Monitoring and Review of Programmes and Modules Ensuring Validity and Relevance

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* The University has adopted the principles of Designing for Diverse Learners, and all policy documents should be written with reference to these principles. Further information is available at the [Designing for diverse learners website](https://designingfordiverselearners.info/).
* An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) must be considered for all new and amended policies. Further information is available from the [EIA section of SharePoint](https://hullacuk.sharepoint.com/Services/EDI/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments-(EIAs).aspx).
* This document is available in alternative formats from [**policy@hull.ac.uk**](mailto:policy@hull.ac.uk).
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Monitoring and Review of Programmes and Modules Ensuring Validity and Relevance

# Introduction

* 1. This guidance clarifies the university’s approach to ensuring that programmes and modules are at all times ‘valid and relevant’, in particular OfS Conditions of Registration, and the importance of comparability with other awarding bodies.
  2. The basis of the code is to promote a shared understanding of the terms ‘valid and relevant’, referring both to the content of provision and to the communication of the provision to stakeholders, principally students, through published programme and module specifications.
  3. The Code is not designed to create additional burden for academic and support staff in terms of demonstrating validity and relevance. This demonstration will be achieved through the existing Continual Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement (CMEE) and Developmental Engagement with Subjects (DES) processes. Changes to programmes will continue to be carried out through established programme approvals processes as defined in the University Code of Practice: New Programmes.
  4. It is the responsibility of university heads of schools/departments and partner institutions to ensure the ‘validity and relevance’ of their programmes and modules, and that changes necessary to ensure continuing validity and relevance are made and submitted for approval in accordance with the University Code of Practice: New Programmes.
  5. The Office for Students (OfS) and the UK Quality Code make clear the expectation that programme monitoring and review processes **should** enable higher education providers to reflect on the ‘validity and relevance of programmes’:
     1. OfS Condition of Registration B1 expects providers to ensure that students registered on each higher education course receive a high-quality academic experience including each higher education course to be up-to-date and for each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills.
     2. The QAA UK Quality Code (2024) consider an expectation of quality as where providers regularly review and enhance their provision, reflecting on a range of data sets as they relate to quality to ensure courses and wider services remain fit for purpose and to take account of changing circumstances, demands and pedagogical developments.
  6. The university’s view is that it is unnecessary to revalidate a programme of study after a fixed period of time to ensure the continuing ‘currency’ or ‘validity’ and relevance of the programme; that existing mechanisms of major and minor modifications and the CMEE and DES processes\*are sufficient provided that attention is paid to four ‘significant elements’.

*\*for collaborative provision the process of Annual Monitoring, Review and Enhancement of Programmes (AMREP) is applicable here.*

* 1. The purpose of this code is to outline those elements. The elements **should** be considered in the context of any relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements as well as legislative requirements. In setting out the four elements it is assumed that central to the monitoring, review and enhancement of academic provision is the self-evaluation by the academic staff responsible for delivery founded on their expertise.
  2. In Developmental Engagement reviews, panels will pay particular attention to a sample of programmes and modules to determine whether the way in which the school/department in question is managing the process of updating its provision in the light of this guidance is effective.

# Validity and Relevance – significant elements

* 1. The four significant elements, which are explained more fully below, are:
     1. Curricula reflecting up to date views of what is appropriate.
     2. Alignment of programme and module competencies and alignment with assessment strategies, reflecting up to date external and internal expectations.
     3. Learning resources – staff and physical resources remain appropriate to support the curricula.
     4. Published information – programme and module specifications reflect the approved version of the programme and modules.

