

7 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

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

Responsibilities

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

Stage 1 – initiation and planning approval

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

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- iii. uses resources efficiently, minimising duplication
- iv. identifies that the resources needed for the development and delivery of the proposal are available or can be obtained.

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

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

Stage 2 - programme development

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

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

7.13 The Dean of Faculty will determine whether an Advisory Group is required.

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

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

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

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

7.17 It is the responsibility of the programme development team to nominate individuals for the Advisory Group, taking into account any specific areas of expertise which may be needed. Nominations are subject to approval by the chair of the Advisory Group.

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7.18 The programme development team will produce programme documentation for consideration by the approval panel in accordance with the agreed timescale.

7.19 The Dean of Faculty and the Chair of the Advisory Group are responsible for providing written confirmation to the Head of Academic Standards and Enhancement that the programme and relevant documentation are ready to go forward to the formal approval stage.

Stage 3 – programme approval

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

Academic development process – stages, purpose and outcomes

| Activity | Who's involved | Purpose | Outcome |
|--|---|--|---|
| Stage 1 – initiation and planning approval (1-3 months) | | | |
| Idea and informal discussions | Academic staff, AP managers, HoS | Initial consideration of viability of concept prior to any development work | Decision on whether concept merits further development work |
| Drafting business case | Proposer(s), AP managers, HoS, University Planning team | Outline business case giving sufficient detail for wider discussion (programme content, delivery, market demand, resources, impact on funded numbers). | Rationale and business case |
| Consideration of business case by planning teams | Proposer(s), AP planning groups, University Planning team | Discussion of concept, fit with strategic plans Opportunity for discussion of resourcing implications and integration with other provision | 'In principle' support - or not - with commitment to resourcing for development May include recommendations for refinement prior to next stage |
| Circulation of business case to SN members, APC and Learning and Teaching team | Proposer(s), CSG, APC, Learning and Teaching team | Visibility of proposed development Opportunity for involvement of / contribution by other CSG members and APs in proposal | Feedback to proposers and HoS |

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| Activity | Who's involved | Purpose | Outcome |
|---|---|---|--|
| HoS convenes writing team to draft curriculum proposal | Proposer(s), HoS, reps from all participating APs | Produce curriculum proposal, building on business case information | Completed curriculum proposal and costing spreadsheet |
| Consideration of curriculum proposal by Faculty Board (normally by circulation) | Proposer(s), Faculty Board | Ensures fit with faculty strategic plan | Dean recommends approval - or not - to APC |
| Planning for marketing | Proposer(s), Marketing (EO and APs) | Planning and integration of marketing activity (including discussion of date for inclusion in print prospectus and UCAS) | Production of marketing plan |
| Consideration of curriculum proposal by APC | | Discussion of curriculum proposal, fit with strategic plan and existing provision, resource and networking implications, implications for funded student numbers, consideration of market and likely demand | Confirmation of planning approval. May include recommendations for consideration by programme development team |
| Addition to approval schedule | Academic Directorate | Planning for approval event | Inclusion on approval schedule |
| Planning for marketing | Proposer(s), Marketing (EO and APs) | Continued planning and implementation of marketing activity | Increased awareness of new programme, inclusion of programme information in print prospectus and UCAS |

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

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

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

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| Activity | Who's involved | Purpose | Outcome |
|--|---|---|--|
| Stage 3 – programme approval (1-3 months) | | | |
| Approval panel meets | Programme development team, AP manager(s), dean, approval panel | Formal consideration of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities of proposed programme | Report with recommendation to FB for approval of programme for delivery - or not May include conditions |
| Response to any conditions | Programme development team | Action taken to address issues identified by approval panel | Programme amended and/or resources made available |
| Sign-off by Chair of approval panel | Chair of approval panel | Meet academic standards and quality assurance requirements as set by approval panel | Programme meets panel conditions |
| Production of final programme documentation | Programme development team | Information for students, staff, stakeholders | Programme documentation |
| Consideration of panel recommendations by FBOS | Faculty Board | Formal approval (on behalf of Academic Council) of programme to be included in academic portfolio | Confirmation of approval of programme for delivery |
| New programme entered on systems | Student Records Office | Control of the university's academic portfolio. Registration and enrolment of students. Student access to finance and other support | Programme and modules and HAPs added to SITS |
| Recruitment to new programme | Marketing (EO and APs), Admissions, Programme team | Recruitment of viable student cohort to programme. | Students enrolled on programme. |

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

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

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