Approval processes for new MOOCS, on-line courses, on-line modules and non-credit bearing short courses.

1. **Background**
An online working group has been established to consider strategy and developments in on-line learning both for wholly on-line courses and for the enhancement of campus based courses. The terms of reference and membership can be found on the LTC website. It is considered that this working group will be required until such time as the creation and delivery of on-line courses are mainstream University activity. The working group has developed a strategy for on-line learning at UEA which was approved by LTC on 24.6.15. On-line courses are resource heavy to develop and maintain and with limited support available it is critical that resources are focussed on development that best support the University's vision. The approved strategy can be found on our website, and is appended to this paper for convenience. The strategy details the criteria that should be used when assessing potential new on-line courses and thereby helping Schools and Faculties identify the areas in which they should pro-actively consider making an on-line offer. Approval processes have been developed to control on-line developments and focus resources on those courses which will best support the University's 2030 vision and five year plan, see below.

2. **Approval process for new on-line credit bearing and non-credit bearing courses and modules**
The University will use Blackboard as its on-line learning course platform for new online courses and modules, both credit bearing and non-credit bearing. UEA on-line courses will exemplify the UEA's strong commitment to an excellent student experience and use the most appropriate technologies and approaches to teaching and learning. They will have at least one of the following:
   a) A clearly identified business case, based either on large scale national/global educational needs or based in a more niche area in which UEA has an international reputation. In both cases, course should form part of a complimentary online/on campus portfolio of courses.
   b) The ability to work for the benefit of one or more campus based courses and share resource production and staffing where possible.

   To assist School and Faculties in reviewing the business case for on-line modules the Head of Learning Technology has devised a costing model based on a 30 credit module designed to be interactive to allow for maximum peer to peer learning and social construction. A sample budget for the preparation of a MOOC has also been developed.

2.1. New on-line credit bearing course approval process.
   A precursor stage has been introduced to the current process such that the development of a fully detailed, new course proposal on the new course proposal form is only undertaken in cases which fit with University strategy and can be resourced. Therefore the approval process has two stages, the first using the new precursor approval form.

   Stage 1, Step 1 – School
   Stage 1, Step 2 - On-line working group.

   If the course is considered viable and there is a strategic fit then the full new course proposal form can be created and processed through the following steps, as normal:
   Stage 2, Step 1 - School
   Stage 2, Step 2 - Faculty LTQC
   Stage 2, Step 3 - Faculty Executive
   Stage 2, Step 4 - LTC

2.2. New on-line credit bearing module approval process.
Due to the resource implications related to the development and maintenance of on-line credit bearing modules these will require a greater level of scrutiny than traditional campus face-to-face delivered modules. LTC recently approved a standard module outline which will provide much of the basic information on the proposed module.
https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/7848102/ltc14d070dividerh.pdf/0a996f2e-332e-448d-bb7a-83a5b0786fed

The proposed module outline form, with an accompanying completed new on-line credit bearing module approval form should be submitted to School Executive in the first instance. The approval process is as follows:
Step 1 – School
Step 2 - On-line working Group
Step 3 – Faculty Executive

2.3. New on-line non-credit bearing courses (such as, but not limited to, a CPD offer).
These also will require a greater level of scrutiny than more traditional campus based non-credit bearing short courses due to the resource implications related to the development and maintenance of non-credit bearing on-line courses.   The approval process is similar to that for credit bearing modules.

The new approval form and the accompanying completed Module Outline template form should be completed and submitted to School Executive in the first instance. Once School support has been secured the proposal should be submitted to the On-line working Group for consideration. If the course is considered viable it will be referred to the relevant Faculty Executive for final determination of the strategic fit and confirmation that the proposal can be resourced.

In summary the approval process has the following steps:
Step 1 - School
Step 2 - On-line working group
Step 3 - Faculty Executive

3. New MOOC approval process
The University will continue to work with its partner, FutureLearn, to ensure a viable business model for the development and running of future MOOCs is established. A new MOOC approval form has been developed. This form should be completed and submitted to the School Executive in the first instance followed by the On-line working Group for consideration and feedback. Once approved by the On-line Working Group the proposal will need approval by the relevant Faculty Executive and finally LTC before it is developed.

