

7 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

- 7.1 This section deals with the development of new programmes. Programmes for this purpose are deemed to be proposals that are planned to lead to an award as set out in Section 6.2 of these regulations. As indicated in Section 6.21, proposals for more than one programme can come forward as a scheme. What follows within this section and Section 8 also applies to schemes.
- 7.2 There are three key stages in the development of a new programme (see table at the end of this section for more detail). These are:
- Stage 1 – Initiation and planning approval
 - Stage 2 – Programme development
 - Stage 3 – Programme approval.
- 7.3 The objectives of adopting a staged process are:
- a. to ensure that developments are open to all wishing to participate
 - b. to ensure that developments are consistent with strategic plans
 - c. to establish a clear business case for the development
 - d. to ensure that the resources required to deliver new developments are identified
 - e. to facilitate development by enabling development teams to secure resources
 - f. to ensure that proposals are subject to rigorous academic scrutiny.

Responsibilities

- 7.4 The relevant Faculty Board is responsible for determining the academic validity of the proposal and for recommending planning approval.
- 7.5 The responsibility for ensuring that a programme development team are properly supported through the development process rests with the relevant Faculty Board and the Dean of Faculty.
- 7.6 All proposals are also subject to scrutiny at institutional level by Academic Council (which delegates this authority to Academic Planning Committee (APC)) of their strategic fit and sustainability, taking into account the recommendation of the relevant Faculty Board of Study.

Stage 1 – initiation and planning approval

- 7.7 Proposals for new programmes will be considered in the first instance by the relevant academic partner(s) and cognate subject group(s) following informal discussions on the viability of the concept.
- 7.8 Proposals must be approved by the planning groups of the responsible academic partner and all other academic partners which will make a significant contribution to development and delivery of the programme.
- 7.9 The Faculty Board will pay particular attention to whether the proposal:
- i. supports the academic and strategic priorities of the faculty and of the university

- ii. meets the needs of prospective students, employers and the wider community
- iii. uses resources efficiently, minimising duplication
- iv. identifies that the resources needed for the development and delivery of the proposal are available or can be obtained.

7.10 The Faculty Board will then determine whether the proposal proceeds, with or without changes being made, or that it should not proceed. In making its recommendation, the Faculty Board will also recommend the responsible academic partner, and nominations for the programme development leader.

7.11 Academic Planning Committee will consider the Faculty Board's recommendation on the proposal, reviewing in particular its strategic fit and viability, and determine whether the proposal is granted planning approval, with or without changes being made, or that it should not proceed.

Stage 2 - programme development

7.12 The programme development team will develop the curriculum and documentation for approval. Internal and external support for this will be provided by either a peer review process or Advisory Group. New programmes will normally only require an Advisory Group where:

- a. The award is to be accredited by a professional body
- b. The programme is within an entirely new discipline area for the university
- c. The programme will be delivered using a new mode or model of delivery for the university
- d. The programme is delivered in collaboration with an external partner.

7.13 The Dean of Faculty will determine whether an Advisory Group or peer review process is required.

7.14 The peer review process supports the programme team by inviting constructive feedback from an internal and external adviser. This will be provided on the final draft documentation at an appropriate stage prior to the approval event.

7.15 It is the responsibility of the programme development team to nominate both an internal and external adviser to undertake the peer review, taking into account any specific areas of expertise which may be needed. Nominations are subject to approval by the Dean of Faculty.

7.16 The Advisory Group, if required will support the programme team through scheduled interactions at mutually agreed points in the development process. The membership of the Advisory Group will normally comprise:

- a. Dean of Faculty or nominee – chair
- b. Head of Academic Standards and Enhancement or nominee
- c. Principal or nominee from responsible academic partner
- d. At least one internal member with appropriate experience, who is not involved with the provision being developed
- e. At least one external academic member from another HEI
- f. Other members if appropriate, e.g. professional body representative.

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- 7.17 It is the responsibility of the programme development team to nominate individuals for the Advisory Group, taking into account any specific areas of expertise which may be needed. Nominations are subject to approval by the chair of the Advisory Group.
- 7.18 The programme development team will produce programme documentation for consideration by the approval panel in accordance with the agreed timescale.
- 7.19 The Dean of Faculty and the Chair of the Advisory Group (normally the Associate Dean) are responsible for providing written confirmation to the Head of Academic Standards and Enhancement that the programme and relevant documentation are ready to go forward to the formal approval stage.

Stage 3 – programme approval

- 7.20 Detailed procedures relating to the approval process are contained in Section 8 of these regulations.

