



## Quality Assurance Code of Practice

### Amendments to Existing Units and Courses and the Approval of New Units

**This document is primarily intended for:**

Unit convenors

Directors of Studies

Assistant Registrars (Faculty/School) or equivalent

Chairs, Faculty/School/ Department Learning, Teaching & Quality Committees

Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee

#### Queries:

**First Point of Contact:** Assistant Registrars (Faculty/School) or equivalent

**Technical Specialist:** Academic Registry

<u>1.</u>	<u>Scope</u>	2
<u>2.</u>	<u>Principles</u>	2
<u>3.</u>	<u>Types of change</u>	2
	<u>Consultation and communication with current students and applicants</u>	4
	<u>Timings for approval</u>	5
	<u>Unforeseen circumstances</u>	5
<u>4.</u>	<u>Consultation and advice</u>	6
<u>5.</u>	<u>Information required</u>	7
<u>6.</u>	<u>Committee approval</u>	8
<u>7.</u>	<u>Withdrawal of courses and pathways</u>	9
<u>8.</u>	<u>Reporting and recording of decisions</u>	10
<u>9.</u>	<u>Following approval</u>	10
<u>10.</u>	<u>Subject benchmark statements</u>	11
<u>11.</u>	<u>Monitoring and review</u>	11

Annex A:	<u>Summary of consultation, communication and deadlines for approval of changes</u>	13
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Annex B:	<u>University Academic Framework (6 credits)</u>	14
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## 1. Scope

- 1.1 These procedures relate to:
  - all changes to units or courses of study, that lead to an award of the University
  - proposals for new credit-bearing units whether offered on a standalone basis or as additions to, or substitutions for, units in existing courses
  - the withdrawal of units, pathways and courses.
- 1.2 New units proposed as part of a new course will be considered under the provisions of [QA3 Approval of New Courses of Study](#).
- 1.3 New exit awards for existing courses are considered under the provisions of QA3.
- 1.4 For collaborative provision, this statement must be read in conjunction with [QA20 Collaborative Provision](#).

## 2. Principles

- 2.1 The University is committed to the ongoing development and improvement of its courses, taking account of developments in the discipline and pedagogic practice, and being responsive to feedback and review.
- 2.2 The University needs to ensure that any changes made to units and courses and the content of new units are academically and strategically appropriate and sound, and can be resourced. To ensure this, all changes to units and courses or the introduction of new units must be approved by a formal process.
- 2.3 Any discretion to delegate authority to approve changes to courses of study and units (see section 6) will only be exercised in the favour of formal minuted fora, and where there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect the interests of students who may be affected by proposed changes, including those outside the owning Department. Authority to approve new units will not be delegated to subject fora i.e. normally the Department Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees (DLTQCs) in the faculties or the equivalent fora in the School.
- 2.4 The form and content of units and courses, and their assessment should be widely accessible within the institution. Where changes are made or new units are made available, notice needs to be given in a timely manner to staff and students.
- 2.5 Where a decision is taken to withdraw a course or pathway, appropriate measures will be taken to notify and protect the interests of students registered for, or accepted for admission to, the course. This should take into consideration the University's [Student Protection Plan](#).

## 3. Types of change

- 3.1 The approval process and timings are set to be appropriate to the type of change to the unit or course. There are four types of change: housekeeping, minor, intermediate and major. Examples of each are given as an illustration below. The

key factor in determining the type of change is consideration of the impact of the proposed change on the student learning experience and on *material* information about a course (see section 3.5ff). Consideration needs to be given to the implications of the proposed change for the structure and balance of the course, for its educational aims, learning outcomes and content, and/or the wider practical implications for the student learning experience as well as other academic and professional service Departments. In line with the University's principle for a whole course approach, course changes should be considered holistically, and in relation to their overall impact on a cohort. Unit changes will normally be made as part of a wider course review rather than in isolation. The impact of unit changes on the overall course should therefore be considered as part of this process.

- 3.2 Examples of each of the types of change are provided in Annex A.
- 3.3 Housekeeping Course Specifications: Non-substantive changes to course information that appears in the digital prospectus, including unit synopses and option block text, should be approved by Directors of Teaching. Marketing Teams may amend typographical errors in the text without seeking approval. Changes must be approved by the end of January for undergraduate courses and by the end of March for postgraduate courses, for courses starting in the following academic year.
- 3.4 Further guidance on the classification of changes can be obtained from the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School.

### **Consultation and communication with current students and applicants**

- 3.5 The University has a legal responsibility to provide clear and accurate information to students and applicants about their course of study. "Material information"<sup>1</sup> about a course is that information which enables prospective and current students to make informed choices. An offer of a place and its acceptance – which establishes a contractual relationship between the University and the applicant – is based on material information. It is therefore necessary to take account of whether any proposed unit or course changes would affect material information provided about the course(s).
- 3.6 "Material information" includes information about, *inter alia*, the course title; core units of the course; the range of optional units offered; overall methods of assessment (such as the overall balance of examination, coursework and practical assessment); the location of teaching; the balance of contact time and independent study; the length of the course; professional accreditation; and the final award. Information provided in course specifications issued to offer holders, and to students at the start of their course, is considered to be "material information". Major changes and some intermediate changes to a course may affect a student's decision-making and therefore will not normally be considered once offers are being made.
- 3.7 If proposed changes to units and courses would affect material information, it will

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<sup>1</sup> [CMA GUIDANCE for higher education providers](#) <sup>4</sup> explains in more detail what is classified as "material information".

normally be necessary to seek, and take into consideration, the views of **affected** students on the course(s). In the case of major changes and of intermediate changes involving substantive changes to the course specification, normally the consent of affected students will be sought in order before implementing the change. **It is therefore advisable to introduce such changes to the course for future cohorts only.** Where the proposed change would not affect current students (for example, in the case of most changes to one-year taught postgraduate courses or the first year of undergraduate courses), it is good practice to consult current students via the SSLC. Changes in optional units do not require consent to be sought provided that they continue to align with the information on options given to students at the point of application.

