant United Nations Education for Sustainable Development Goals within the context of their discipline;
 - All programmes will support students to articulate the subject specific knowledge, research inspired education and transferrable skills that they have achieved over the course of their studies;
 - All programmes will promote active learning and contain an appropriate balance of different teaching and learning methods, synchronous and asynchronous content;
 - All programmes will ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to seek, review and respond to student feedback on their learning experience;
 - All programmes will, to an appropriate level, engage students with the technical, critical and ethical considerations with regard to the role of Generative Artificial Intelligence within the context of the discipline;
 - All undergraduate programmes will embed appropriate opportunities for work-related learning in line with the University's strategic approach to student development;
 - All programmes will take a holistic approach to assessment that supports the development of student literacy across the programme, through:
 - The production of programmatic assessment maps and scaffolding of assessment;
 - The provision of assessment briefs, criteria and rubrics;
 - An appropriate balance of assessment methods, including both formative and summative assessment;
 - All programmes will incorporate appropriate training and guidance for students to understand and avoid academic misconduct;
 - All developments will take account of wider market provision and labour market trends to ensure alignment with sector expectations.
33. The following additional design principles apply to joint degree provision. A joint degree is where one or more distinct subject areas are named within the title of a programme. These may be within or between schools. A programme which is based wholly within one school but may use a small amount of teaching from another area that is not explicitly referenced in the degree title will not be considered a joint degree and would be considered a specialism or pathway in line with para 39 below.
- An 'and' degree should have broadly equal weighting of the academic disciplines named in the title, across the degree as whole. Variation of up to 10% may be permitted;
 - A 'with' degree should have a weighting broadly equal to 75% for the lead subject area and 25% for the contributing subject area. Variation between 20:80 and 30:70 may be permitted on a case by case basis;

Table 1: Example joint degree title splits

Subject A	Subject B	Subject C	Title
180 credits	180 credits	0 credits	BSc A and B
90 credits	270 credits	0 credits	BSc B with A
255 credits	105 credits	0 credits	BSc A with B

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150 credits	150 credits	60 credits	BSc A and B
330 credits	15 credits	15 credits	BSc A

- Joint programmes should be designed to emphasise the overarching intellectual and transferable skills and content across the disciplines contributing to the award;
 - Particular consideration will be given to the assessment scaffolding and design to ensure that students are supported to develop assessment literacy in both subjects;
 - Joint degree development between schools and colleges will specifically consider the practical elements of joint delivery such as timetabling, PST roles, student support and establishment of cohort identity.
34. For distance learning programmes, the following additional curriculum design and regulatory principles apply:
- Distance learning delivery will be digital by default;
 - The timeline for learning resource provision will be clearly articulated and realistic;
 - Processes for the support of students and the management of student progression will be appropriate for the distance learning mode of delivery.
35. For apprenticeship programmes the specific additional considerations that will be taken into consideration in the approval process are set out in the relevant Code of Practice.
36. For partnership programmes the specific additional considerations that will be taken into consideration in the approval process are set out in the relevant Code of Practice.

Process Definitions

37. A programme is defined as being a unique combination of the following three key features: Intended award type (ie BA, MSc), Award name (ie Chemistry, Law) and method of delivery (campus based, distance learning or partnership).
38. A programme variation shares the same core identity as the programme such as qualification level and learning outcomes, and how the programme is studied. However, it includes additional features which do not alter the learning outcomes of the core programme. These are typically experiential elements such as a Year Abroad, Year in Industry or Year in Research.
39. A programme specialism (sometimes called a pathway) is an academic focus within a broader programme that allows students to pursue a defined area of disciplinary depth with associated learning outcomes. A specialism:
- Is represented as part of the award title (e.g., BSc Biology (Genetics)). Where relevant, this should comply with the titling conventions set out in para 33 and is defined by a coherent set of modules that provide subject specific focus, or through a specific choice of final project focus;
 - Does not change the programme's overall qualification level or disciplinary identity;
 - Remains academically aligned with the parent programme's learning outcomes.
40. A new programme development is defined as a substantial addition to the University's portfolio of taught programmes, which may include but is not limited to:
- A completely new programme, involving entirely or largely new modules;

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- A new award type;
 - A programme in a new disciplinary area for the University;
 - A new programme with significant PSRB requirements;
 - A new programme but using entirely existing modules;
 - A substantially new model of delivery.
41. A major amendment to an existing programme is defined as a substantial amendment to an existing programme or group of programmes, including but not limited to:
- A change to programme title;
 - A change to the award to which a programme leads;
 - Changes to programme level learning outcomes or aims;
 - Changes to the approved length, type or mode of study or the addition of a new intake;
 - The addition of a programme variant (as defined above);
 - The addition of a programme specialism (as defined above);
 - Changes that would require derogation from Senate Regulations;
 - Significant changes to the structure of the programme above the minor modification threshold below.
42. A minor amendment to an existing programme is defined as structural or module level change that does not alter the overall aims or learning outcomes of the programme. These may include:
- Alterations to core modules representing less than 25% of a level of the programme;
 - Alterations to optional module offerings, where this does not alter the overall balance between core and optionality within the programme;
 - Minor amendments to module content to reflect developments in knowledge, teaching methods or assessment.
43. New programmes will typically be considered higher academic risk and therefore likely to require a high level of academic approval. Major amendments may represent a lower level of academic risk and academic approval processes will be proportionate. Minor amendments will be considered low risk, and therefore require a low level of academic approval.

Risk based framework

44. The workflow and academic approval process for new programmes or major amendments to existing provision will be determined by application of the University's risk based framework. The full risk based framework covering the range of programme development and amendment scenarios is provided in appendix 6.
45. As standard, all new programmes and major amendments will undertake the stage gate process set out in section 2 of this code, however the documentation, external comment and detail of the academic consideration applied to individual proposals will align with the risk levels set out in the risk based framework. The formal allocation of the risk level will apply following stage gate 1. All minor modifications will, as standard follow the process for minor amendments, or Curriculum Planning, set out in section 3 of this code.
46. Assignment of the level of academic risk and confirmation of the route that a development should take through the development process is the responsibility of EQED. The Head of Academic Quality, working with the Chair of CQSC and the relevant College Dean of Education where appropriate, is empowered to determine the appropriate approval route.