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Academic development process – stages, purpose and outcomes

Activity	Who's involved	Purpose	Outcome
Stage 1 – initiation and planning approval (1-3 months)			
Idea and informal discussions	Academic staff, AP managers, HoS	Initial consideration of viability of concept prior to any development work	Decision on whether concept merits further development work
Drafting business case	Proposer(s), AP managers, HoS, University Planning team	Outline business case giving sufficient detail for wider discussion (programme content, delivery, market demand, resources, impact on funded numbers).	Rationale and business case
Consideration of business case by planning teams	Proposer(s), AP planning groups, University Planning team	Discussion of concept, fit with strategic plans Opportunity for discussion of resourcing implications and integration with other provision	'In principle' support - or not - with commitment to resourcing for development May include recommendations for refinement prior to next stage
Circulation of business case to SN members, APC and Learning and Teaching team	Proposer(s), CSG, APC, Learning and Teaching team	Visibility of proposed development Opportunity for involvement of / contribution by other CSG members and APs in proposal	Feedback to proposers and HoS
HoS convenes writing team to draft curriculum proposal	Proposer(s), HoS, reps from all participating APs	Produce curriculum proposal, building on business case information	Completed curriculum proposal and costing spreadsheet
Consideration of curriculum proposal by Faculty Board (normally by circulation)	Proposer(s), Faculty Board	Ensures fit with faculty strategic plan	Dean recommends approval - or not - to APC
Planning for marketing	Proposer(s), Marketing (EO and APs)	Planning and integration of marketing activity (including discussion of date for inclusion in print prospectus and UCAS)	Production of marketing plan

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Activity	Who's involved	Purpose	Outcome
Consideration of curriculum proposal by APC		Discussion of curriculum proposal, fit with strategic plan and existing provision, resource and networking implications, implications for funded student numbers, consideration of market and likely demand	Confirmation of planning approval. May include recommendations for consideration by programme development team
Addition to approval schedule	Academic Standards and Enhancement Team	Planning for approval event	Inclusion on approval schedule
Planning for marketing	Proposer(s), Marketing (EO and APs)	Continued planning and implementation of marketing activity	Increased awareness of new programme, inclusion of programme information in print prospectus and UCAS

Table 1: Stage 1 - Initiation and planning approval (1-3 months)

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Activity	Who's involved	Purpose	Outcome
Stage 2 – programme development (3-12 months)			
Curriculum development	Programme development team, Peer Reviewers/ Advisory Group	Detailed development of programme. Advice on content, structure, alignment with external reference points	
Production of programme documentation	Programme development team, Peer Reviewers/ Advisory Group	Documentation to support programme	Programme Specification Module Descriptors Library Resources Reading List Draft student handbook
'Sign-off' of draft programme documentation	(Chair of) Advisory Group	Confirmation from Advisory Group/Peer Review process that documentation is ready to go forward to formal approval stage	Chair's written confirmation to Dean of Faculty
Consideration by Dean	Dean	Decision by dean whether programme is ready to go forward to formal approval stage	Dean's confirmation

Table 2: Stage 2 - Programme development (3-12 months)

Activity	Who's involved	Purpose	Outcome
Stage 3 – programme approval (1-3 months)			
Approval panel meets	Programme development team, AP manager(s), Dean, approval panel	Formal consideration of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities of proposed programme	Report with recommendation to FB for approval of programme for delivery - or not May include conditions
Response to any conditions	Programme development team	Action taken to address issues identified by approval panel	Programme amended and/or resources made available

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Sign-off by Chair of approval panel	Chair of approval panel	Meet academic standards and quality assurance requirements as set by approval panel	Programme meets panel conditions
Production of final programme documentation	Programme development team	Information for students, staff, stakeholders	Programme documentation
Consideration of panel recommendations by FBOS	Faculty Board	Formal approval (on behalf of Academic Council) of programme to be included in academic portfolio	Confirmation of approval of programme for delivery
New programme entered on systems	Student Records Office	Control of the university's academic portfolio. Registration and enrolment of students. Student access to finance and other support	Programme and modules and HAPs added to SITS
Recruitment to new programme	Marketing (EO and APs), Admissions, Programme team	Recruitment of viable student cohort to programme.	Students enrolled on programme.

Table 3: Stage 3 - Programme approval (1-3 months)

List of acronyms					
AP	Academic Partner	FB	Faculty Board	HoS	Head of School
CSG	Cognate Subject Group	HAP	Home Academic Partner	SRO	Student Records Office
EO	Executive Office				