

10 CHANGES TO ACADEMIC PROVISION

10A PROGRAMME MODIFICATION

SCOPE OF REGULATIONS

- 10a.1 This section deals with modifications to existing degree programmes, ie those which have already been approved and are being delivered. These regulations do not apply to the normal and expected ongoing changes in programme content and delivery which are monitored through the annual monitoring process.
- 10a.2 The type of modifications covered by these procedures include:
- change in overall programme aims and objectives
 - change in mode / location of delivery
 - change in module / programme title
 - a significant addition to the resources required for the programme
 - approval of joint awards (internal), using existing provision
 - approval of joint awards (with other HEIs), or other form of collaborative agreement, using existing provision
 - approval of stand-alone modules
 - approval / addition / deletion of modules within a programme (new or existing)
 - change in module assessment arrangements
 - change in regulations for the admission of students
 - change in regulations for the assessment of students.

PROPOSALS FOR MODIFICATION OF A DEGREE PROGRAMME

- 10a.3 Initial consideration of formal proposals for modification will be at faculty level, with Faculty Executive making a decision on the appropriate subsequent process, based on the level of risk within the proposal.
- 10a.4 A modification proposal must be supported by the following information:
- a. a brief description outlining the proposed changes
 - b. the rationale for the proposed changes
 - c. evidence of market or student demand, if appropriate
 - d. evidence of student feedback / student demand leading to the change if appropriate
 - e. implications for enhancement of the student learning experience
 - f. implications for human / physical resources
 - g. evidence of internal / external support for the modification
 - h. specific comment from relevant external examiner.
- 10a.5 A modification proposal must be endorsed in writing by relevant lead staff and quality managers at programme / subject network / academic partner levels as appropriate.
- 10a.6 The Faculty Executive will assess the risk level of the proposed modification into one of the following categories with the associated course of action:
- a. **low risk** – Faculty Executive approves or rejects the modification

- b. **medium risk** – Faculty Executive determines the nature and scope of modification approval ‘event’
- c. **high risk** - Faculty Executive refers decision to Academic Council (or a body to which it delegates this authority), with recommendation for further action, ensuring that the university retains strategic oversight of its academic portfolio
- d. **unacceptable risk** - Faculty Executive rejects the modification.

10a.7 The proposer(s) will be given feedback on Faculty Executive decisions and recommendations, normally within one working week of the Faculty Executive meeting. Where the Faculty Executive does not accept a proposal, proposers will be given the option of addressing the issues identified, and re-presenting the proposal at a later stage.

10a.8 All decisions made by the Faculty Executive will be reported to Academic Council, via faculty reports. Where Faculty Executive has approved a low / medium risk modification, Academic Council will be asked to homologate the decision.

RISK FACTORS

10a.9 Faculty Executives will take into consideration the following risk factors when assessing a proposed modification:

- risk to academic standards of any award
- risk to quality of student learning experience
- risk to financial viability of any programme or subject area
- risk to reputation / student / stakeholder perception
- risk to sustainability of programme delivery (or elements thereof)
- any other risk not covered by the above.

MODIFICATION APPROVAL EVENTS

10a.10 Modification approval events provide an opportunity for full discussion of the proposal and its implications, and will be formally minuted. They are unlikely to be as extensive as full approval events for new provision. They **may** involve any or all of the following:

- a further meeting of the Faculty Executive
- attendance of programme team members and / or academic partners’ senior managers at a Faculty Executive meeting
- production of additional documentation as required, including informed internal / external comment
- convening a panel, with or without internal / external members.

OUTCOME OF MODIFICATION APPROVAL EVENTS

10a.11 The outcome of a modification approval event will be a recommendation to Faculty Board that the proposed modification is:

- a. approved unconditionally
- b. approved with conditions to be met prior to implementation
- c. not approved.

10a.12 The outcome will also be sent to relevant academic partners. Outcomes will be homologated

by Academic Council, via faculty reports.

10a.13 Within one month of approval of a modification, an electronic version of the updated definitive programme document must be lodged with Academic Directorate.

10B CLOSURE OF AND WITHDRAWAL FROM PROVISION

SCOPE OF REGULATIONS

10b.1 These regulations cover closure of and withdrawal from degree programmes, levels of programme, eg HN awards and honours level.

CLOSURE OF A PROGRAMME, LEVEL OF A PROGRAMME OR HN PROVISION PROPOSED BY AN ACADEMIC PARTNER

10b.2 Academic Council has overall responsibility for ensuring that students remaining on the programme have the opportunity to complete their studies, and that academic standards for these students are maintained. Faculty Board will need to see any special arrangements being made for completing students, and plans for how these are to be monitored. Faculty Board will also wish to see evidence of consideration of students on other programmes who might also be affected by the proposed closure.

10b.3 Should an academic partner decide to close a programme, level of a programme or HN provision, they must firstly indicate their intention to the relevant dean of faculty and then make a formal notification to that effect to Partnership Planning Forum (PPF). Normally, this notification should be sent a full academic year in advance of the intended closure.