Externality

47. In line with OfS and QAA principles the University will ensure that appropriate external input will be involved for all new programmes or major amendments, both from areas of the University external to the proposing school, and external to the University as a whole for the confirmation of content and academic standards. This will include:
- Scrutiny of business cases from individuals with appropriate expertise from outside of the proposing school;
 - Scrutiny of the academic case by individuals with appropriate expertise from across College and wider University;
 - Apprenticeship provision is informed by working closely with local and national employers in the development phase to ensure that programmes meet their requirements for skill development, and that content and assessment are informed by the needs of employers;
 - Programme Approval Panels include external academic representatives when considering detailed academic cases;
 - Proposals which do not require a Programme Approval Panel will be subject to appropriate scrutiny by external academic representatives, either specifically appointed or via the current external examiner(s) as appropriate;
 - The requirements of PSRBs are built into the design of programmes, and the scrutiny and approval of proposals may take place in conjunction with the formal accreditation process of a PSRB;
 - Colleagues will be supported to seek input from other stakeholders such as employers either through existing Industrial Advisory Boards or via the Careers and Employability Service.
48. For minor modifications the comments of external examiners are a key source of information in the development of updates and enhancements to existing programmes.

Section 2: New Programme Development and Approval and Major amendments to existing programmes

Introduction

49. All additions to the University's portfolio of taught programmes will go through a consistent programme development and approval framework. The documentation or stakeholder input required may vary on the basis of the academic risk associated with the programme, however all programmes will complete appropriate business case and academic case approval at College level, and in all cases final academic approval will take place at University level.
50. Programme developments may be generated in schools, at College level or via the central identification of portfolio opportunities. The PRMB has authority to undertake horizon scanning or strategic portfolio reviews and recommend that schools and colleges develop new programmes in areas of strategic importance. PRMB may also recommend major amendments to existing provision on the basis of strategic portfolio insights.

School level developments

51. All programme development should be strategically aligned and therefore new proposals at school level should ensure that they are aligned with the relevant portfolio strategies at College or University level. Where proposals are not strategically aligned they will not be able to proceed through the approval process.
52. Programme teams will typically be invited to an initial PPDG meeting to discuss potential developments and receive guidance and feedback before commencing the full development process. Schools should not undertake extensive development of full academic or business case documentation for new programmes until after they have completed stage gate 1 to ensure the most effective direction of resources towards viable and strategically aligned programme development.

Support for Programme Development

53. All programme leads will be assigned a lead advisor and a lead Educational Developer from EQED. These colleagues will support the team through the provision of procedural advice, timelines and milestones, pedagogic advice and documentary review.
54. Teams are required to engage with a range of stakeholders throughout the development process in order to ensure a well rounded programme proposal. The following table sets out a number of considerations that the school should review in the early development of programmes. Not all will be relevant for all programmes. It is a condition of acceptance into the development process that teams will have engaged with supporting services as required, and this is reflected in the PCM workflow. Where a team has not sought or gained the endorsements required for their proposal, it will not be able to proceed and will require escalation in order to resolve any issues raised.

Table 2: Supporting services reference grid

Team	Expertise
Future Students Office	Entry requirements Recruitment cycles for launch Fees and Scholarships

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	CAS eligibility and visa requirements
Education Quality, Enhancement and Development	Pedagogic design Regulations Progression and award design Procedural advice
Student Records	Operational records structure and management Non-standard programme structures
Digital Learning and Innovation Team (and Digital Services)	Blackboard and other learning technologies Digital accessibility Effective online learning design
Timetabling and Exams* / Estates	Timetabling constraints and opportunities Campus based exam requests
Student Immigration, Advice and Compliance	Visa requirements/implications of different programme structures, e.g., duration, placements Teaching Partnerships Eligibility for Post Study Visas
Student and Education EDI	Universal Design for Learning Inclusive practice
Education Strategy, Policy and Student Voice	Research Inspired Education Education for Sustainable Development Student voice
Marketing Insight*	Market opportunity and viability Competitive landscape Labour market insight
Careers and Employability	Employability development, including: • Data and insights on graduate labour market and early career destinations Involving employers (and others) in your module/programme • Work related learning plus Year in Industry/Enterprise/Research • Skills recognition and articulation
Statutory returns	Statutory compliance of programmes, particularly where there is something novel about the programme. This can include, but is not limited to, new partnerships, TNE, locations of study, subject areas.
Apprenticeships	Design, regulatory requirements, employer engagement for Apprenticeships
Library and Learner Services*	Indicative reading lists and resources to plan purchases and adjust licenses
Centre for Academic Achievement	Student academic skill support including: • General academic, digital and AI skills • Research and referencing support • Assessment support • Maths and statistics support • specific learning difficulties support
Global Partnerships	TNE and all academic partnership considerations: • Support with business development and partnership due diligence • Advice and guidance on the types of collaborative arrangements and level of risk

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	• Advice and guidance on the partnership approval process and documentation required for approval
College Accountant	Income, expenditure and contribution calculations
College Marketing and Recruitment Managers	Support for course launch processes

**Services where endorsement is required to progress*

Joint Programmes

55. Where a joint degree is proposed between two schools there will always be a lead school responsible for leading the development and approval process. This should always be the school that will own the programme after launch. This School will be responsible for progressing the proposal through the approval process.
56. With respect to stage gate approval, all developments will proceed through the Stage Gate approval for the lead College. Confirmation will be required within the workflow from contributing Colleges in terms of ensuring approval of the relevant element of the business case and academic cases. This may be achieved by correspondence or through joint meetings of the relevant Committees. For Cross College developments the College in which the lead school is based will formally give approval at the relevant College stage gates.

Professional Bodies

57. Schools should identify at the outset of the process where professional accreditation will be sought for a programme and the requirements of the relevant PSRB with respect to involvement in or outputs of the University approval process.
58. Where a new programme development, or major amendment, also requires approval from a PSRB the EQED team will work with the programme team to determine the format and timeline for PSRB involvement. Where required PSRB involvement may be facilitated within the PCM workflow however this will require case by case consideration, and may require that additional documentation is developed outside of the PCM system for the individual approval process.

Timelines for Programme Development and launch of new programmes

59. Successful recruitment to a new or modified programme relies upon adequate time and resource for course launch. A strategic approach to course development should be undertaken to ensure that the programme is given the best opportunity to recruit successfully. The timescales in the following table should be met within planning for course launch.