In summary the approval process has the following steps:
Step 1 - School
Step 2 - On-line working group
Step 3 - Faculty Executive
Step 4 - LTC

New MOOCs should achieve at least one of the following:
   a) Help support UEAs recruitment and admissions to UG and PGT taught courses through either generically pitched or specialist subject-specific MOOCs built on our peaks of academic excellence
   b) Generate new content that enhances and enriches provision for all UEA's community and beyond, and which takes advantage of the opportunities afforded by Creative Commons licensing;
   c) Enhance links with other organisations such as subject associations, companies or other partners;
   d) Have potential for generating income through the sales of certificates or enhanced assessment opportunities;

e) Help build capacity at UEA in the creation of digital learning materials and online courses. This is in terms of both staff expertise and the provision of necessary equipment.

UEA's Strategy for On-Line and MOOCs

1. Context

UEA has an excellent reputation as a provider of high quality higher education. To date, this has been mostly based on campus, but in 2013 we were amongst the first Universities to join the FutureLearn MOOC provider and have enjoyed substantial success in that online. In addition, some Schools and Faculties are keen to develop new forms of provision online both to deliver taught HE programmes and also for CPD.

There are a number of internal and external drivers for the development of an online strategy for courses.

External drivers include:

- Increasing recognition of potential for online learning to play a greater role in higher education[1]

- Extensive interest internationally in the potentially disruptive role of MOOCs[2]

- Increasing connections between online presence and face to face courses [3]

Internal drivers include:

- The need to harness technology to meet the expectations of increasingly digitally engaged learners[4]

- Increasing evidence that a 'flipped' mode of teaching can enhance student engagement in their studies, and the important role of technology in facilitating this approach[5].

All this means that now there is a need for a more strategic approach to the development of online provision to ensure that initiatives at UEA develop in a planned and co-ordinated way, underpinning the University's overall corporate strategy, and with appropriate resourcing. This should mean we are well placed to maximise the benefits of technology enhanced learning both to grown online courses where appropriate and to make sure our campus based courses are competitive.

At the time of writing, the University tends to think of its online and campus based courses as two separate modes of teaching. However increasingly it may be that 'hybrid' mode of higher education will become best practice, where students on campus learning is guided and supplemented by technology enhanced learning.[6]

2. Strategic Principles

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[1] Online Learning Task Force (2011) *Collaborate to Compete: Seizing the Opportunity of Online Learning for UK Higher Education*. Report to HEFCE. http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2011/201101/

[2] Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (2013) *The Maturing of the MOOC*. BIS Research Paper No 130. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/240193/13-1173-maturing-of-the-mooc.pdf

[3] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-29240959

[4] http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/october-2013/research07Oct2013.pdf
[5] http://www.flippedlearning.org/cms/lib07/VA01923112/Centricity/Domain/41/HigherEdWhitePaper%20FINAL.pdf
[6] http://mfeldstein.com/faculty-know-adaptive-learning/

2.1. UEA is committed to continuing to develop online provision in a planned and coordinated way across Faculties.

2.2. New online initiatives should underpin the University's 2030 Vision and UEA Plan.

2.3. Online provision poses new questions in quality management, but also in the University's IT, finance and HR systems and the implications of increasingly online learning of all types are important for all the University's divisions and professional services.

3. Strategy

3.1. Part A – MOOCs

The University will continue to work with its partners at FutureLearn to ensure a viable business model for the development and running of future MOOCs is established as soon as possible. New MOOCs should achieve at least one of the following:

f) Help support UEAs recruitment and admissions to UG and PGT taught courses through either generically pitched or specialist subject-specific MOOCs built on our peaks of academic excellence

g) Generate new content that enhances and enriches provision for all UEA's community and beyond, and which takes advantage of the opportunities afforded by Creative Commons licensing;

h) Enhance links with other organisations such as subject associations, companies or other partners;

i) Have potential for generating income through the sales of certificates or enhanced assessment opportunities;

j) Help build capacity at UEA in the creation of digital learning materials and online courses. This is in terms of both staff expertise and the provision of necessary equipment.

3.2. Part B – Fully online courses

The University will use Blackboard as its on-line learning course platform. New online courses, both credit bearing and non-credit bearing, will exemplify the UEA's strong commitment to an excellent student experience and use the most appropriate technologies and approaches to teaching and learning. They will have at least one of the following:

a) A clearly identified business case, based either on large scale national/global educational needs or based in a more niche area in which UEA has an international reputation. In both cases, course should form part of a complimentary online/on campus portfolio of courses

b) The ability to work for the benefit of any campus based courses and share resource production and staffing where possible.