10b.4 The notification from the academic partner should include:

- reasons for proposing closure of programme to new students
- plans for continuing students
- evidence of discussion with the relevant dean of faculty.

10b.5 And if appropriate:

- minutes / report of consultation with other academic partners offering the provision
- minutes / report of consultation with relevant subject network
- minutes / report of consultation with programme committee and external examiners
- minutes / report of consultation with other networked provision sharing modules with the provision to be withdrawn.

10b.6 Immediately after sending notification to PPF, the academic partner should inform the following, in writing, that it is the intention to withdraw the programme:

- students on the programme. Unless all students formally agree in writing to transfer to other programmes, arrangements must be made available for them to complete their programme. Transfer options, if relevant, should be discussed with students at the earliest possible date
- programme committee
- relevant subject network(s) and faculty(ies)

- quality manager(s) of academic partners offering the programme and / or individual modules
- admission and marketing staff at all relevant academic partners and Executive Office.

10b.7 Following approval of the proposed closure, the Dean of Faculty will inform:

- relevant awarding body
- external examiners of the programme
- relevant subject network(s) and faculty(ies)
- any applicants for the provision.

10b.8 Following approval of the proposed closure, the academic partner will inform:

- students on the programme
- programme committee
- quality manager(s) of academic partners offering the programme and / or individual modules
- admission and marketing staff at all relevant academic partners and at Executive Office.

10b.9 This notification and its outcome should be included in the annual programme report.

CLOSURE OF A PROGRAMME, LEVEL OF PROGRAMME OR HN PROVISION PROPOSED BY ACADEMIC COUNCIL

10b.10 A proposal to close a programme would normally be formulated by the Deputy Principal who would normally be acting on the advice of a dean of faculty that a programme be closed. The university has responsibility for ensuring that students remaining on the provision have the opportunity to complete their studies, and that academic standards for these students are maintained. Faculty Board may need to arrange and monitor special arrangements being made for completing students.

10b.11 Following a recommendation from the Deputy Principal to close a programme, a level of a programme or HN provision, Faculty Board will consider the proposal and take into account all matters relating to standards and quality and make a recommendation to Academic Council.

10b.12 The recommendation considered by Faculty Board, and made to Academic Council, should include:

- reasons for proposing closure
- report from the faculty and / or subject network
- report from all academic partners offering the provision
- report, if applicable, from external validating or quality body
- whether temporary or permanent closure
- if temporary, when the provision will be offered again and planned remedial actions required
- plans for continuing students.

10b.13 The Dean of Faculty will inform the following, in writing, that it is intended to withdraw the provision:

- students enrolled on the provision or those undertaking individual modules from the provision
- programme committee
- other academic partners offering the programme and / or individual modules
- admission and marketing staff at all relevant academic partners and at Executive Office.

10b.14 Following a recommendation from Faculty Board or Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, Academic Council may require a programme, level of programme or HN provision to close or cease recruiting if there is clear evidence that the standard of the award is under threat and students are being disadvantaged by inadequate provision. This is a final step that would only be taken following full investigation of issues involved and failure of a programme, level of programme or HN provision to be supported in undertaking remedial actions.

10b.15 Following approval of the proposed closure, the Dean of Faculty will inform:

- relevant awarding body
- external examiners of the programme
- relevant subject network(s) and faculty(ies)
- students enrolled on the provision or those undertaking individual modules from the provision
- any applicants for the provision
- programme committee
- quality manager(s) of academic partners offering the programme and / or individual modules
- admission and marketing staff at all relevant academic partners and Executive Office.

10b.16 This recommendation and its outcome should be included in the annual programme report.

WITHDRAWAL BY AN ACADEMIC PARTNER FROM NETWORKED PROVISION

10b.17 Should an academic partner decide to cease or reduce its contribution to a networked programme, they must first of all discuss this with the relevant dean of faculty prior to making formal notification to that effect to PPF. The contribution by the academic partner to a networked programme may be through the provision of teaching, student support, or module / programme ownership. Normally, this notification should be sent a full academic year in advance of the intended withdrawal of the networked provision.

10b.18 This notification should include:

- details of the provision to be withdrawn
- reasons for withdrawal, including alternative provision for the withdrawal of any specialist modules offered by the academic partner
- minutes / report of consultation with programme committee
- minutes / report of consultation with other academic partners sharing modules with the provision to be withdrawn
- students enrolled on the provision.

10b.19 PPF may require a report from all of the relevant programme committee(s), indicating the implications of the proposed withdrawal, and any resulting changes to the curriculum and

staffing of the programme(s). If the withdrawal of the academic partner will bring about a major modification of a programme, the relevant programme modification regulations (Section 10A) will be followed.

10b.20 Following PPF consideration of the withdrawal, the responsible academic partner will inform, as appropriate and necessary:

- students on the programme
- programme committee
- quality manager(s) of academic partners offering the programme and / or individual modules
- admission and marketing staff at all relevant academic partners and at Executive Office
- any applicants for the provision
- external examiners
- relevant subject network(s) and faculty(ies).

10b.21 The notification and its outcome should be included in the relevant annual programme report.