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| Modifications to programmes of study | |
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| Modifications to programmes of study |

# Introduction

* 1. The purpose of this code is ensure that the University’s procedures for the approval of modifications to programmes are robust, transparent and streamlined. It sets out the requirements for the approval of both major and minor modifications.
  2. This code is designed to reflect external expectations, specifically the QAA’s UK Quality Code for Higher Education, 2018.
  3. Reasonable modifications to a programme of study can be made at any time during the academic year as long as the overall effect of the modification is neutral or advantageous to the students concerned.
  4. Where a modification is proposed:

1. to keep content and delivery up to date and relevant;
2. as a result of a programme review;
3. to reflect external change; or
4. to run or not run an optional module;

normal University processes should be followed and the modification should be communicated to students on the relevant programmes via the normal means (for example Canvas). Details of the modification should also be forwarded to [studentcontract@hull.ac.uk](mailto:studentcontract@hull.ac.uk).

* 1. A proposed modification to alter the location of the delivery of a programme (i.e. a location to a different campus) must be considered as a significant modification (i.e. a major modification) (see1.6).
  2. Major modifications to programmes of study should normally only take effect at the start of an academic year. Where such a modification is being considered, a detailed implementation plan must first be approved by the relevant Faculty. The implementation plan must include as a minimum (i) details of the support to be offered to students impacted by the modification, (ii) whether or not compensation is to be offered and (iii) a communication plan. Details of the proposed modification should also be forwarded to [studentcontract@hull.ac.uk](mailto:studentcontract@hull.ac.uk).
  3. See 7.2 for a full list of major modifications.

# Authority

* 1. The Education Planning Committee (EPC) is the final arbiter of the application and interpretation of this code of practice.

# Delegation

* 1. Any action or power designated to a Dean under this code of practice may be undertaken by the Chair of the Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC) of the same faculty.

# Scope of the Code

## On campus provision

* 1. The term ‘on campus’ within this code of practice is understood to mean programmes and modules which are delivered and supported entirely by University of Hull staff, irrespective of the location of delivery and also includes non-credit bearing provision delivered by University staff.

## Collaborative provision

* 1. The term ‘collaborative provision’ in this code means: programmes and modules which are delivered in whole or in part by the staff of a University partner (whether FE institution or other, whether publicly funded or not) irrespective of the location or mode of delivery, and leading to credit or an award of the University of Hull.
  2. A proposal to have an on campus programme delivered by a partner institution must be treated as a new programme in accordance to the University Code of Practice: New Programmes.

# Professional Accreditation

* 1. Where appropriate, and in consultation with the relevant professional body, the processes of approval set out in this code will be conducted in parallel with the relevant professional body.

# Terminology

* 1. This code of practice recognises two types of modification:

1. **Minor modifications** are approved by Faculty Education and Student Experience Committees.
2. **Major modifications** are approved by the Education Planning Committee (usually, but not necessarily via a University Validation Panel).

# Defining Minor and Major Modifications

## Minor Modifications

* 1. The following changes to programmes are examples of typical minor modifications:

1. the withdrawal or substitution of individual option modules for a future cohort of students, where this does not affect the overall intended learning outcomes/competencies as defined in the programme specification.
2. changes within option modules (e.g. to reflect a different emphasis brought to the module by a new or different member of teaching staff), where these do not affect the overall intended programme learning outcomes/competencies as defined in the programme specification.
3. changes to the delivery model of a module or modules, where these do not affect the statement in the programme specification relating to the teaching and learning methods for that programme or the intended learning outcomes/competencies.
4. changes to the assessment for a module or modules, where these have not already been published to students (including in the programme specification or written statement of assessment policies and practices) or where students will be informed sufficiently in advance of a change to published details to not be disadvantaged.

## Major Modifications

* 1. The following changes to programmes are examples of major modifications:

1. a change to the programme title, the nature of the award (e.g. changing an MA award to an MSc award) or the addition or removal of other award routes as part of an existing programme where these have not already been approved (e.g. new points of entry and/or exit).
2. any change to a module designated as “core” and/or “elective” (see 8 below) in the programme specification which would have significant impact on the learning outcomes/competencies of the programme.
3. a change to the duration of the programme.\*
4. a change to the location of delivery of the programme.\*
5. a change in the mode of delivery of the programme (e.g. a move from face-to-face tuition to distance learning or vice versa, or the introduction of an additional distance learning route to an existing face-to-face programme or vice versa).\*
6. collaboration with another institution or organisation in the delivery of the programme and/or delivery of a programme, or part of a programme, overseas.
7. the addition, or substantive revision, of a work-based placement or study abroad element.
8. the addition/ withdrawal/ modification of core, elective or optional modules (see 8 below) that results in changes to the intended learning outcomes/competencies of the overall programme (as defined in the programme specification).
9. the systematic re-structuring of a programme, or part thereof, for example as a result of a review (e.g. the reorganisation of a stage of the programme and/ or changes to module credit values/ levels).
10. the designation of modules as pass/ fail or core and elective.
11. substantive changes to the assessment rules of the programme as a whole (i.e. rather than of individual modules).