Table 3: Timelines for New Campus-Based Course Launch

Market exposure	UG Launch date (months prior)	UG Activity	PGT Launch date (months prior)	PGT Activity
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Optimum	18-20	Full UCAS event cycle, summer and autumn open days, central campaign inclusion and web exposure for full cycle	12	Full website exposure, central brand campaign benefit, additional explicit inclusion in the central marketing campaign
Limited	15	Some UCAS event availability, autumn open days, shorter central campaign impact, shorter web exposure	9	Shorter website exposure due to time constraints, shorter central brand campaign impact
Basic	12	No UCAS events, limited open day availability, short awareness time of web page, limited impact of central marketing	6	Launch in time for UG end of term and application deadline, shorter central brand campaign impact

60. Where a programme development process is not launched in time to meet these timelines, approval from PRMB will be required before the programme is accepted for development. Examples may include where a new priority undergraduate programme has been identified for a Clearing only launch, and this is reflected in both the marketing and intake projection figures. In extraordinary circumstances where a course is being launched for Clearing, the business case must be approved by the end of June, unless explicitly authorised by PRMB, to ensure that marketing activity can be undertaken and available during the early Clearing recruitment cycle.
61. Distance learning courses are not subject to the same minimum timeframes for launch as campus-based programmes. Guidance should be sought from your College and the relevant College Recruitment and Marketing Manager on appropriate timings for approval and launch.
62. Where a programme is subject to major amendments but is continuing to recruit in the interim (see para 69 below) the principles in table 3 represent best practice, but alternative timelines may be agreed on a case by case basis.
63. A programme development may be paused where it has not met agreed milestones, or where delays in the process may compromise the successful launch of the programme.
64. The External Relations Division can provide advice on the requirements for successful course launch, including central supporting resource. These should be reflected in the business case for the programme.
65. Timelines for programme development, approval and launch will account for the time required for University services to create the required data structures, post academic approval of the development.

Consumer Rights with respect to programme development

66. New programmes may be advertised to prospective students once College Business Case approval has been granted (see stage gate 2 below). EQED will be responsible for confirming to stakeholders where business case approval has been given, and will provide authorisation for marketing activities to commence. All marketing prior to full academic approval will be governed by additional 'subject to approval' guidance (see appendix 14).

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67. Offers will not be made for new programmes until full academic approval (stage gate 5) has been completed. This ensures that the relevant material and pre-contractual information for students reflects the programme as approved. The Chair of CQSC is authorised to exceptionally allow offers to be made on a programme after detailed academic scrutiny has been applied at stage gate 3/4 (as required) and before stage gate 5, on a risk basis.
68. Some PSRBs may set restrictions on marketing or offer making. Where this is the case, the requirements of the PSRB will be met. Programme teams will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements of PSRBs are clearly reflected in the submission.
69. Where an existing programme is undergoing major amendments the University will not cease making offers on the existing programme during the development process. Once business case approval is granted for major amendments the University will clearly flag in marketing materials that the programme is 'subject to review' and that applicants will be informed of changes well in advance of the start of the programme, to determine whether they wish to continue with their offer. Following final approval at Stage Gate 5 applicants will be informed of approved changes to the programme and their options.

Stage gate process

70. The following stage gate process applies for new programmes or major amendments. This should be read in conjunction with the risk based framework in appendix 6.
71. At each stage the process will apply robust challenge to ensure the resilience of the business and academic case. Where a proposal does not meet the requirements it will typically be referred back for further development rather than proceed with a large number of additional requirements.
72. Any approval body within the stage gate process may set conditions, recommendations or technical corrections that must be addressed. Conditions or recommendations should take account of feedback provided at any previous stage.
 - A condition will have an associated timeframe and must be met either in order for the programme to be approved, or after approval but before the first intake.
 - A recommendation is a suggestion for the enhancement of the programme that the Programme Team is required to address, either in their response to the approval or through the next annual programme review cycle.
 - Technical corrections are amendments to the documentation such as factual inaccuracies, typographical errors and incorrect references, which require correction within a specific timeframe (prior to delivery) but are not serious enough to prevent approval of the programme
73. As part of the process of academic scrutiny the relevant approval body may identify changes required to existing modules that feature within a new programme. The approval body has the authority to require such changes, but these must be considered within the context of the impact on other programmes that may already use those modules. Schools will be required to respond to PPDG or Programme Approval Panel and the approving body will determine the alterations that should be made within the full context of the school's provision.

Table 4: Stage Gate process

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Stage Gate	Approval required	Stage Gate Approver	Supporting Body	Notes
1	Strategic Opportunity	Head of College	N/A	High level strategic approval to develop proposal
2	Business Case (College approval)	Head of College	College Business Group (or equivalent)	Consideration and approval of full business case
3	Academic Case (College Endorsement)	Dean of Education	College PPDG	Consideration and approval of full academic case on behalf of the College
4	Academic Case (University Approval)	Chair of Programme Approval Panel	Programme Approval Panel	Consideration and approval of full academic case at University level, for high risk only
5	Final University ratification (Report and Response)	Chair of CQSC	CQSC	Final academic approval for introduction

Stage gate 1: High level strategic opportunity

74. At stage gate 1 the Head of College will consider an initial strategic business case for a new programme or major amendment. The purpose of this stage is to consider overall strategic portfolio fit, initial market viability assessments and resource requirements. The Head of College will consider key information including:
- Initial market insight data;
 - Student number projections;
 - Requirements for new resource, in terms of staffing and the physical or digital estate;
 - High level strategic rationale for development;
 - Alignment with institutional strategic portfolio development priorities.
75. Where a new programme would represent an addition of a whole new subject area, or would require significant investment in either staffing or physical resources, it is expected that Heads of College or their delegate will engage with PRMB to inform the strategic judgment at stage gate 1.
76. The outcomes from stage 1 are:
- a. A programme is approved to proceed to stage 2;
 - b. A programme is not approved to proceed at this stage, but referred back with conditions required before approval can be given to move to stage 2;
 - c. A programme is not approved to progress.
77. Where a programme is not approved at stage gate 1, the Head of College may provide comments to the original proposer within the PCM system. Programme teams may choose to resubmit a revised case for consideration at stage gate 1 in the future.

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78. Once a programme is approved at stage gate 1 the Head of College must record their approval through the PCM system to allow the programme to move to the next stage of the development and approval process. All documents supporting stage gate 1 approval must be saved within the PCM system.
79. Following approval at stage gate 1 EQED will review the proposal to determine the level of academic risk and therefore the risk based approval workflow that the proposal will need to follow. The decision of the Head of Academic Quality on the approval workflow to be followed will be final. In the absence of the Head of Academic Quality the Academic Registrar will determine the appropriate workflow.