- 3.8 Applicants and students must be informed of changes to material information at the earliest opportunity. Major changes to undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses will normally be approved by the start of the application cycle. This is in order to avoid informing applicants of substantial changes to courses at the time of making an offer, or after an offer has been made.
- 3.9 **Annex A** summarises the requirements for student consultation on proposed changes, and for the communication of approved changes to affected current students and applicants. Advice on consultation and communication of changes is available from the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School in the first instance. Guidance documents on student consultation are available from [Academic Quality and Standards](#).

### Timings for approval

- 3.10 The purpose of establishing deadlines is primarily to ensure that timely and clear information can be made available to students and applicants to inform their academic choices, in line with CMA expectations and the conditions of Office for Students registration. Deadlines also enable essential internal processes such as timetabling and option choice. The [academic administration calendar](#) sets out the main administrative deadlines, such as for the production of the University timetable, and is provided to help all Departments, both academic and professional, to plan work accordingly. Where units or courses have been approved for delivery outside the semester pattern, advice on timescales for proposed changes should be sought from Academic Registry.
- 3.11 The deadlines for changes to units and courses, for courses with a September/October start date are provided in **Annex A**.
- 3.12 For changes affecting courses with non-standard start dates, the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School should be consulted in the first instance regarding deadlines for approval of changes. The key consideration will be the completion of the approval process (including consultation) sufficiently far in advance of the start date to communicate with applicants/current students in good time about approved changes.

### Unforeseen circumstances

- 3.13 In the event of unforeseen circumstances (e.g. staff illness), F/SLTQCs retain the

discretion to consider approval of minor changes to units at any point in time. In such circumstances, careful consideration will need to be given to appropriate consultation and/or communication with students. Advice should be sought from the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School in the first instance.

- 3.14 Intermediate change proposals, affecting the substance of the course specification, that are put forward after the deadlines require University-level approval (see Annex A).

## 4. Consultation and advice

- 4.1 Proposals should be drawn up with due reference to:
- The University's [Student Protection Plan](#)
  - the relevant University Academic Framework to which the course has been designed ([Academic Framework \(10 credits\)](#) or Academic Framework (6 credits) (QA4 Annex B))
  - the relevant University [assessment regulations](#) for the course
  - the [Quality Assurance Code of Practice](#)
  - the [University Strategy](#), and specifically the [Driving excellence in education](#) strategic pillar
  - University frameworks such as the [Statement of Equality Objectives](#), [Disabled Student Provision Overview](#), and [Health and Safety Statement](#) policies, standards and guidance
  - the Office for Students [ongoing conditions of registration on quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes](#)
  - the descriptors for higher education qualifications set out in the [sector recognised standards](#), Office for Students condition of registration B5
  - relevant [Subject Benchmark Statements](#)
  - QAA [Characteristics Statements](#), where applicable
  - [Higher Education Credit Framework for England](#)
  - requirements of professional or statutory bodies, with advice where relevant from employers
  - The University's Assessment Taxonomy ([QA3](#) Annex E)
- 4.2 The Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School is the primary source of professional advice on preparing proposal documentation, identifying the level of change involved, preparing proposal documentation using Curriculum Planner, and the approval process in general.
- 4.3 Academic Registry staff can advise on conformity with nationally recognised frameworks, and on the University's Academic Frameworks; the quality assurance framework; and assessment regulations, including any exemptions that may be required. Additionally, the Timetabling Office within Academic Registry can advise on teaching space implications and requirements.
- 4.4 The Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) can advise on good practice in learning, teaching, assessment and feedback including consideration of a global educational experience. The CLT can also advise on the definition and description of assessment and delivery methods and constructive alignment with learning

outcomes.

- 4.5 Faculty/School Marketing teams advise on the writing and editing of all text that is used in the digital prospectus as well as in the course specification – namely the course description text, unit synopses and option block text. This ensures that the change process for all such student-facing, material information is fully integrated in terms of approval and publication, and that a single source of truth is maintained.
- 4.6 In the case of intermediate and major changes, the advice of the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School in the first instance must be sought regarding the consultation and communication required with current students and applicants, as outlined in **Annex A**.
- 4.7 When developing proposals that affect the assessment methods for a unit or units, the proposer should consult the University's Assessment Taxonomy ([QA3](#) Annex E). Summative assessments for new units, and changes being proposed to assessment for existing units, should be described in line with the Assessment Taxonomy where possible. Proposals for innovative assessment methods not covered within the taxonomy must be considered at the relevant Faculty/School Learning and Teaching Quality Committee (F/SLTQC), and recommendations to extend the taxonomy can be made to Education, Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC) as needed.
- 4.8 Prior to seeking approval for changes to a unit or course or for the creation of a new unit the proposer should:
  - obtain support from the Director(s) of Studies and the Head of the home Department/Division of the School
  - consider whether the proposed change has an impact on cohorts or courses in other Departments/the School and if so obtain the views of all relevant Directors of Studies
  - in cases of a series of related changes contained within units or the introduction of new units, solicit the view of the Director(s) of Studies regarding the impact of the proposed change upon the academic focus of the course(s)
  - seek the views of affected students; for substantive changes to the course specification (i.e. major changes and some intermediate changes) the consent of all affected students will normally be required
  - seek the views of employers, where necessary, for instance in the case of Degree Apprenticeships
  - seek the views of the accrediting body, where the unit or course is accredited
  - for changes affecting the text in the course specification that is also used in the prospectus (course description, unit summaries, option block text), involve Marketing teams in the updating of the relevant text prior to committee approval
  - for assessment changes and new/discontinued units, consider any impact on the assessment methodologies for the course as a whole (see [QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback](#) para 5 and 6); bear in mind also the University's approach to anonymous marking (see [QA16](#))
  - invite the External Examiner(s) to comment on changes to the curriculum, new units and anything affecting the nature and pattern of assessment
  - in the case of collaborative provision, seek the views of the Link Academic Adviser and undertake appropriate consultation with partners; in those instances



where an amendment to an existing institutional agreement is required, seek advice from the Legal Advisers (see [QA20](#))

- consult with the Timetabling Office in Academic Registry where the proposal entails new or different teaching space requirements
- identify any other additional resources that the change would need and obtain assurance that these can be met e.g. from the Library or Digital, Data & Technology.

