

APPENDIX C1

APPROVAL OF NEW MODULES AND COURSES (UNDER REVIEW)

3.1.1. Scrutiny of New Modules

Proposals for new modules of teaching must be scrutinised and approved by the School Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality (or other person or Committee to whom this authority has been appropriately delegated by the School Board or Director) before their addition to relevant courses/programmes of study. Formal records of the approval of new modules of study must be maintained by the School or by the relevant Faculty Support Office on the School's behalf.

Arrangements for the subsequent annual monitoring, review and update of existing modules are set out in the Code of Practice for this purpose

[Appendix C2

<https://www1.uea.ac.uk/cm/home/services/units/acad/ltqo/keydocs/codesofpractice>]

The relevant Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee scrutinises the operation of this process and confirms to the Learning and Teaching Committee that it has been appropriately undertaken. Where there is a significant amount of new provision for any course affecting learning outcomes, for example, or for core/compulsory modules in a course, the School Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality (or other person or Committee with the appropriate authority) must seek the advice of the relevant Faculty Associate Dean (LTQ) as to whether a new course proposal is required in accordance with the principles set out below.

3.1.2 Approval of New Course Proposals

This revised process for the approval of new course proposals was introduced from 2005-06. The process takes account of the new Faculty structure and combines assurance of the academic standards and the quality of the provision with appropriate flexibility and responsiveness to internal and external conditions at the Faculty level. There are two key approval stages:

School Level

- approval by the Head of School on the recommendation of the relevant Director(s) of Learning, Teaching and Quality report to the School Board.

Faculty Level

- approval by the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee or by the Faculty Associate Dean (Learning, Teaching and Quality) if the proposal can be considered via the "fast-track" route (see below) and report to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.

It is the responsibility of the proposing School to:

- liaise with the Secretary of the University's Planning and Resources Committee at the earliest possible stage (and well before any relevant bidding deadline) if the proposed course is subject to a teaching contract (e.g. with a Health Authority) and/or is an entirely new subject area. This is to ensure that any strategic and resource implications are considered at the earliest possible time;
- consult and demonstrate evidence of consultation of a range of internal and external stakeholders prior to submitting a course proposal (e.g. School colleagues, other Schools (essential where the proposal is a joint one with another School and/or involves substantial input by (an)other School(s)), the Staff-Student Liaison Committee, the relevant School/Faculty Associate Deans for Admissions and Outreach, the Admissions and Outreach/International Offices, Careers, Library, Information Services Directorate, Dean of Students' Office, Accommodation Office, an independent external academic reviewer (who may be a current or former external Member of a Course Review Panel or academic contacts in the appropriate subject Centre(s) of the Higher Education Academy), external examiners, relevant Professional and/or Statutory Bodies, major employers and schools);

See Paragraph 3.1.8 below for further information about external consultation requirements.

- complete a programme specification and the accompanying background information forming the case for the proposal and any resource implications, using the Learning and Teaching Committee's template for this purpose (downloadable from the Learning, Teaching and Quality website: www.uea.ac.uk/ltg). It is expected that the proposal will take into account relevant requirements regarding academic standards, content and any practice-based elements, as specified by the Quality Assurance Agency (in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, in the subject benchmarks and the Code of Practice and by Professional and/or Statutory Bodies where relevant. The proposal will also take into account any relevant UEA Codes of Practice;
- follow the additional steps for course approval where University approval is sought in tandem with Professional and/or Statutory Body approval (see below);
- on receipt of formal course approval, and, in the light of any required changes, prepare the final programme specification to be lodged with the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office and the Planning Office/Student Information System (SIS) Team. The programme specification will be placed on the University's website (intranet)* and, from a date to be agreed by the Learning and Teaching Committee, the internet)

*(This is still under development following the implementation of the new Student Information System from September, 2006);

It is the responsibility of the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (or Faculty Associate Dean, Learning Teaching and Quality) to ensure that:

- the School-level process has taken place in accordance with the required procedure including appropriate internal and external consultation;
- consideration at Faculty level takes place in accordance with the appropriate procedure for fast-track or full new course-proposals;
- the Faculty Executive has confirmed that the course proposal is consistent with University/Faculty strategy and that sufficient resources are available (this may require negotiation with Central Services or the submission of a specific bid PRIOR to approval);
- (via the relevant Faculty Support Office) the relevant School(s) is/are informed regarding the outcome of the approvals process, together with the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office (for the Learning and Teaching Committee) the Admissions and Outreach Office, the Planning Office and Student Information System Team. On receipt of formal approval and in the light of any required changes, the School must prepare a final Programme Specification.