Stage gate 2: Business Case Approval

80. At stage gate 2 the College Business Group (or equivalent) will consider a detailed business case for the proposal, including draft marketing copy, that has been entered into the PCM system. The purpose of stage gate 2 is to ensure that the more detailed proposal meets the following:
 - Demonstrates appropriate fit with the College strategy;
 - Shows clear evidence of sustainable market demand for the proposal, with relevant selling points and commercial competitiveness articulated within the proposal;
 - Demonstrates that the detailed intake, income, expenditure and contribution rates meet any requirements that may be set by the University;
 - Demonstrates that all significant risks associated with the development have been identified and, where possible, mitigated;
 - Ensures that any complex or atypical non-academic programme requirements have been identified and referred for detailed consideration;
 - Ensures that any specific reputational issues, concerns or risks associated with the new provision have been duly considered;
 - Considers in particular the resourcing associated with the programme, confirming that these are available or have been committed in line with the timeline for the programme development and roll out;
 - o Physical resources (teaching space, laboratories, specialist equipment);
 - o Digital resources (hardware, specialist software);
 - o Staffing (both academic and Professional Services);
 - o Marketing resource (resource required for course launch);
81. Where a joint degree is being developed between Colleges the CBG for the lead College is responsible for approval, but endorsement from the contributing College will be required.
82. Following consideration of the business case the College Business Group (or equivalent) can determine one of the following outcomes:
 - a) Programme may proceed to the next stage gate;
 - b) The programme is referred back for amendments before resubmission;
 - c) A proposal may be rejected.

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83. For b) the Group can provide feedback to the proposing team within the PCM system, and may also determine a timeline for resubmission. For c) the Group can provide feedback to the proposing team within the PCM system but the proposal cannot be resubmitted. A new proposal may be prepared in the future if appropriate.
84. Stages 2 and 3 may occur either in sequence or in parallel. Proposals may not pass beyond stage gate 3 to final academic approval until the business case (stage gate 2) has been completed and approved.
85. The College Business Group must record their approval and any comments through the PCM system to allow the programme to move the next stage of the development and approval process. All documents supporting stage gate 2 approval must be saved within the PCM system.
86. Following approval of the full business case, EQED will issue confirmation to all stakeholders that the stage gate has been passed. This will allow stakeholders to review the information needed to operate downstream systems. Issuance of this confirmation will be the trigger to allow for marketing of the programme.
87. Where a programme is undergoing major amendments but continuing to recruit in the interim the approval of the business case at stage gate 2 will be the trigger to add relevant wording to marketing materials to note that the programme is under review.

Stage gate 3: College Academic Approval

88. College level academic approval of proposals for new programmes or major amendments will be undertaken by the Programme and Portfolio Development Group (PPDG). The membership and Terms of Reference for PPDGs are set out in Appendix 13.
89. Depending on the workflow for the proposal determined through the risk based approval process, the PPDG may be the final point of detailed academic scrutiny before recommendation to CQSC. For higher risk proposals the PPDG will consider on behalf of the College before recommending that the proposal is ready to proceed to a Programme Approval Panel (stage gate 4).
90. The standard documentation that PPDGs will consider for any proposal will include:
 - Programme Development and Approval form (generated through PCM) including core information regarding the business for the development (for information) and the academic case for the development (for approval).
 - Programme specification
 - Module specifications
 - Educational Developer report (provided by EQED for certain levels of development, please see appendix 11)
 - Relevant mapping documents (Subject benchmark statement, assessment, work related learning and Research Inspired Education)
 - Comments from an external advisor where required
 - Additional standard forms that may be required for particular forms of provision, such as joint degrees or distance learning
91. In addition to this, the PPDG may consider additional documentation as may be relevant to the proposal. This may include information for PSRBs, distance learning delivery schedules and

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materials or information that is specific to apprenticeship or partnership delivery, in line with the relevant code of practice.

92. Where stage 3 represents full academic scrutiny and the programme will not require stage 4, PPDG approval will receive external input in line with the risk based framework. This will typically be received via a written report from either an existing external examiner for the programme or a separate external advisor, nominated by the school and approved by the Chair of CQSC.
93. PPDG will review proposals against the following relevant external and internal benchmarks:
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications;
 - Relevant qualification level characteristics statement;
 - Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s);
 - Professional Body requirements, where relevant;
 - University Research Inspired Education Strategy;
 - University Assessment Strategy;
 - For UG, alignment with the University degree classification descriptors;
 - University strategies in relation to employability and transferable skills;
 - Wider University Senate Regulations, academic policy and procedure.
94. In considering academic proposals the PPDG will review the documentation, benchmarks and design principles (in section 2) in order to determine whether the proposal should proceed. Particular consideration will be given to the following points, but the PPDG is free to explore any element of the programme proposal that it wishes:
- Appropriate fit with University educational strategies and alignment with the curriculum design principles set out above;
 - Alignment with relevant internal and external benchmarks for content and quality;
 - Clear evidence of the way in which threshold academic standards have been set and will be maintained;
 - Clear evidence of the design of student learning opportunities such that a coherent academic experience is provided to the intended learners;
 - The accessibility and inclusivity of the curriculum and assessment and learning experience of all learners;
 - Additional scrutiny will be applied to joint degree proposals for delivering the curriculum, supporting students in their studies and the oversight of the administration of the programme;
 - The specific elements of the proposal relating to delivery in an apprenticeship format as appropriate, such as the mapping of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours, assessment methods and arrangements for End Point Assessment;
 - That the programme design, as expressed in the programme and module documentation, is comprehensive and complete;
 - That there is evidence of curriculum development to meet the aims and priorities of the Transferrable Skills Framework;
 - Where appropriate, responses to feedback given earlier in the process.