## 5. Information required

5.1 Amendments to units and courses, including the creation of new units and the withdrawal of units, must be processed through the Curriculum Planner system.

5.2 For approval by committee(s) of a proposed change, or the introduction of a new unit, the following information should be provided:

- a rationale for the change(s);
- the resourcing impact of the proposal, and where additional or differentiated resourcing will be required, confirmation that the resourcing requirement(s) can be met;
- the impact of the change(s) on the course and the on the student experience;
- if a course is accredited, the implications of the change for the accrediting body;
- for collaborative provision, feedback from the partner institution, and where applicable, from the Link Academic Advisor;
- feedback on the consultation undertaken including the views of:
  - students, particularly those affected by the proposal – see **Annex A**;
  - the External Examiner(s) - for intermediate and major changes;
  - Directors of Studies of courses affected by the changes, as appropriate to the nature of the change
  - the Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee, where appropriate for changes to courses containing a doctoral element
  - employers, in the case of Degree Apprenticeships.
- the current and revised unit description
- for intermediate and major changes, the current and revised course specification including course structure and description
- for courses that have undergone Curriculum Transformation:
  - where changes are proposed to assessment(s), the updated course-level assessment mapping and assessment strategy
  - where structural changes are proposed, the updated mapping of unit contributions to the course intended learning outcomes.

5.3 For the withdrawal of a course, [QA4 Form 2](#) should be used.

## 6. Committee approval

### Boards of Studies

6.1 **Delegation:** Boards of Studies are responsible for the approval of the withdrawal of units and for the approval of minor and intermediate changes, but routinely delegate these powers to the F/SLTQC. They may, on recommendation from the F/SLTQC,

delegate responsibility for approving minor unit changes, to nominated subject fora, normally the Department Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees (DLTQCs) in the faculties or the equivalent fora in the School. Only the approval of minor changes can be delegated to subject fora.

### **Subject fora (normally DLTQCs)**

- 6.2 Subject fora (normally DLTQCs or the equivalent fora in the School) can approve minor changes to units where that responsibility has been delegated by the Board of Studies. In considering proposals for such changes, subject fora will assure themselves that the case made for the proposed change is sound; that the academic rationale for the content and methods of delivery and assessment remains coherent; and that relevant consultation has been undertaken.

### **Faculty/School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees**

- 6.3 The F/SLTQC is responsible for consideration of proposals at a level of detail commensurate with the proposed type and impact of change. The Committee will assure itself:
- that the case made for the proposed change is sound;
  - where applicable, that account is taken of whether the proposed change might affect alignment with the principles of, and benefits delivered by, curriculum transformation;
  - that the information provided enables an adequate understanding of the impact of the proposed change in the context of the course as a whole;
  - that the proposed change can be appropriately resourced where differentiated or additional resourcing will be required;
  - that the educational aims and intended learning outcomes remain appropriate;
  - that the academic rationale for the content, structure, methods of delivery and assessment remains coherent;
  - that the methods of assessment continue to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes of the course;
  - that relevant consultation has been undertaken and taken into consideration appropriately;
  - that the proposed change is in line with the [University's Academic Framework \(10 credits\)](#) or Academic Framework (6 credits) (QA4 Annex B) as appropriate.
  - and the proposed change has taken account of external reference points (as outlined in Annex A to [QA3](#));
  - that the University's obligations with regard to provision of accurate and timely information to students and applicants on their course of study are not compromised by the proposal.
- 6.4 The F/SLTQC is responsible for detailed consideration of proposed new units, normally on recommendation from the DLTQC or equivalent subject forum.
- 6.5 The F/SLTQC will:
- agree whether to approve proposals for intermediate changes, proposals for new units and the withdrawal of existing units where that responsibility has been delegated to the Committee by the Board of Studies;
  - agree whether to recommend for approval by CPAC all major changes, including where such changes affect collaborative arrangements and agreements, and any intermediate changes that become major due to



submission after the University deadlines;

- agree whether or not to recommend for strategic approval by Academic Programmes Committee (APC) a change of course title and/or material change to course aims and/or learning outcomes, prior to its consideration by CPAC.

### **Courses & Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC)**

- 6.6 CPAC<sup>2</sup> is responsible for the approval of major changes and consideration of requests for exemptions from elements of the [University's academic framework](#) but not for the withdrawal of courses (see below).

### **Academic Programmes Committee (APC)**

- 6.7 Changes to course titles and/or material changes, including to course aims and/or learning outcomes, may have strategic implications for the University's portfolio of courses including resourcing implications and, in particular, potential impact on the recruitment of students. Where a major change involves a change in course title, and/or such strategic implications, the proposal should be submitted to APC prior to its consideration by CPAC. APC will make a decision on initial strategic approval.

## **7. Withdrawal of courses and pathways**

- 7.1 Course withdrawal comprises two elements: strategic approval and final approval. These two elements can occur simultaneously. [QA4 Form 2](#) should be completed and submitted to APC. For withdrawal of courses delivered collaboratively with a partner institution, see also [QA20](#).