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee

The Committee will receive regular reports from the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees regarding courses approved and, on an annual basis, will audit the process of consideration and scrutiny (by sampling) at School and Faculty level in order to assure itself that the process is operating robustly and to determine whether and what enhancements might be made.

The Committee (or officers such as the Director of Taught Programmes to whom authority is delegated) will consider for approval proposed changes to University regulations arising from new course proposals. Schools/Faculties must alert the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office at an early stage if it appears that the proposal has regulatory implications.

What can be considered via the Fast-Track route and what via the Full New Course proposal route?

The following principles shall apply when determining whether the route for course approval (full or fast-track) is to be followed:

Full/New Course Process	Fast-Track Process
Major modifications to core/compulsory modules and major modifications arising from Course Review or Annual Course if there are resource implications.	Major modifications to core/compulsory modules and major modifications arising from Annual Course Update or Course Review but without resource implications.
Courses involving the addition of a year or semester abroad.	
PgR provision with resource implications but does not require a programme specification (although one may be prepared).	
The introduction of any new degree award or subject area not previously offered and must gain the prior	

approval of the LTC for the new award and, in the case of the introduction of subject areas new to the University and/or externally funded, the prior approval of the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC).	
Proposals where two thirds (or more) of the modules comprising the course have been approved by the School during the session in which the course proposal is presented or were approved in the preceding session, whether or not there are resource implications and whether or not the subject area is new to the School. This is to ensure that there has been at least one session's experience of delivery of the new modules (on which there will have been student evaluation and module monitoring and update) prior to their inclusion in a fast-track course proposal.	
<p>Comment: Where it is not clear which is the most appropriate route, the Faculty Associate Dean (LTQ) shall determine whether a proposal requires consideration under the Fast Track or New Course process.</p>	

What constitutes a Major Modification to Existing Courses and which process would it fall under?

The following examples are regarded as “major modifications” and would normally fall under the full new course approval process if there are resource implications. (If there are no resource implications, the fast-track route may be used with the exception of new course proposals where two thirds (or more) of the modules have been approved by the School during the session in which the course proposal is presented or were approved in the preceding session. This rule applies whether or not there are resource implications).

- a change to the designated year/semester spent abroad
- the addition of pathways within a named route
- separation of pathways from a course into individual named courses
- any modules to be offered by distance learning routes
- change(s) in Learning Outcome(s) at the level of the course
- changes to core/compulsory modules
- changes in module credit values: e.g. a change to 4 x 30 credit modules, or 3 x 40 credit modules (rather than say 6 x 20 credit modules)
- changes to assessment methods (within the limits of the balance of coursework to examination permitted under the relevant Regulatory Framework).

This is not an exhaustive list. If the proposed change does not fall into any of these categories, the advice of the Faculty Associate Dean should be sought in the first instance as to the most appropriate route.

Variations to the Processes : Shortened Fast-Track Process

A shortened Fast-Track process may apply where there is a simple modification to an existing course without resource implications. Consultation will be required with the Admissions and Outreach Office and Planning Office and once the School Director has approved the proposal, the Faculty Associate Dean (LTQ) may take the final decision. A Fast-Track proposal may not (immediately) require a new programme specification to be prepared, depending on the nature of the change and the date of its introduction (i.e. the programme specification may be updated accordingly at the specific time). Modifications under the shortened Fast-Track process may cover:

- change of name of degree course
- change in School of registration
- changes in year weightings (but within the combinations permitted under the relevant Regulatory Framework)
- new PgR provision without resource implications.