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95. For lower risk proposals where PPDG is the point of final detailed academic scrutiny (see the risk based framework) PPDG will review and approve all necessary elements of the proposal to give assurance to CQSC for final approval. For higher risk proposals which will proceed to a Programme Approval Panel the PPDG should review and endorse the proposal to proceed to detailed scrutiny at the following stage.
96. For lower risk proposals where PPDG is the point of final detailed academic scrutiny the outcome of a PPDG meeting may be:
 - a) Programme may proceed straight to stage gate 5 for final approval;
 - b) Conditions are required for amendments to the proposal before it may proceed;
 - c) The proposal is approved but with a specific issue referred to Stage 5 for decision;
 - d) A proposal may be rejected.
97. For b) and c) the Group can provide feedback to the proposing team within the PCM system, and may also determine a timeline for resubmission. For c) comments for consideration by CQSC will be recorded within the PCM system. For d) the Group can provide feedback to the proposing team within the PCM system.
98. For higher risk proposals (see the risk based framework) where PPDG is recommending that a proposal proceed to stage gate 4 the outcome of a PPDG meeting may be:
 - a) Programme may proceed to stage gate 4;
 - b) Conditions are required for amendments to the proposal for reconsideration at a future date, before it may proceed;
 - c) The proposal is approved but with a specific issue referred to Stage 4 for consideration at University level, where these may represent a precedent;
 - d) A proposal may be rejected.
99. For b) and c) the Group can provide feedback to the proposing team within the PCM system, and may also determine a timeline for resubmission. For c) comments for consideration by CQSC will be recorded within the PCM system. For d) the Group can provide feedback to the proposing team within the PCM system.
100. Where a programme team is required to make amendments before approval is given, these will be recorded within the PCM system, and teams will be required to amend their submission to respond to the feedback given within the PCM system.
101. The response will typically be considered by the PPDG by correspondence or, for very minor amendments, by Chair's action. Where the PPDG, or Chair, remain dissatisfied with the response further requirements may be set before the proposal can progress.
102. Where a proposal has been rejected and a programme team has been required to resubmit in full this will always be considered by a full PPDG panel.
103. The secretary to PPDG must record approval through the PCM system to allow the programme to move to the next stage of the development and approval process. All documents supporting stage gate 3 approval must be saved within the PCM system.

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104. Where the proposal is proceeding straight to stage 5 the PPDG will produce a short report confirming the issues considered and its recommendations for consideration by CQSC. This will include any University level issues such as dispensation from Senate Regulations requiring CQSC approval. Where the proposal is proceeding to stage 4 the PPDG will produce minutes of its consideration for the information of the Programme Approval Panel a stage 4, highlighting any particular issues that the Programme Approval Panel is requested to consider.

Stage Gate 4: Programme Approval Panel

105. At Stage Gate 4 a University Programme Approval Panel will consider the proposal. The circumstances under which Stage Gate 4 is required are set out in the risk based framework, but will typically reflect where the proposal represents a higher level of academic risk such as:
- A proposal with high volumes of new modules;
 - A proposal with significant external PSRB involvement;
 - A proposal in a new area of provision;
 - New distance learning provision in a school without prior experience of this mode;
 - Apprenticeship provision;
 - Major University partnerships.
106. Such proposals require a higher level of consideration as they may involve significant new areas of teaching, University level precedent, dispensation from regulations or other issues which require a check, challenge and endorsement from outside of the proposing College.
107. Programme Approval Panels will receive the comments and recommendations from PPDGs and are not required to review in detail those areas already scrutinised at College level.
108. The list of staff eligible to sit on Programme Approval Panels will be approved annually by the Education Committee. A list of Programme Approval Chairs will also be approved annually. Criteria for the appointment of Panel members is in appendix 7.
109. A Programme Approval Panel will consist of:
- A chair, who will be a member of academic staff with significant educational leadership experience from outside of the proposing College;
 - Two further members of academic staff with expertise appropriate to the proposal under consideration, at least one of whom will be drawn from a cognate discipline;
 - A student representative, from either the Students' Union Executive or Student Representative pool;
 - At least one external advisor (see below), who may attend the event in person or provide a report in advance, depending on the requirements of the individual approval event.
110. An external advisor to the Panel will be appointed to provide expert, independent external review of the content, assessment and threshold standards of the new provision. The external advisor will be appointed in line with the criteria in appendix 7. The Programme team will nominate the external advisor, who will be approved by the Chair of CQSC. EQED will

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determine whether an external advisor is required to attend the panel or provide a written report. The external advisor is an equal member of the Panel. Such an appointment would only be considered where the pool of available external advisors/examiners is demonstrably small due to the level of specialisation of the programme.

111. The Programme Approval Panel will be provided with all the documentation considered at Stage Gate 3 along with the output of the PPDG process and any specific issues or considerations that may be flagged for the Panel's consideration by PPDG.
112. The Programme Approval Panel will consider the issues as set out under para 94 above, with the addition of:
 - University level considerations in relation to regulatory compliance or requested dispensations;
 - Cross University issues such as the management of joint provision;
 - New areas of learning and teaching activity which may represent a higher level of academic risk, or set precedent for future provision.
113. Following consideration a Programme Approval Panel determine the following outcomes:
 - a) Programme may proceed to stage gate 5 for final approval;
 - b) Programme is approved in principle with conditions that must be met before final approval can be given;
 - c) Programme is approved in principle with conditions that can be met after final approval is given, but typically before the programme runs;
 - d) A proposal may be referred for further development and resubmission.
114. Conditions of approval, recommendations and timelines for their completion will be captured within the PCM system. EQED will be responsible for completing a report of the approval event.
115. Programme teams will be required to submit a response to any conditions, recommendations and technical corrections (see para 113) for consideration by the Panel before proceeding to stage gate 5. Typically, consideration will take place by correspondence and the PAP Chair is authorised to take action on behalf of the Panel to approve where appropriate.
116. The secretary to PAP must record approval through the PCM system to allow the programme to move to the next stage of the development and approval process. All documents supporting stage gate 4 approval must be saved within the PCM system.

Stage Gate 5: Final academic approval

117. Stage gate 5 is the responsibility of the CQSC. CQSC holds delegated authority from Senate to approve the introduction of new programmes or major amendments. CQSC approval is required for all such developments, and will always represent the final point of approval, ensuring University level oversight of all major programme development.
118. Once a programme has received approval to proceed from stage gate 3, or where required stage gate 4, the CQSC will consider the relevant approval body report along with the

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response from the programme team and confirmation of the PPDG/PAP approval of that response. This will occur at ordinary meetings of the Sub-Committee.