- 7.2 Strategic approval - The initiator of a proposal to withdraw a course is responsible for submitting to APC:
- a rationale; and
  - the numbers of current students, the date when the last of them is expected to complete, and the number of students accepted for admission.

Where the initiator is not the relevant Head of Department (or the Dean in the case of the School of Management), they should be consulted, and any feedback presented with the rationale.

- 7.3 Final approval The Dean of the relevant Faculty/School (or their delegate) is responsible for providing information to APC on the proposed arrangements to protect current students remaining on the course during the phasing out period, and any students accepted for admission onto the course. The note should include feedback from students and External Examiners and, where relevant, collaborative partners and link tutors, regarding the proposed arrangements for the protection of student interests.
- 7.4 APC will:
- grant strategic approval where an appropriate rationale has been provided;
  - grant final approval where it is satisfied that the interests of current students, and students accepted for admission, are being/have been appropriately protected.

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<sup>2</sup> For terms of reference of the committee, see: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/teams/courses-and-partnerships-approval-committee/>

- 7.5 In order to suspend a course for a limited period of time, rather than permanently withdraw it, approval will also be required. Further guidance should be sought from the Academic Registry in the first instance.

## **8. Reporting and recording of decisions**

- 8.1 The decisions of CPAC and APC will be reported to Senate via the minutes.
- 8.2 The decisions of the F/SLTQC will be reported to the Board of Studies via the minutes.
- 8.3 The decisions of subject fora will be reported to the F/SLTQCs via the minutes together with the relevant unit descriptions and associated documentation required by the faculty-level committee.
- 8.4 The formal record of the consideration and approval of unit or course changes will comprise:
- the minutes showing the decision made;
  - the change proposal (including the rationale and impact information);
  - the final approved versions of the unit description(s) and the course specification(s) including course structure(s) and description(s) as appropriate;
  - evidence of student consultation regarding the proposal, as appropriate.

## **9. Following approval**

- 9.1 Committee Secretaries are responsible for the timely confirmation of final versions of documentation via Curriculum Planner to ensure appropriate action is taken or information communicated. The Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School is a key role in this process as they (or their nominee) are responsible for liaising with Academic Registry to ensure the University's course and unit records are correct, including the unit and course catalogues. Normally (and where necessary) Academic Registry should be informed of approved changes and new units within 10 working days of approval and Assistant Registrars should be informed within 5 working days. Academic Registry should be informed of housekeeping changes as they occur.
- 9.2 Where a change or the introduction of a new unit entails a change in requirements for University teaching space, Departments/the School are responsible for notifying the Timetabling Office within Academic Registry. Through the consultation process (see section 4) any significant teaching space requirement should have already been discussed with Academic Registry.
- 9.3 Directors of Studies are responsible overall for ensuring that students are provided with up to date information about their current course including their choice of options. In particular, Directors of Studies are responsible for notifying all affected current students in writing at the earliest opportunity of any approved changes to their units/course (including reissuing the course specification, where updated) and for ensuring that the course handbook(s) is amended appropriately. Advice on wording of communications must be sought from the Assistant Registrar in the

Faculty/School in the first instance.

- 9.4 Assistant Registrars in the Faculty/School are responsible for notifying the undergraduate or taught postgraduate Admissions office (as applicable) of changes to material information requiring communication to applicants. The relevant Admissions office (undergraduate or taught postgraduate) is responsible for sending written communications to affected applicants about approved changes.

## **10. Monitoring and review**

- 10.1 The impact of changes to units and courses and the introduction of new units is monitored under the oversight of the Education, Quality and Standards Committee through External Examiners' reports, annual review processes and periodic review, where required, for doctoral, collaborative and/or accredited, courses (Degree Scheme Review). This may draw upon feedback, such as student unit evaluations and from Staff/Student Liaison Committees.

## Statement Details

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	<p><i>University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee</i>  13 July 2011, Minute 120  10 July 2012, Minute 279  9 July 2013, Minute 428  5 Nov 2013, Minute 462  8 July 2014, Minute 552  11 Nov 2014 Minute 600  7 July 2015 Minute 671  5 July 2016 Minute 807  17 January 2017 Minute 871  21 March 2017 Minute 890  11 July 2017 Minute 940  18 Jan 2018 Minute 1002  16 July 2019 Minute 1197</p>
	<p><i>Quality Assurance Committee</i>  13/07/2010, Minute 1098(2)  03/07/2009, Minute 976(7)  01/07/2008, Minute 857(7),(8)  19/07/2006, Minute 638  06/09/2002, Minute 318  25/02/2002, Minute 289c</p>
	<p><i>Academic Programmes Committee</i>  Minute</p>
	<p><i>Senate New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations (NFAAR) and Review of Committee processes</i>  <i>Report of the Working Party on Faculty Structure</i>  <i>Faculty and Department responsibilities</i>  <i>Review of the Effectiveness of Senate, 2006.</i>  09/04/2010 Minutes 13110 and 13112  08/06/2011 Minute  11/06/2008 Minute 2782  09/04/2008 Minute 12740</p>
	<p>QA49 Approval of New Units  Withdrawn on 31/07/2011</p>
<b>Related Documentation :</b>	<p>University <a href="#">Assessment Regulations</a>  <a href="#">QA3 Approval of New Courses of Study</a>  <a href="#">QA44</a> Course Handbooks and Course Specifications (including Annex B template)</p>

	<a href="#">QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback</a> QAA UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance: <a href="#">Course Design and Development</a> <a href="#">Sector-recognised standards</a> (Office for Students condition of registration B5): descriptors of higher education qualifications QAA <a href="#">Subject Benchmark Statements</a> <a href="#">University of Bath Student Protection Plan (SPP)</a>
<b>Author</b>	Academic Registry