These proposals should be presented to the relevant Faculty Associate Dean (LTQ) in the form of a memorandum which addresses the following:

- background, context and rationale for change
- confirmation of approval by the relevant School Director of Learning and Teaching including appropriate consultations. (Appropriate consultation, where a proposed change of name of degree course affects current and intercalating students, must include obtaining the consent of these students in writing. Any prospective students who have applied for the course under its existing title must also be informed in writing)
- confirmation that there are no resource implications
- the effective date of commencement of the change.

It is expected that appropriate amendments to programme specifications will be made either at the time of the next annual review and update of modules and courses (if the approval of the proposal occurred prior to the annual review and update) or following approval (if the proposal was made after the annual review and update).

3.1.3 Joint Course Proposals

In the case of joint proposals (including 'minor' subjects – which typically constitute less than 50% of the total content) the School of registration should take responsibility for preparing the case/programme specification and for making arrangements for both Schools to consider the proposal (this consultation may be arranged through the relevant Faculty Office). Where a joint proposal covers more than one Faculty, the Faculty of the School of registration which is responsible for considering the course proposal shall satisfy itself that the other Faculty(ies) concerned have been consulted (at the appropriate point in the process) and ensure that the Faculty(ies) concerned support the proposal.

3.1.4 Conjoint Approval/Re-approval between the University and a professional and/or Statutory Body

Where a new course proposal requires approval by a Professional and/or Statutory Body (PSB) as well as the University, a conjoint approval process may be held between the University and the relevant PSB. The process is illustrated in the Process Maps referred to in Section 3.1.6 below. Existing courses requiring re-approval also follow this process.

Any courses that require a separate (i.e. not conjoint) validation shall follow a modified PSB validation process, assuming that the course has been approved by the University. The process therefore begins with consideration of the need for an internal Critical Read prior to the actual Validation/Accreditation event. Domestic arrangements for the event should broadly follow those set down for the School and Faculty Office regarding dates, timetable, travel etc.

3.1.5 Publicity

Approval for entries in the Prospectus shall not be given until either the relevant Faculty Associate Dean (LTQ) has approved a Fast-Track proposal, or in the case of a New Course proposal, until the Faculty LTQC has granted approval or, in the case of changes requiring the approval of the Senate LTC, and/or the PRC, such approval has been granted by the LTC and/or the PRC in principle.

In the case of course proposals/validations including a PSB, approval shall not normally be given for entries in the Prospectus until the course has been validated by the University and the relevant PSB. Exceptionally, a case for approval may be put forward to the LTC once the course has been given approval by the Faculty LTQC.

3.1.6 Process Maps

Process maps are available (via the LTQ website at: https://www1.uea.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.20284!new%20course%20proposals.pdf) which show in diagrammatic, flow-chart form the approvals process for:

- Annexe 1: 'Fast-track' course proposals
- Annexe 2: 'Full' course proposals
- Annexe 3: Course proposals that require PSB (conjoint) validation or accreditation.

3.1.7 Programme Specifications

A Programme Specification must be prepared for each new course/programme. Schools may decide to have one specification per course or a specification that covers several courses where those courses form a programme, having generic as well as their own specific learning outcomes. In cases of joint course proposals, one embracing programme specification may be prepared or an overarching specification prepared which includes the learning outcomes for the programme as a whole and which explains the contribution to the outcomes made by each constituent subject or subjects having their own programme specification.

There is a University template for a programme specification which includes sections relevant to the course proposals/approvals process. These sections are not intended for publication. The template may be accessed via the LTQ website at the following address: <http://www1.uea.ac.uk/cm/home/services/units/acad/ltqo/taughtprogs/ProgspeCS>

In addition, there are guidelines for staff to help them complete the specification/course proposal. These are also available via the LTQ website as follows: <http://www1.uea.ac.uk/cm/home/services/units/acad/ltqo/taughtprogs/ProgspeCS>

3.1.8 Consultation with Internal and External Stakeholders

The Learning and Teaching Committee recognises that consultation with students is part of the approvals process. Thus, the process requires that the Head of School reports proposals to the School Board, on which there is student representation. The School Director is also charged with ensuring that students, via their School Board, School Teaching Committee (where one exists) and/or Staff/Student Liaison Committee representatives, are kept abreast of proposals (**Appendix D2.**) Student members also sit on the Faculty LTQCs and the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee.