119. Upon consideration of the report and response the CQSC may decide the following:
 - To approve the proposal for introduction;
 - To approve the proposal subject to meeting conditions from either the approval body or additional points set by the Committee, which must be met on a timeline to be determined by CQSC, typically before launch;
 - To require further information or assurances to be provided before approval can be given;
 - To refer the proposal back to the original approving body, with such direction as may be necessary;
120. Where required, the Chair is authorised to take action on behalf of CQSC to approve the introduction of new programmes or major amendments between meetings of the Committee. Approval will be reported to the following meeting.
121. Where a proposal includes the creation of a new award type for the University this requires addition to the approved list of awards within the Senate Regulations. Any such proposals require approval by the Education Committee. This will typically occur via the relevant report of the CQSC that approved the introduction. However, where there is a need, such as for PSRB reasons, to approve a new award type at an earlier stage of the process this can be facilitated by the EQED team.
122. Upon final approval of a new programme or major amendment the EQED team will be responsible for communication of the decision to relevant stakeholders, through the PCM system. Final academic approval is the trigger to allow offers to be made on the programme. All documents supporting stage gate 5 approval must be saved within the PCM system.
123. By exception the Chair of CQSC may approve a request to allow for offers to be made on a programme before final sign off is issued. This may be on the basis that the conditions set are relatively minor and likely to be addressed without alterations to the core external programme documentation. Offers will never be permitted to be made before the detailed academic scrutiny point (stage gate 3 or 4 as required).

Section 3: Minor Modifications and Curriculum Planning

Minor Modifications and Curriculum Planning

124. The University will undertake an annual process of curriculum review and enhancement to ensure that the curricula of taught programmes remain current, coherent and provide an appropriate level of educational challenge. This annual process is called Curriculum Planning and is undertaken through the PCM system.
125. Schools will be responsible for identifying amendments to curricula which may arise from:
- Local Curriculum Review;
 - Staffing change;
 - Developments in knowledge, teaching and assessment methods;
 - Feedback from external stakeholders such as External Examiners or the requirements of Professional Bodies;
 - Feedback from students;
 - Amendments which may be mandated by University quality assurance processes such as programme development and approval, annual programme review or periodic revalidation.

Types of change

126. Changes up to an agreed threshold may be made through the Curriculum Planning process. Where a programme exceeds the threshold for Curriculum Planning it will be required to undertake a full approval process for major modification, as set out in Section 2 above.
127. A minor modification which may be considered through the Curriculum Planning process is defined in para 42.
128. Structural changes which may be considered through Curriculum Planning are the addition, deletion, merger or movement of modules where the effect would not lead to an overall change in programme level aims or intended learning outcomes. Where alterations to modular structure would represent the equivalent of 25% or more of the content within a level of a programme, this will be considered a major change which could not be considered through Curriculum Planning and would require a full approval process in line with the risk based framework.
129. Modular changes are amendments to individual modules and may include:
- Alteration to a module title;
 - Alteration to the overall learning and teaching strategy for a module, which may include a change to the balance of student workload;
 - Alteration to assessment methods, timings and weightings;
 - Amendments to module level ILOs where these do not impact upon programme ILOs.
130. A full list of the changes which may be considered through the Curriculum Planning process is set out in Appendix 12.
131. The Curriculum Planning process does not incorporate the annual process of updating operational curriculum data undertaken by Student Records.

Student information and consultation

132. In line with the University's Terms and Conditions of Offer and Student Protection Plan the University will ensure that students are informed of all changes to their programme, and have the opportunity to provide feedback. There are certain categories of change where the University will undertake full consultation with students.
133. The requirements for student information or consultation are set out in Appendix 12. Advice on the process of informing and consultation will be provided by EQED. Appropriate evidence of student consultation will be retained by the School.
134. Where objections are raised by students these will be addressed by the School. Where students remain concerned, the University will consider whether to proceed with the change in light of the circumstances in place at the time. There may be some circumstances where the University proceeds with a change following objections raised by students. In such cases the University will operate in line with its Terms and Conditions of Offer and Student Protection Plan by supporting students who wish this to transfer programme, within or outside of the University, or to cancel their contract with the University.

Strategic themes

135. The University may set strategic themes for consideration through the Curriculum Planning process. These will be communicated to schools in the preparation processes along with relevant guidance on the themes that schools are required to address within their curricula.

Process for Curriculum Planning

136. Requests for minor amendments will follow the process set out below. At each stage of the Curriculum Planning process the University will consider the potential impact of the change on other provision, for example where a module may be shared with other programmes. Schools are responsible for ensuring that appropriate consultation with partners has taken place.

Step	Process	Responsible	Notes
1	Entry of revisions into the PCM system	Module convenor	
2	School level consideration	School Education Committee	Simple changes, as determined by EQED, may be approved directly at this point
3	College level consideration (final approval)	College Education Committee	For complex changes May be delegated to a sub-group or PPDG as appropriate Dean of Education is authorised to approve low level changes directly

137. The following documentation will be required for consideration of minor amendments:
- A completed entry in the PCM system setting out the rationale for the change and its impact on programmes;
 - Revisions to the relevant programme specification(s);
 - Revised module specification(s);
 - Evidence of student consultation, where required;

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- Evidence of approval through the relevant school level governance;
- Evidence of confirmation with all affected programmes.

Considerations for approval

138. In reviewing requests for curriculum planning the relevant approver will consider:

- That there is an appropriate rationale;
- That the relevant curriculum design principles as set out in para 32 have been maintained for the programme as a whole;
- That consultation and impact assessment have both clearly been undertaken
- That documentation has been updated appropriately;
- That the change does not impact upon the core aims and intended learning outcomes for the programme.

Outcomes

139. The outcome of the minor modification process will be one of the following:

- a) A proposal is approved;
- b) A proposal is referred back to the programme team for further information before approval is given;
- c) A proposal is deemed to constitute a major amendment and referred to that process;
- d) A proposal is rejected.

140. Final documentation and approval status will be retained within the PCM system as the master record.

141. Information on significant changes to the programmes will be reflected in the programme change section of the programme specification for the relevant intake(s) in line with consumer rights requirements.

Reporting

142. Once Curriculum Planning submissions have been approved EQED will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are informed in order to allow downstream processes to occur.

143. The External Relations division will be informed of changes and responsible for informing applicants.

Late Changes

144. Where requests for minor modifications are submitted outside of the Curriculum Planning window these will be considered through the late change process. Change requests will be made through the PCM system and considered on a case by case basis. Schools will be required to confirm that School level consideration and approval has been undertaken in line with the steps set out above. Schools will be required to confirm why it was not possible for the change to have been submitted through the standard Curriculum Planning process.

145. Requests may be considered by EQED or the Dean of Education depending on their complexity. The Dean of Education has the authority to refer a request to a PPDG meeting for detailed consideration where this is deemed necessary.