## Annex A: Summary of Types of Change, Consultation, Communication and Deadlines for Approval of Changes

- 1) All deadlines must be met except in the event of unforeseen circumstances (see section 3.13). To enable deadlines to be met, dates of relevant Committee meetings need to be checked, and appropriate student consultation planned and implemented, well in advance. Adequate time must be allowed for proportionate student consultation taking account of assessment or holiday periods.
- 2) Approved changes **must be communicated in writing to all affected current students** (see section 9.3). The right-hand column below indicates whether additional communication with applicants is also needed.
- 3) Where current students would not be affected by the proposed change, such as for most changes to one-year postgraduate taught courses or the first year of undergraduate courses, it is good practice to consult current students via the SSLC.
- 4) For changes affecting courses with non-standard start dates, the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School should be consulted in the first instance regarding deadlines for approval of changes. The key consideration will be the completion of the approval process (including consultation) sufficiently far in advance of the start date to communicate with applicants/current students in good time about approved changes.



## Examples of change and deadlines for courses with a September/October start date

Level of change	Examples	Consultation with current affected students (pre-approval)	Deadlines	Communication to applicants required? (post-approval)	Final approving committee or officer
<b>House-keeping changes (units)</b>	changes that do not alter the substance of a unit, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updating references, URLs, etc.</li> <li>• minor correction</li> <li>• clarification of existing content.</li> </ul>	None	N/A (at any time)	None	None
<b>House-keeping changes (course specification)</b>	Changes that do not alter the substance of a course specification, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updating references, URLs, etc.</li> <li>• minor correction (typos)</li> <li>• clarification of existing content</li> </ul>	None	<b>UG:</b> 31 January in the academic year prior to implementation <b>PGT:</b> 31 March in the academic year prior to implementation	None	Director of Teaching if text is rewritten. Correction of typos, updating of references, URLs do not require approval.
<b>Minor changes (units)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change of unit title</li> <li>• minor variations in content</li> <li>• changes to assessment patterns and/or weightings that do not affect the overall balance of assessment on the course, that do not increase the number of assessments, and that are not judged in other respects</li> </ul>	Via SSLC	<b>UG and PGT:</b> 30 June in the academic year prior to implementation	None	Normally DLTQC or SLTQC (as delegated by Board of

Level of change	Examples	Consultation with current affected students (pre-approval)	Deadlines	Communication to applicants required? (post-approval)	Final approving committee or officer
	<p>to have an appreciable impact on the student experience</p> <p><i>For example, if the assessment of a unit comprises two essays, removing one would constitute a minor change, whereas adding a group presentation would be considered to be an intermediate change.</i></p>		on		Studies)
<b>Intermediate changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>changing the designation of a unit e.g. compulsory/optional, or in the context of relevant University assessment regulations, essential, e.g. a Designated Essential Unit (DEU)/Must Pass Unit (MPU)</li> <li>an additional compulsory unit and/or, in the context of relevant University assessment regulations, an additional DEU/MPU to a course</li> <li>additional optional units to a course</li> <li>joining two or more units</li> <li>changes to requisites</li> <li>substantive revisions to unit content that may have an impact on the overall course</li> <li>changing a unit's occurrence from one semester to another</li> <li>changing the year in which a unit occurs within a course structure</li> <li>withdrawal of a unit</li> </ul>	<p><b>All</b> affected current students to be consulted on changes to the course specification (see also <i>point 3</i>) above). For changes to options on UG courses, SSLC consultation will normally be sufficient.</p>	<p><b>UG:</b> 31 January in the academic year prior to implementation</p> <p><b>PGT:</b> 31 March in the academic year prior to implementation</p> <p>Changes, that affect the course specification, proposed after these deadlines</p>	<p>YES</p> <p><i>Changes to material information provided to prospective students must be communicated to applicants.</i></p>	<p>F/SLTQC (as delegated by BoS)</p>

## QA4 Annex A

Level of change	Examples	Consultation with current affected students (pre-approval)	Deadlines	Communication to applicants required? (post-approval)	Final approving committee or officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>changes in the breakdown of, or overall, taught contact time</li> <li>changes to assessment patterns and/or weightings that affect the overall balance of assessment on the course, increase the number of assessments, or are judged to have other appreciable impact on the student experience</li> <li>changing a unit's examination date to one outside the examination period approved by Senate.</li> </ul>	The consent of all affected students will normally be sought for substantive changes to the course specification.	require University-level approval (see para 3.14).		
<b>Major changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>changing the title of a course of study</li> <li>changes which require an exemption from elements of the University's <a href="#">Academic Framework (10 credits)</a> or Academic Framework (6 credits) (QA4 Annex B) (as appropriate) to be approved by the Courses &amp; Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC), or from relevant University assessment regulations to be approved by Education, Quality &amp; Standards Committee</li> <li>changes to the structure of a course or assessment regime which have a significant impact on the student experience</li> <li>changes that would otherwise be intermediate but that are submitted after the University deadline (and therefore likely to be higher risk and impact)</li> </ul>	<b>All</b> affected current students to be consulted (see <i>also</i> 3) <i>above</i> ). For major changes the consent of all affected students will normally be sought.	<b>UG and PGT:</b> 31 July that falls <b>14 months</b> prior to affected cohort start (e.g. 31 July 2024 for courses starting in Sept/Oct 2025)	YES <i>Major changes must be communicated to applicants.</i>	CPAC (also APC for strategic elements as necessary)