It is a requirement that Schools consult a range of external and internal stakeholders when considering new course proposals. The programme specification/course approvals template illustrates those who should be asked for comments.

It is a requirement that proposers of new health-related courses must liaise closely with the relevant health professions' statutory and professional bodies and health service employers and that they are compliant with relevant national provisions.

External Consultation

This is a requirement. Consultation should cover both academic and employability aspects of the new course proposal.

Our approach to consideration of new course proposals is based on proportionate risk. This is in line with the Quality Assurance Agency's own Code of Practice (Section 7, precept 3 and illustrative comments). The requirement for consultation has a difference of emphasis dependent on whether the proposal is considered as a 'fast-track', a new course proposal for a subject area new to the School making the proposal or new to the University. However, it is important that evidence of appropriate independent external advice can be demonstrated.

Academic Consultation

Fast-track course proposals

Evidence of consultation with, as a minimum, a recent or current external examiner is required. This could be in the form of a short report by the external appended to the course approval form or extracts from such comments incorporated within the approval document (the original being

retained by the School for audit purposes, if necessary) or recorded in the course approval document following oral discussion. (If the last option is followed, the course proposer must obtain the written approval of the external regarding the accuracy of the comments. This approval (which may be by email correspondence) must be retained by the School for audit purposes.

We consider this appropriate and proportionate on the basis that the subject area already has University approval and that the external examiner is expressly excluded from participating as a member of a Course Review Panel during the regular review of courses.

Course originators are at liberty to and are encouraged to consider seeking the views of an external who is not a current or recent external examiner.

New course proposal regarding a subject area new to the School or a subject area new to the University

Written evidence of consultation with an external adviser is required. The external adviser must not be a current or recent external examiner. It would be acceptable to approach a current/recent course reviewer or to approach the relevant subject centre in the Higher Education Academy for comments. Where there is Professional/Statutory and /or Regulatory Body involvement in the course proposal, the course proposer should seek the consent of the relevant Faculty Associate Dean (LTQ) to waive the requirement for further external academic advice. The requirements for the written comments are those as set out above.

“Employability” advice

The advice of external advisers on, for example, developments in the workplace, employability, and career opportunities should be sought in respect of any proposal, be this a fast-track or new course proposal.

This advice may come from contacts with employers’ groups that may exist in the proposing School (for example, CMP and LAW have Advisory Groups). It is recognised that some courses are not associated with specific employers. In these circumstances especially, the advice/comments of the University’s Careers Centre should be sought. Schools are encouraged to contact the Careers Adviser linked to their School in the first instance.

3.1.9 Role of the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee and the Associate Dean (Learning, Teaching and Quality)

The Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC) and the Associate Dean (Learning, Teaching and Quality) are expected to give careful consideration to the evidence provided in and/or with the course proposal regarding internal and external consultation. They are expected to use their powers to reject proposals where there is no evidence of such consultation or to requirement amendments to proposals where they deem the evidence to be unsatisfactory.

3.1.10 The role of the Learning and Teaching Committee

The Learning and Teaching Committee will receive regular reports from the Faculty LTQCs regarding new courses (including fast-track proposals and

those requiring PSB involvement) approved during the course of each session.

Each session, the Learning and Teaching Committee will audit (via sampling) the processes undertaken at School and Faculty level in order to assure itself and the Senate that the processes remain appropriate, robust and consistent with external requirements, expectations and guidelines such as those of the QAA's Code of Practice (in particular Section 7). The Learning and Teaching Committee will review the operation of the requirement for external consultation as part of this annual audit of the operation of the course approvals process. The audit will also consider whether enhancements or other changes to the process should be made, with any recommendations for change/enhancement being considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee. For the purposes of audit, the Learning and Teaching Committee may delegate its authority to specific members of the Committee (such as the Directors of Taught Programmes and Postgraduate Research Programmes) and to other appropriate staff.