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146. All late changes will be considered in line with the criteria set out under para 138 above. A final date for late changes to apply to the next academic year will be set annually. The approval process will take into consideration the potential impact of the timing of the change on the student experience, central teams and other relevant systems. Where the impacts on the above may be significant or negative a request may be declined.

Section 4: Programme Withdrawal and Suspension

Principles

147. The decision to suspend or withdraw a programme may arise from a variety of circumstances, including changes to the University's facilities or staffing, local curriculum review, pedagogic developments, or School, College or University reviews of commercial viability or financial sustainability. Where a School or College is considering the suspension or withdrawal of a programme or group of programmes the processes described below should be followed.
148. The following principles apply to the process of programme suspension and withdrawal:
- A decision to suspend or withdraw a programme should be informed by consideration of appropriate current market intelligence and future projections;
 - The decision to suspend or withdraw a programme will have due regard to the University's obligations under consumer rights legislation and OfS conditions;
 - The timescale for a decision to suspend or withdraw a programme should consider potential impact on current students and offer holders;
 - The approval process for programme suspension or withdrawal should review the effectiveness of the measures in place to protect current students' ability to complete their studies, in line with the Student Protection Plan;
 - The PCM system will represent the master record for the withdrawal and suspension programmes.

Definitions

149. Withdrawal is defined as a decision to permanently cease accepting new students onto any future intake date for one or more programmes, variants or specialisms.
150. Where a full programme is withdrawn all associated programme variants and specialisms are withdrawn with it. An individual intake of a programme may be withdrawn without withdrawing the programme overall. Similarly, an individual variant or specialism within a programme may be withdrawn without withdrawing the programme overall.
151. Programme suspension is defined as a decision not to allow an intake on a programme, variant or specialism for a defined period of time, but with the overall intention that the programme may resume in the future.

Timelines for withdrawal or suspension

152. A decision to suspend or withdraw an intake of a programme should be made sufficiently in advance of the intended start date so as to allow the opportunity to communicate with applicants in a timely manner.
153. A programme intake that has offers out to applicants should not, under normal circumstances be withdrawn. However, where circumstances are such that withdrawal may be necessary consideration will be given to the number and spread of applicants for the programme, the number of offer holders and the number of Confirmation of Acceptance (CAS) issued.
154. A decision to suspend or withdraw a campus-based undergraduate programme should normally be completed before the admissions cycle for the intake in question. This should be before the UCAS deadline (typically January) to ensure that applicants have sufficient notice to seek alternatives. Where this is not possible, the latest point a campus-based undergraduate

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programme should be withdrawn is 6 months before the intended intake date. Where a programme is to be withdrawn at this point advice should be taken from the Future Students Office with regard to any implications for applicants.

155. For all other modes of study, suspension or withdrawal of a programme should be finalised before the start of the relevant admissions cycle for the intake or, in extreme circumstances at least 6 months before the intake to be cancelled.
156. Where a request to suspend or withdraw a programme is received after this date the University will undertake an assessment of the impact upon applicants. Under some circumstances it may be necessary to delay the suspension or withdrawal of a programme to a future intake in the event that significant numbers of students have made financial commitments toward their study.

Student Protection

157. The circumstances under which a programme may be withdrawn are set out in the University's Terms and Conditions of Offer along with students' rights to cancel their contract and seek refunds of advanced fees paid.
158. Programmes should only be suspended or withdrawn for future intakes. In managing the process of programme suspension and withdrawal the University will act in accordance with the commitments set out in its Student Protection Plan². Registered students will be supported to complete their studies, through the teach out of current provision or support to transfer programme, within or outside of the University.
159. The University will ensure that clear information is provided to students whose programmes may be affected by suspension or withdrawal, setting out the University's commitments, sources of support and students' rights.

Process for withdrawing a programme

160. The plan to withdraw or suspend a programme should be identified in College planning processes and progressed in line with the timelines set out above.
161. In the suspension and withdrawal process the relevant team will be required to follow the workflow within the PCM system which will require confirmation of:
 - Full programme details including titles and specialisms to be suspended or withdrawn
 - Date of final intake (withdrawal) or specific intakes to be suspended
 - Number of students remaining on the programme, by level, and date of projected completion
 - Number of offers that have been made for the relevant entry
 - Strategic, commercial or market rationale for withdrawal
 - Teach out arrangements, confirming how the overall student experience and support for student outcomes will be maintained for remaining learners
 - Alternative options for applicants and current students, where relevant
 - Potential impact on other programmes if modules are to be withdrawn
 - Intended date of resumption (suspension only)

² May be subject to change pending OfS consultation

Table 6: Programme Withdrawal and Suspension

Step	Approval required	Approver	Notes
1	Local proposal	Head of School or Head of College	A Head of School may initiate a process of withdrawal The Head of College in which the lead school is based may initiate a process of withdrawal directly, working with the Head of School
2	Educational Impact Review	School Education Committee	For comment only
3	Business Case	College Business Group	Consideration and approval of business case for withdrawal
4	Academic Case (University Approval)	CQSC	University approval of withdrawal

162. Where a Head of School initiates the process of suspension or withdrawal they are responsible for authorising this on behalf of the School. Where a Head of College initiates the process they are responsible for seeking appropriate input on behalf of the School, but the Head of College may authorise the submission of the process directly to the College Business Group. For joint programmes the process must be initiated by the Head of School or College for the lead school of the programme and seek input from contributing schools.
163. The School Education Committee will have the opportunity to review the proposal in order to provide comment on the impact of the suspension or withdrawal of a programme on wider provision within the school such as where modules may be shared with other programmes, and to inform the development of the teach out plan.
164. Following this the College Business Group will review the proposal and provide approval on behalf of the College for the suspension or withdrawal to proceed to the University. This will include consideration of:
- Strategic and local rationale;
 - Impact upon school contribution rates;
 - Potential reputational impact, where relevant;
 - Impact upon school resource planning;
 - Proposals for teach out, ensuring sufficient resources are in place.
165. Where a joint programme is to be withdrawn or suspended the College Business Group for the lead school is responsible for ensuring that considerations of contributing colleges are included in this process.
166. The final stage is for the suspension or withdrawal documentation to be considered by CQSC. This represents the point of final approval for the withdrawal of the programme. CQSC will consider the proposed teach out plans to determine whether these are sufficient to ensure that the student experience and student outcomes are protected.

Reporting

167. Following the approval of the business case to suspend or withdraw a programme EQED will notify stakeholders in External Relations in order to add a 'subject to review' flag to relevant

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websites and stop making offers. Once a withdrawal is approved in full EQED will be responsible for ensuring that all stakeholders are informed.

