

LTC09D055

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Learning, Teaching & Quality Office

Procedure for the Withdrawal / Close of Courses

The following seeks to formalise the procedure for withdrawing courses, taking account of the need to safeguard the interests of any students on the course(s) being withdrawn and the interests of applicants, and of the need to ensure that relevant offices and parties within the University are informed of the decision.

The procedure covers the following

- A decision to close a course outright
- A decision to transfer a course from one School to another, involving the closure of the course in the original School
- A decision to stop recruiting to one version of a course, whilst creating a new version of the course which will only be available to new students.

The following procedure has been informed by the section of the QAA Code of Practice dealing with Programme design, approval, monitoring and review (precept 9).

1 Identifying Courses for Closure

1.1 As set out in Assuring and Enhancing Teaching Quality, and specifically within the section of the Code dealing with Programme Monitoring and Review, Schools should undertake regular reviews of their provision to ensure that they remain current. Similar processes are undertaken by Marketing and Admissions Services through the Recruitment Admissions and Marketing Committee. These processes may identify courses which have not recruited, which have recruited poorly, which are otherwise uneconomic, or which no longer fit the strategic plan of the School and Faculty. They may also identify the need to make significant modifications to a course for incoming cohorts to adjust to developments in the subject area, to better fit market needs, to more closely align with School or Faculty strategy, or to fit revalidation conditions where the course leads to PSRB recognition.

2 Decision Making

2.1 The following procedure is designed to cover a spectrum of situations, from a School undertaking housekeeping to withdraw a course that has not recruited for some years, through low recruiting courses, to a decision to withdraw a substantial course for economic or academic reasons. As such, the decision making process will need to be adjusted to the circumstances. For example, where a decision is being taken to withdraw a course that has not admitted any students for a number of years, plans for safeguarding the student experience will not be required and only a very limited impact assessment screening will be necessary.

- 2.2 The decision to close a course is an academic one and rests with the School of registration. Schools and Faculties have discretion to determine the appropriate decision making procedure, but any decision to close a course must take account of the position of any students who are currently registered in the course and anyone who has applied for admission.
- 2.3 The relevant Head of School and the Associate Dean for Learning, Teaching and Quality are required to satisfy themselves that the interests of any students currently registered on the course will be safeguarded before approving the withdrawal of a course.
- 2.4 It is recommended that a School discusses a proposal to close a course with the Faculty Admissions Manager, the Associate Dean for Admissions, and Marketing and Admissions Services.
- 2.5 Where the course to be withdrawn also draws on modules outside the School of registration (and particularly where these are core or compulsory), proposals to close a course must be discussed with the other School(s), not least for planning purposes. Where the withdrawal of a course in one School will have an adverse impact upon another School, the matter should be drawn to the attention of the relevant Associate Dean(s) for Learning, Teaching and Quality in the first instance.
- 2.6 Where there are continuing students registered on the course(s) which the School proposes to withdraw, there must be early and ongoing discussions with students. These discussions should inform students of the School's plans, the measures that will be taken to safeguard their educational experience, the options open to students (including transfer to alternative courses) and should seek to provide students with an opportunity to raise and discuss their concerns. Such discussions must be held with all affected students and not just student representatives on School committees.
- 2.7 Schools should also take into account the point in the admissions cycle when the decision to close a course or courses takes effect and seek advice from the Faculty Admissions Manager, the Associate Dean for Admissions, and Marketing and Admissions Services. It will be necessary to write to applicants to offer advice in respect of their options, and to formally release their choice within the UCAS system.
- 2.8 In reaching a decision to withdraw a course Schools have a legal duty to take into consideration the impact of the decision upon those groups covered by equality and diversity legislation. The University may be called upon to demonstrate that it considered and took steps to safeguard the interests of students and potential students from the main equality monitoring groups. Schools will need to undertake an impact assessment screening before making a decision to withdraw a course. (There is a screening proforma to assist Schools with this process.) The purpose of the impact assessment is to determine and clarify whether the business case for course closure is justifiable against equality considerations, and to identify ways to mitigate adverse impact upon a particular group. Where a decision to withdraw a course relates to a course that has not admitted any students for a number of years the screening proforma must still be completed, but will require minimal information. Where the course to be withdrawn targets a specific audience, a full impact assessment may be required.

3 Procedure

- 3.1 The Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate has [approved] a proforma for use by Schools and Associate Deans LTQ when considering and approving course closures. The proforma seeks to provide a framework for considering the various issues.

4 Process for Withdrawing a Course

- 4.1 Where a School makes a decision to cease to recruit to a course, but where there are students continuing on the course, adequate provision must be made for the continuation of

the course until such time as all students have completed the course. Schools should note that intercalations, part time study and reassessment may extend the lifetime of the course.