Level of change	Examples	Consultation with current affected students (pre-approval)	Deadlines	Communication to applicants required? (post-approval)	Final approving committee or officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of year-long units, which contribute to the final award, exceeding 36 credits per year per course</li> <li>• changes which result in material changes to the course aims or course intended learning outcomes. NOTE: this could be brought about by changes to individual or a group of units e.g. introducing new, existing unit(s), changing a significant unit, for example a dissertation or major group project unit</li> <li>• discontinuation of an existing course accreditation<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• exemptions from the generic exit awards (Certificate of Higher Education and Diploma of Higher Education) available on undergraduate courses (including an exemption from the stipulation that credit achieved through a placement or study year abroad will not contribute to these awards)</li> <li>• exemptions from the generic exit awards (Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma) available on taught postgraduate courses (including if applicable an exemption from the stipulation that credit achieved through a placement or study year abroad will not contribute to these awards).</li> </ul>				

More detailed examples are available from [Academic Quality and Standards](#)

<sup>3</sup> See also [QA8](#) Professional Accreditation.

## ANNEX B - UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK (6 CREDITS)

- 1 University Academic Framework (6 credits)
- 2 Developing a new programme of study – aspects to consider
- 3 Programme Specifications
- 4 Programme regulations
- 5 Assessment at the unit level
- 6 Progression and the Programme Description
- 7 Reassessment
- 8 Degree Classification
- 9 Transfer between programmes
- 10 Generic University exit awards

### 1. University Academic Framework (6 credits) – taught programmes

- 1.1 **This Academic Framework has been superseded by the Academic Framework (10 Credits) (QA3 Annex A). This Academic Framework is intended for continued use in relation to courses implemented under it and will not apply to courses designed to newer expectations (such as those transformed under Curriculum Transformation).**
- 1.2 This framework uses the terms “programme” and “programme of study”, which have been generally superseded by the terms “course” and “course of study” in related quality code statements. For the purpose of this annex, these terms can be treated as interchangeable.
- 1.3 A programme of study leading to a named award within the University's unitised Academic Framework comprises a defined number of discrete units. Each unit will have its own learning outcomes which will be assessed either within the unit or as part of an integrative assessment:
  - Compulsory units are those components of a programme of study which must be taken by all students; in the NFA context some or all of these might also be designated essential units (DEUs);
  - Optional units are those units that students can select from a prescribed range specified within the programme of study or other, Director of Studies-approved units. Electives are a particular sort of optional unit which can be chosen from across the University's provision by a student as part of their programme of study. In the NFA context, some or all optional units might also be Designated Essential Units (DEUs). The availability of all optional units may be constrained by timetabling or resource availability;
  - Extra-curricular units are taken outside the programme of study, up to a maximum of 6 credits per year. They can be chosen by a student but do not contribute to progression requirements, or to the final degree classification. Credits achieved in these units may count towards an undergraduate award of Certificate of Higher Education or Diploma of Higher Education.
- 1.4 The programme structure should ensure that the programme learning outcomes are met by all who would graduate under the normal assessment and award provisions, e.g. by using Designated Essential Units to underpin requirements without which the named award could not be made.

- 1.5 The University uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as the basis for its unitisation. Proposals for new programmes should reflect the requirements set out in Annex B on award titles and minimum levels of credit, in accordance with the [FHEQ](#).
- 1.6 A student engaged in full time undergraduate study for an Honours Degree is normally required to complete 60 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits per academic session (equivalent to 120 Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) credits). A student engaged in full time taught postgraduate study is normally required to complete 90 ECTS credits (equivalent to 180 CATS credits). Students may opt to take additional free/extra-curricular units to a maximum of 6 additional ECTS credits (equivalent to 12 CATS credits) in any one academic year (with the prior approval of their Director of Studies).
- 1.7 Normally, units are based on one tenth of a full-time academic year of study and will have a weighting of 6 ECTS credits (equivalent to 12 CATS credits). Half units of 3 ECTS credits, double units of 12 ECTS credits and project units based on multiples of 6 will also be permitted. Industrial placements may also be assigned an ECTS credit tariff based on multiples of 6.
- 1.8 In line with national credit frameworks and QAA guidance, the University has set an expectation of 120 notional learning hours associated with a 6 ECTS credit unit (equivalent to 12 CATS credits), which equates to 1200 learning hours in an academic year for full-time undergraduates. For full-time taught postgraduate students there is an expectation that their 90 ECTS credits (equivalent to 180 CATS credits) will equate to 1800 learning hours.
- 1.9 Units made up from the combination of any normal 3-, 6-, 12-credit unit-dimensions are permitted. A clear pedagogic argument outlining the formal and summative assessment regime should be made where year-long units will total more than 36 credits per year per programme. The impact of year-long units on inter-disciplinary programmes or generally available units should be considered and agreed with the relevant programme teams prior to approval.
- 1.10 Requests for exemption from elements of the University's Academic Framework will normally be considered at Stage Two Full Approval by the Programmes and Courses Approval Committee (CPAC), although this may be sought earlier where appropriate from the same Committee. The exception to this is exemptions from NFAAR which are approved by the Education, Quality and Standards Committee. Such requests should be accompanied with a clear rationale for the exemption being sought. Exemption from unitisation is normally only permitted on the grounds that the provision requires collaboration with partner organisations or has constraints on the pattern of delivery dictated by the requirements of professional bodies.

## 2. Developing a new programme of study

- 2.1 As set out in its [Education Strategy](#), the University welcomes academically gifted students from any background, to create a diverse and culturally-rich community; and is committed to sustaining an inclusive, supportive, well-resourced learning environment within which independent learning flourishes and individual potential can be achieved.