**\**denotes that development consent must also be approved.***

* 1. In addition to the above, there are sometimes difficult cases that would benefit from, or require, consideration at University level by EPC, which also fall under the definition of a major modification. These include:

1. modifications which would require changes to the published teaching timetable once teaching has begun.
2. modifications to a programme of study that affect programmes offered by other subject groups where agreement has not been reached, for example in the case of combined degrees.
3. the addition of optional modules which supplement rather than replace existing modules.
4. modifications which do not comply with the University’s quality framework.

# Core, Compulsory, Optional and Elective modules

* 1. Modules must be designated as core, compulsory, optional or elective, according to their importance in enabling students to achieve the learning outcomes/competencies for the programme as a whole and, where applicable, to meet professional body requirements.
  2. CORE MODULE: This is a module that is fundamental to the degree programme and must be studied. It cannot be compensated or condoned. There may also be different restrictions applied with regard to minor/major modifications.
  3. COMPULSORY MODULE: This is a module which must be studied to successfully complete a particular degree programme. It can be compensated or condoned, subject to regulations.
  4. OPTIONAL MODULE: This is a module that a student may choose to study as part of their degree programme.
  5. ELECTIVE MODULE: This is a module that a student may choose to study as part of their degree programmes. It cannot be compensated or condoned.
  6. Note:

1. There should be no optional modules at Level 4 (unless an exemption request has been approved by EPC).
2. Optionality should be minimised throughout the programme.
3. Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC) is the final arbitrator of any disagreements regarding the level of optionality in a programme.
4. Levels of optionality should be clearly linked to the number of students taking the module**.**

# Risk Based Approach

* 1. A risk based approach will be applied to proposals for major modifications. In cases where the Quality Support Service consider that a “major” modification is likely to have no adverse effect on the quality and standards of the programme and the impact on the student experience is minimal, the Quality Support Service will forward such applications to the Education Planning Committee (EPC) without the need for consideration by a University Validation Panel.

# Approval Route

## Major Modification

* 1. Applications for major modifications require the approval of EPC, usually but not necessarily involving consideration by a University Validation Panel\* in accordance with the University Code of Practice: New Programmes.

\**See 14.1 below for externality arrangements for major modifications. The current external examiner is required to comment but there is no expectation that there will be an external member of the UVP.*

## Minor Modification

* 1. Applications for minor modifications require the approval of the faculty via FESEC (or equivalent) or relevant sub-committee.

# Approval Documentation

## Major Modification

* 1. A revised programme specification (with changes highlighted) must be submitted with a completed standard coversheet. Development Consent documentation must also be submitted for those major modifications identified above as requiring Development Consent.
  2. The submission must make clear the date from which the change(s) will take effect, including making clear the extent to which it applies to current students.
  3. Submission, including FESEC endorsement, must be electronic to the relevant Faculty Quality office in the first instance, before submission to EPC for approval. For collaborative provision, submission must be made to Quality Support Service.

## Minor Modification

* 1. Relevant sections of the programme and / or module specification (with changes highlighted) must be submitted with a completed standard coversheet.
  2. Submission must be electronic to the faculty office, or for collaborative provision, to the Quality Support Service.

# Consultation with Students

## Major Modification

* 1. Where it is intended that the proposed major modification will apply to **\***current students, the students directly affected by the change(s) must be consulted and a summary of their feedback obtained. Evidence of this must be provided with the submitted programme specification.
  2. Any prospective students, including those who may have already applied, must be informed in writing of the change(s) once approval has been granted.

**\****The programme on to which students were initially registered forms part of a legally binding contract, and therefore cannot be significantly varied unless the students are consulted and a summary of their feedback is obtained, and evidence of this provided to the UVP when seeking approval. ‘Directly affected’ needs to be considered carefully in the context of the proposed changes, bearing in mind that changing a second year module might have implications for first year students likely to take that module the following year, but will not affect third year students.*

## Minor Modification

* 1. Where it is intended that the proposed minor modifications will apply to current students, the students must be consulted and informed of any change.

# Deadlines

## Major Modification

* 1. The deadline for submitting a proposed major modification for full approval is five months prior to the proposed start date.
  2. The timing in 13.1 is essential to enable students to be correctly registered and to ensure they receive the correct certificate (e.g. if there is a change of award or title).
  3. For University Validation Panel Records to be considered by EPC they must be submitted to the secretary of EPC no later than one week prior to the date of the meeting.
  4. EPC is empowered to grant block exemption to types of programmes, facilitating a fast-track approval, for example for programmes which are of relatively short duration.

## Minor Modification

* 1. The deadline for submitting a proposed minor modification for full approval is determined by the Dean and should be no less than five months prior to the proposed start date.

# Externality

## Major Modification

* 1. Written evidence of the opinion of the current external examiner must be provided. No additional independent externality is required, but it may prove helpful as part of the rationale for the change (e.g. views of industry or other stakeholders to demonstrate the appropriateness of a change of title).
  2. The opinion of the external examiner is important, although the final decision necessarily rests with the programme team, the UVP and EPC as the approving body.

## Minor Modification

* 1. Written evidence of the opinion of the current external examiner should be provided.

**Version Control**

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