4.2 In preparing for the withdrawal of a course with continuing students, Schools must give consideration to the range and resourcing of modules required to complete the course. Plans for the withdrawal of the course must be available to the Associate Dean to inform their decision.

4.3 In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to transfer students onto a newer version of the course or onto an alternative course offering similar module choices. Any transfer must be with the full agreement of the student.

5 **Notification**

5.1 Once the closure of a course has been approved by the relevant Head of School and the Associate Dean for Learning, Teaching and Quality the following should be informed via an electronic copy of the approval proforma:

- Faculty Admissions Office

For information and to ensure that publicity materials are updated.
To take appropriate action where there are applicants currently in the admissions process.

- Faculty Teaching Office(s)

For information and the updating of taught programmes records.

- Marketing and Admissions Service

For reporting to the Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing Committee; updating of the prospectus, University web pages and other marketing materials; and closing the course at UCAS (where relevant).

- CAMS Manager

For the purposes of updating the record.

- Learning, Teaching & Quality Office

For reporting to the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate; for updating the Programme Review schedule.

COURSE CLOSURE

| | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|--|
| Faculty | | School | |
| Courses to be closed | | | |
| Course Title (incl. award) | Course Code | UCAS Code | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Academic year the above course(s) will cease / ceased recruiting | | | |
| Are the above courses currently advertised in a prospectus? | | Yes | |
| | | No | |
| Are there applicants for the above course(s) currently in the system? | | Yes | |
| | | No | |
| Date course will cease to be delivered (i.e. academic year in which final student(s) will complete / completed) | | | |
| Will there be students continuing on the course after it ceases to recruit? | | Yes | |
| | | No | |
| If yes, how many? | | Yr2 | |
| | | Yr3 | |
| | | Ind/Abr | |
| | | Yr4 | |
| What are the implications for students currently on the course(s)? | | | |
| | | | |
| Plans for phasing out (including when all students should complete, modules to be offered during the phase out period) | | | |
| | | | |

| | | |
|--|-----|------|
| Have continuing students affected by the closure of the course been consulted? | Yes | |
| | No | |
| Reasons for discontinuation of course | | |
| | | |
| An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been carried out (and is attached for the Head of School and Associate Dean) | Yes | |
| | No | |
| A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out (and is attached for the Head of School and Associate Dean) | Yes | |
| | No | |
| Who has been consulted in reaching the decision to close the course? (e.g. Marketing & Admissions Service) | | |
| | | |
| Signature of Course Director | | Date |
| | | |
| Signature of Head of School | | Date |
| | | |
| Signature of Associate Dean LTQ | | Date |
| | | |

Once complete, please email a copy of this proforma to

- Faculty Admissions Manager
- Marketing and Admissions Services
- Planning Office (CAMS Manager)
- Faculty Manager – Taught Programmes
- Learning, Teaching & Quality Office (for report to LTC)

Screening, Prioritisation and Equality Impact Assessment (Course Closure)

Section 1

1. Title of Course(s) to be withdrawn

2. What are the main aims and objectives of the course?

(Identifying the aims and objectives of a course may help identify any groups who may be adversely affected. For example, is it aimed at a particular audience or provide training in a specialist field of particular interest to a specific group?)

3. What is the profile of registered students over the past five years in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, and disability?

4. What is the profile of applications over the past five years in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, and disability?

5. Who are the other stakeholders (in addition to those listed in 3 and 4) in relation to this course (for example, the Funding Councils, UCAS, PSRBs local communities, other Schools or departments within UEA, other strategic partners)?

Section 2

1. Are the different groups taking the course likely to have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to it?
2. Are there any indications of higher or lower application, participation or success rates for this course for members of these groups?
3. In the light of the above, are there any likely or potential differences in the way in which the withdrawal of the course(s) will impact upon these different groups?

| Group Characteristic: | Yes, No or Not Known | Please elaborate (and give examples of any evidence or data used) |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Age | | |
| Disability | | |
| Gender | | |
| Racial group | | |
| Religious belief | | |
| Sexual orientation | | |
| Transgender | | |

4. To what extent does the withdrawal of this course have the potential to meet or hinder the policies, values or objectives of the University with regard to equality of opportunity ?

High potential

Moderate potential

Low potential

None

Please elaborate:

Based on the information above, indicate whether a full impact assessment is recommended:

Yes

No

Please outline your reasons below:

What priority do you assign to this impact assessment?

High

Medium

Low

Completed by:

Date:

Validated by:

Date:

| Follow up Action Required | Completion date | Person Responsible |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
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