- 2.2 In developing a new programme for approval, the Programme Development Team should consider the following:
- the educational aims of the programme, i.e. the rationale prompting the design of the course
  - how the proposed programme fulfils the Departmental/School/LPO and the [University](#) and [Education](#) Strategies
  - the viability of offering the proposed programme based on projected student numbers and the resources available, taking into account the extent to which comparable provision in the subject area already exists and anticipated student demand
  - the level and the title of the final award, with reference to the table of awards in QA3, Annex B and the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications\(FHEQ\)](#). In line with guidance set out in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications the expectation is that for programmes with "and" in the title, e.g. BSc Economics and Computing, there will be an approximate 50/50 split between disciplines; for programme titles containing "with", e.g. BSc Economics with Computing, the split will be between 75/25 and 60/40
  - the intended learning outcomes, i.e. the range of knowledge and abilities that a student may be expected to have acquired upon successful completion of the programme. Learning outcomes should be clear and explicit and defined, where possible, in terms of key skills and in terms of external reference points i.e. the [FHEQ](#) and [Subject Benchmark Statements](#)
  - the curriculum structure and the proposed length of the programme, as applicable to both full and part-time students - taking into account progression with an increasing level of demand at each stage of the programme
  - the modes and weighting of assessment for each component of the programme; the pedagogically-appropriate mix of summative and formative assessment; opportunities for synoptic, and/or programme-wide assessment of learning outcomes; and the University's approach to anonymous marking ([QA16](#))
  - the balance of the programme, incorporating a range of modes of delivery and assessment, aligned to the learning outcomes, and a balance of breadth and depth in the curriculum. This should also include consideration of how all students in a diverse cohort are provided with opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes in order to experience an inclusive and supportive learning environment; as well as the capacity to meet the anticipatory duty to meet the entitlements of disabled students
  - the overall coherence and integrity of the programme - how the component parts link together to meet the overall purpose and objectives of the programme
  - best use of different modes of delivery and technological resources, pedagogic best-practice
  - the entrance requirements, including acceptable qualifications and experience and arrangements for accrediting prior (experiential) learning
  - the likely opportunities available to students upon completion of the programme;
  - external reference points:
    - Framework for Higher Education Qualifications ([FHEQ](#));
    - any relevant [Subject Benchmark Statement](#)(s)
  - internal reference points:
    - [University Strategies](#)
    - [University Ordinances](#) on minimum periods of study and aegrotat awards
    - [University Regulations](#), particularly Regulation 15 on assessment and maximum periods of study
    - [New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations \(NFAAR\)](#);

- the University's Academic Framework (see section 1 above and Annex B below)
- [QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback](#)
- [QA35 Assessment Procedures for Taught Programmes of Study](#)
- where relevant, [QA20 Collaborative Provision](#)
- [Equalities and diversity policies and guidance](#) on an inclusive education experience
- Statement of [Equality Objectives](#)
- requirements of professional or statutory bodies.

2.3 The Programme Development Team should therefore seek written advice and guidance from a range of perspectives:

- **Assistant Registrars in the Faculties/School** (or equivalent), who are the primary source of advice on preparing programme proposal documentation and the programme approval process, including timescales, the collation of all documents required for final approval of the new programme and the arrangements with the External Reviewer(s) for their reports or attendance
- **Department and Faculty accountants** on preparation of a business case
- **Academic Registry** on areas such as current desirable strategic direction for programme structures and modes of delivery, student records, time-tabling and teaching space implications, model programme structures, Academic Framework requirements, compliance with the New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations (NFA:AR) including and any exemption that may be required, alignment with nationally recognised frameworks, and award certification. Consultation should take place early in the process, particularly when developing complex or innovative programmes to avoid delays later on at the committee stages
- **Undergraduate Admissions & Outreach / Postgraduate Taught Student Recruitment & Admissions** regarding admissions including confirmation from the Director of Undergraduate Admissions & Outreach / Head of Postgraduate Taught Student Recruitment that they consider that the proposed title of the programme is appropriate to the stated aims and outline of the programme content (form [QA3.3](#))
- **Librarian, Director of Computing Services and relevant Heads of Department and/or Professional Services** on any potential service requirements beyond existing baseline provision
- **Disability Service Manager** to enable the entitlements of disabled students for access to the programme to be considered
- **International Relations Office** – where appropriate
- **Student Immigration Service** on visa implications relating to Designated Alternative Programmes
- **Head of Careers Service**, on development of professional, vocational or broader career aims and employability through the learning aims of the programme and/or specific units
- **external inputs** from potential employers, academic peers, intended partners in collaborative provision, professional and regulatory bodies, and, where appropriate, from potential students (for example, for continuing professional development programme proposals, or where students on existing programmes are viewed as likely recruits to a proposed higher level programme)
- **Centre for Learning and Teaching** on curriculum development assessment approaches

- **Academic Registry** on programme structure and modes of delivery.

### 3. Programme Specifications

(see also Guidance on [Preparing a Programme Specification](#))

- 3.1 [Programme Specifications](#) are definitive, formal and concise descriptions of programmes that are comprehensible to a general audience, stored within the electronic Curriculum Management Information System (CMIS) and made publicly available via the University website. Programme Specifications are public documents that support external accountability, intended for a general external audience as well as current and prospective students.
- 3.2 The University also uses Programme Specifications in programme approval processes to ensure that the aims and intended learning outcomes of programmes are clear, and that the learning outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated.
- 3.3 The template and guidance on writing a Programme Specification are available in the CMIS system, including standard text on University indicators of quality and student support structures; a Microsoft Word version of the [template](#) is also available on-line under QA3 for use in stage 1 strategic approval only.