168. The External Relations Division will be responsible for reflecting changes on the University website and published materials, for informing applicants and offering alternatives.
169. Withdrawal of a programme may represent a reportable event to the Office for Students. Where this is the case it will be identified within the process and highlighted to the relevant University team for reporting.

Teach Out

170. In designing the teach out for students on a programme that will be withdrawn or suspended the University will ensure that students remain supported and able to achieve their intended outcome within the University's regulations and student protection requirements. The following considerations should inform a teach out plan:
 - Learning outcomes should remain aligned with national qualification frameworks. The programme content should remain current, coherent and ensure an appropriate level of educational challenge
 - Students should continue to experience a positive academic experience, and be provided with the support and resources to succeed. This includes appropriate levels of staffing, access to physical and digital resources and University supporting services.
 - Qualified staff should be available to deliver and assess all essential programme components, and to ensure that assessment and marking processes can meet University requirements
 - Risk mitigations should be in place to manage the impact of staff reductions on delivery
 - Students should be adequately supported to achieve positive outcomes, which will be subject to University monitoring
 - Assessment procedures should remain secure, fair, and robust
 - Quality monitoring should continue as normal through processes such as annual programme review, marking and moderation processes, and external examining
 - The University should continue to ensure the academic standards of the awards for which the students are registered are consistent with their peers on other programmes and the wider sector

Resumption of programmes

171. Where a programme has been withdrawn it cannot be resurrected in a future year. It would be considered a full new programme development and the processes set out in section 2 would apply.
172. Where a programme has been suspended it may resume without the requirement for further academic approval for a period up to 2 academic years, inclusive of the first suspended cohort. In such circumstances the College Business Group may approve resumption of the programme. Where a programme is to be revised before resumption appropriate processes would apply under this code, depending on the nature of the amendments.
173. Where a programme has been suspended for more than 2 academic year cycles it cannot resume directly. Colleges will be responsible for monitoring the status of suspended programmes and determining whether to resume at the point the 2 year limit is reached. If a

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programme does not resume at that point it will be required to be withdrawn. If a programme is to resume after this point, it will be required to undertake a full programme approval process within a maximum of 6 months.

Section 5: Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and review mechanisms

174. The operation of this Code of Practice will be monitored via:
- Receipt of individual programme approval reports and responses by CQSC;
 - An annual report on programme development, approval, modification and withdrawal processes from EQED to CQSC, Education Committee and Senate. This will review the operation of the code in the preceding academic year and make recommendations for amendments;
 - An annual review of Curriculum Planning submissions, including trends for consideration;
 - Individual reports on the implementation of strategic initiatives as they apply to programme development;
 - Regular summaries of portfolio updates to the PRMB and to Senate;
 - Periodic analysis of the success of course launch activities and associated timelines;
 - Regular review of processes in place to ensure compliance with Consumer Rights legislation will be undertaken via the CMA Working and Steering Groups, with recommendations for updates to the code considered through the education governance framework.
175. In addition to annual updates the Code will be reviewed in full every 4 years.
176. The performance of individual programmes following launch will be monitored through the relevant University processes including the Education and strategic planning processes, Annual Programme Review and periodic revalidation.
177. Longer term conditions set through the processes will be monitored through the Annual Programme Review process, the Education Meetings and through College Education Committee governance.
178. The Annual Programme Review and periodic revalidation processes may require changes to curricula, which will trigger modifications through the processes set out in this code.
179. The Portfolio and Curriculum Management system will represent the golden source of all curriculum data, development, approval, suspension and withdrawal documentation. The data within the system will be used to support other quality assurance and quality enhancement processes. These include:
- Generating reports on curriculum, delivery or assessment to inform annual monitoring and periodic revalidation processes;
 - Tracking and reporting on the implementation of University strategic initiatives with regard to curriculum;
 - Reviewing assessment practices across programmes;
 - Reviewing the efficiency of teaching delivery.

QAA principles

Providers design, develop, approve and modify programmes and modules to ensure the quality of provision and the academic standards of awards are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework. Providers ensure their provision and level of qualifications are comparable to those offered across the UK and, where applicable, The Framework of Qualifications for The European Higher Education Area.³

- a) All programmes and modules meet academic standards that are consistent with relevant national qualifications and credit frameworks. Where applicable, provision also meets professional body and accreditation requirements, and apprenticeship standards.
- b) A definitive set of documents are produced from the design, development, approval and modification processes, which are held securely and act as the primary source of information about each programme. Similar but proportionate arrangements are in place for modules and smaller units of study.
- c) The award to be received and how outcomes of study are recorded and certificated are made clear to all students and staff involved in the teaching, learning and evaluation of the programme and module.
- d) Policies and processes that support the design, development, approval and modification of programmes and modules are published on each provider's website and are easily accessible to key stakeholders.
- e) External engagement and evaluation form a component part of the design, development, approval and modification process.
- f) The design, development, approval and modification processes align with providers' policies and practices on equity, equality, diversity and inclusion, and environmental sustainability.
- g) Students are involved meaningfully in the design, development, approval and modification of programmes and modules.

³ https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/uk-quality-code-for-higher-education-2024-sector-agreed-principles.pdf?sfvrsn=6da5b881_11

Appendices

1. [Programme Development flow chart](#) *(login required)*
2. [Programme Withdrawal and Suspension flow chart](#) *(login required)*
3. [New programme approval flow chart](#) *(login required)*
4. [Programme major modification flow chart](#) *(login required)*
5. [Curriculum Planning flow chart](#) *(login required)*
6. [Risk based approval framework](#) *(login required)*
7. [Criteria for appointment of PAP members and role expectations](#) *(login required)*
8. [PAP meeting agenda template](#) *(login required)*
9. [PAP meeting report template](#) *(login required)*
10. [PAP Outcomes response template](#) *(login required)*
11. [Educational Developer report template](#) *(login required)*
12. [Consultation and Approval requirements for Curriculum Planning changes](#) *(login required)*
13. [PPDG Terms of Reference](#) *(login required)*
14. [‘Subject to approval’ guidance](#) *(login required)*
15. [Policy on Consumer Rights with respect to taught programmes](#)
16. [Curriculum design websites and toolkits](#) *(login required)*
17. [Curriculum Planning documentation](#) *(login required)*
18. [COP on Apprenticeships](#) and [COP on Higher Education with Others](#)
19. [PCM supporting documentation](#) *(login required)*