## Curricula

* 1. The curricula of each programme:
     1. Enable students to demonstrate the programme competencies.
     2. Reflect the university’s commitments to ensure programmes continue to be current, coherent, rigorous and academically excellent.
     3. Accurately reflect the title of the programme.
     4. Reflect the university’s commitments expressed in the Education Strategy 2020-25 including:
        1. Embedding research experiences for learners into and across curricula.
        2. Integrating the University of Hull’s research into the curriculum.
        3. Enhancing the student journey and help raise student aspiration by making connections between disciplinary research and the curriculum explicit.
        4. Ensuring learning and teaching activities are fully informed by pedagogic research and the scholarship of teaching and learning.
     5. Reflect the current version of any applicable Subject Benchmark Statements.
     6. Reflect relevant PSRB requirements.
     7. Are informed by feedback from, and consultation with, external examiners, students, other stakeholders, and informed by progression and achievement data.

## Alignment of competencies and assessment strategies

* 1. Generally, competencies and assessment are informed by feedback from, and consultation with, external examiners, students, industry specialists and other stakeholders. Furthermore, careful oversight is maintained to ensure that successive minor changes over a number of years does not result in completely changing the nature of the programme (bearing in mind that a module may contribute to more than one programme).
  2. Specifically, alignment reflects the following:
     1. Programme competencies:
        1. Support the educational aims of the programme.
        2. Are aligned with external reference points, principally the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (QAA, 2021) and the up-to-date applicable Subject Benchmark Statements.
     2. Assessment strategies (within each module):
        1. Are aligned with the programme competencies to ensure that assessments enable students to demonstrate achievement of the competence.
        2. Reflect the Education Strategy 2020-25 including adopting authentic and inclusive assessment practices within the framework of professional, statutory and regulatory requirements as appropriate and providing our students with prompt, meaningful feedback that explains the grade achieved, and provides constructive advice and support on future development.
        3. Reflect current expectations expressed in the Quality and Standards Framework notably University Regulations and Assessment Procedures.
        4. Reflect current expectations relating to diversity/equality of opportunity.

## Learning Resources

* 1. Confirm staff and physical resources continue to be appropriate to support students’ learning in the light of the curricula.

## Published information

* 1. The programme and module specifications are not just used for the purposes of gaining university approval. They form part of the published information available to students, and as such form part of the University’s contract with each student. They are available through Canvas.
  2. Therefore, the information published **must** accurately reflect the version of the programme/modules approved and being delivered. (Note the consultation requirements outlined under re-approval below). Programme documentation includes the following:
     1. The programme specification which includes a curriculum map (demonstrating which programme competencies are delivered in each module).
     2. The module specifications.

# Approval of Programme Modifications

* 1. The process for gaining approval of modifications to an existing programme is specified in the Code of Practice: Modifications to Programmes of Study with the level of approval being determined by whether the modifications are deemed ‘major’ or ‘minor’.
  2. Major modifications are approved by the Education Planning Committee (usually, but not necessarily via a University Validation Panel). Major modifications **must** be preceded by consultation with, and the written consent of, current students if the changes are to apply to those students. Evidence of the opinion of the current external examiner **must** also be provided.
  3. Note: some major modifications require development consent via the Education Planning Committee (as noted in the Code of Practice: Modifications to Programmes of Study).
  4. Minor modifications are approved by Faculty Education and Student Experience Committees. Where it is intended that the proposed minor modifications will apply to current students, the students **must** be consulted and informed of any change. Written evidence of the opinion of the current external examiner **should** be provided.
  5. The Continual Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement (CMEE) and Developmental Engagement with Subjects (DES) processes will monitor modifications to programmes of study. These process will also have oversight of the way in which the school/department manages the process of updating provision.

# ENDS

# Version control

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| **Version** | **Author** | **Date approved** | **Relevant sections** |
| 1 04 | Quality Manager, Quality Support Service | July 2024, Education Student Experience Committee | Reintroduces Code of Practice and revises content. |
| 1 03 | Quality Officer, Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice | Aug 2015, University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee | Updates references to external documentation and amendments to reflect changes to the programme approvals process. |
| 1 02 | Quality Officer | Feb 2011, Academic Board | Updates the code with reference to the new committee structure. |
| 1 01 | Quality Officer | Oct 2010, Academic Board |  |
| 1 00 | Quality Officer | April 2009, Academic Board | New |