### 4. Programme Regulations

- 4.1 Regulation 15.2.b states that “Schemes of Study” are those documents which set down the approved curriculum, rules, requirements and scheme of assessment for a programme of study. This Regulation is normally realised in detailed Programme Specifications.
- 4.2 Programme regulations summarised in or appended to the Programme Specification should be drawn up to reflect the University's Academic Framework and Regulations and to articulate how these are given effect for the programme; they will specify any further stipulations) for that programme, such as any professional or statutory body requirements, unit choices, student conduct and any other special responsibilities. For example, whereas the University Regulations give the overall admissions requirements for the University, those for specific subjects go into the Programme Specification.
- 4.3 **Assessment regulations** should be covered by reference to the appropriate section of the [NFAAR](#): NFAAR UG, PGT, FD, HY, PGOLC or CPD. For programmes which are not compliant with NFA a clear and fully detailed set of programme regulations is required as definitive and accurate information on the rules governing entry, progression, assessment and awards, under the provisions of the University Regulations, for reference by students, staff, and Boards of Examiners including External Examiners.

### 5. Assessment at the unit level

- 5.1 Credit will be awarded for successful completion of a unit. This will normally be defined as the achievement of the pass mark for the summative assessment(s). Unit descriptions should specify and define any additional criteria for the award of credit to be applied at the level of individual components of assessment. In particular, where

- a candidate must pass each individual component of the assessment in order to complete the unit successfully;
- the candidate is required to reach a minimum threshold in any, or all, of the components of the assessment.

this should be specified in the unit description and will be recorded in the on-line unit catalogues.

- 5.2 In instances where the teaching of a level 6 (H) level unit and an M level unit is shared, the learning outcomes and assessment must be appropriately differentiated. The Academic Registry should be consulted if this need is anticipated.

## **6. Progression and the Programme Description**

- 6.1 Programme regulations describe the structure of, and routes through, a programme. A diagrammatic description of the programme structure is included in the documentation held within CMIS ("Programme Definition and Structure") linked to the Programme Specification.
- 6.2 For programmes fully compliant with [NFAAR](#), the programme regulations set down in the Programme Specification should outline the progression requirements by referring directly to the criteria in the relevant appendices of the relevant [NFAAR](#) document (UG, PGT, FD, HY, PGOLC or CPD) and note any key features. If progression to a placement year is contingent upon having fulfilled all the progression requirements (i.e. if it is not possible to progress to a pre-arrangement before repeating a stage), this must be stated.
- 6.3 For other programmes, the programme regulations should outline the criteria for progression from one year, or part of the programme, to the next, and should in particular, specify:
- the minimum threshold to be achieved in a unit before credit can be awarded by compensation;
  - the maximum number of failed units for which credit might be awarded by compensation;
  - the criteria for the award of credit by compensation in the light of a satisfactory academic profile during the academic year;
  - the criteria for an interim award or transfer to another defined award;
  - any differences in the treatment of compulsory, optional and elective units with respect to the award of credit by compensation.

## **7. Reassessment**

- 7.1 For programmes fully compliant with the NFAAR, the programme regulations set down in the Programme Specification should refer directly to the criteria in the relevant appendices of the relevant NFAAR document (UG, PGT, FD, HY, PGOLC or CPD) to define the timing and nature of any re-assessment or supplementary assessment permitted, and indicate the mechanisms for retrieval appropriate to different degrees of failure.
- 7.2 For other programmes, the programme regulations should define the timing and nature of any re-assessment or supplementary assessment permitted, indicating the mechanisms for retrieval appropriate to different degrees of failure and having

heed to the following principles:

- candidates may not be permitted an opportunity for reassessment solely to improve upon their marks/degree classifications if they have already been deemed to have satisfied the Examiners;
- candidates will not normally be required to undertake any reassessment for units that they have already passed unless the extent of their original failure was deemed by the Board of Examiners for Programmes to necessitate that they repeat the whole year in order to satisfy the progression requirements of the programme;
- final year candidates on three, four or five year undergraduate degree programmes may not be permitted an opportunity for reassessment unless the Faculty/School Board of Studies determines that exceptional circumstances have affected the candidate's performance.

## 8. Degree Classification

- 8.1 For programmes fully compliant with the NFAAR, the criteria for how a candidate's final degree classification is reached are defined in the relevant appendices of the relevant [NFAAR](#) document (UG, PGT, FD, HY, PGOLC or CPD).
- 8.2 For other programmes, the programme regulations should define how a candidate's final degree classification is reached having due regard to the principle that the formulaic calculation is intended as an aid to reaching a decision on an individual candidate. It does not override the Board of Examiners for Programmes' discretion to take account of other appropriate evidence, and in particular such regulations should specify:
- the weighting of individual units in the calculation of the final award, including classification where appropriate
  - the criteria for an interim award or transfer to another defined award.

## 9. Transfer between programmes

- 9.1 Where appropriate, the programme regulations section of the Programme Specification should also define any criteria for transfer points between programmes of study (e.g. between BEng and MEng); where programmes are fully compliant with the NFAAR this is by reference to the relevant appendices of the relevant [NFAAR](#) document (UG, PGT, FD, HY, PGOLC or CPD). The criteria according to which a student might be admitted or transferred in to an alternative programme need to be specified where relevant. Tier 4 visa requirements may constrain programme transfer options for international students, therefore programme designers may wish to consult Student Immigration Services.

## 10. Generic University exit awards

- 10.1 Generic awards, Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE) and Diploma in Higher Education (DiplHE), are available to students on undergraduate programmes, who meet the relevant award requirements and who are obliged or wish to leave their programme prematurely. Programme Specifications/regulations should state whether students are eligible for these awards (if it is not considered appropriate to offer one or both awards, an exemption should be sought from Senate). Exemptions from

specific aspects of the CertHE and DiplHE may be approved by CPAC. Credit achieved through a placement or study abroad cannot contribute to either award, unless explicitly stated otherwise in the relevant Programme Specification/ Regulations and approved by CPAC.