### UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

#### POLICY ON MODULE AND PROGRAMME APPROVAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Module and Programme Approval</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>Applies to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate modules and programmes taught across the University.</td>
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<td><strong>Relationship with other policies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Owner</strong></td>
<td>Curriculum Approvals Group</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Approving Committee</strong></td>
<td>Learning &amp; Teaching Committee (LTC), then Academic Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy approved date</strong></td>
<td>Policy updated July16 by CAG (introduction of Programme Development Boards)</td>
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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON MODULE AND PROGRAMME APPROVAL

Introduction

All proposals for new Modules or new Programmes must be in line with the University’s overall strategy for Learning and Teaching, and with the academic plans as presented in the strategic plans of the School or Schools making the proposal.

Proposals must comply with University Regulations relating to module structures, credits, and academic levels, and to the educational strategies for supporting students’ learning outcomes and personal development.

Proposals must be designed so that they meet the academic standards of the University of St Andrews, and of the UK Quality Code.

They must also be in accord with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and/or European Qualifications framework (EQF), with QAA subject benchmarks where these exist and, where relevant, with appropriate professional, statutory or regulatory accreditation bodies. They should also take account of comments from External Examiners.

The proposal must take account of any identifiable impact on academic resources, administrative services, and estate or IT infrastructure.

Proposers must also ensure that the validation processes are in place (for example External Examiners and an appropriate module board) so that the programme meets the necessary requirements for quality assurance.

Responsibilities

School Teaching Committees
Responsibility for the initiation of new modules and programmes lies with the School Teaching Committees. Directors of Teaching, (or Directors of Postgraduate Studies), on behalf of the School Teaching Committees, are responsible for submitting module and programme proposals for consideration by the Deans through the Curriculum Approvals Group.

Deans
Responsibility for considering proposals submitted by the School Teaching Committees, lies with the Deans. The Deans through the Curriculum Approvals Group have delegated authority to approve new modules and any significant changes to existing modules and/or programmes. Only Academic Council can authorise the approval of a new programme or withdrawal of an existing programme. The Vice-Principal (Proctor) and Deans are responsible for the formulation of University policy in relation to curriculum development and provide guidance to Schools in these areas.
Academic Council
Academic Council has ultimate authority for the approval of new programmes and for the withdrawal of existing programmes.

Approvals Schedule

Proposals for new programmes and modules and/or changes to modules and programmes may be submitted at any time of year. However, for changes to become effective for the following academic year, Schools must note the constraints in the lead--times necessary for the programme and/or module to be included in the Prospectus and Course Catalogue (for further advice on timescales, contact Publications). As a general rule, for modules and programmes to begin in the following academic year, proposals must normally be approved by the appropriate Dean and, where appropriate, Academic Council no later than the end of May. Only in cases where there are exceptional grounds may proposals be considered for approval during the summer vacation eg appointment of new staff.

Externality in Approvals Process

External Examiners are asked to advise and comment on the development of new modules and programmes. Schools should seek the views of its External Examiners on new module or programme proposals and also where there is a significant change to existing modules and/or programmes.

For new programmes, Schools may seek the views of an External subject specialist who is not a current or recent External Examiner. Comments from the External Examiner should be submitted to the Dean.

Programme Approval and Withdrawal

Proposals must have been tested for viability by appropriate market research, for example through the Recruitment Office, taking into account the need to meet (but not to exceed) agreed home/EU targets and the recruitment strategy of the School and University.

Proposals must define clear and achievable programme specifications, with explicit learning outcomes described in the programme specifications.

Programmes must ensure appropriate progression from one level to the next, and ensure that any required exit points (and qualifications) are achievable and defined.

For programmes involving more than one School, it must be ensured that each Head of School is aware of, and has approved, the programme. Where an Interdisciplinary programme involves many or all Schools this requirement may be relaxed. New Programme proposal forms must be accompanied by a New Module Proposal form for each new module within the new programme, in the same submission to the Dean.

Approval of New Programmes

New Programme Development

The development of a new undergraduate or postgraduate programme has wide implications across the University in terms of resources, personnel, and promotional activity. Therefore development of all new programmes must have received initial strategic approval normally via the annual meetings between the Principal’s Office and
the School prior to embarking on more detailed preparation of degree programme proposals and detailed business case documentation. Initial strategic approval does not guarantee subsequent academic approval by the Curriculum Approvals Group nor approval of the Business case.

In the case of Postgraduate Taught programmes and significantly new undergraduate programmes initial strategic approval does then trigger the formation of a new programme development board.

**New Programme Development Board**
The role of the development board is to ensure that the proposal for the developed programme prepared for the Curriculum Approvals Group (CAG) meets the required academic standards and that the business case is well developed, founded upon solid market research and with sufficient consultation and engagement of all the major stakeholders. Individual members of the board should be consulted in the preparation of the proposal papers where relevant.

The board should physically meet in its entirety at least twice, once at the initial concept stage and secondly to finally agree the business proposal, the programme proposal and (if relevant) module proposals prior to these proposal papers being submitted to CAG and Principal’s Office. Minutes of this meeting should accompany the programme proposal.

**Required members:**
Relevant ProDean
Director(s) of Teaching (of all Schools contributing to the programme)
Registry representative – will relay information to relevant Registry members
Admissions representative - will relay information to relevant Admissions members

**Advisory members to be included where relevant:**
School(s) finance advisor
Library (Academic Liaison Officer)
Fees and Funding (Registry)
Timetabling (Registry)
Space allocation (Estates)
Special Collections (where relevant)
Health and Safety office (where fieldwork or safety implications are involved)
Collaborations and Study Abroad Office (where collaborations, study abroad, internships or placements are involved)

**Required prior consultation and approval needed in writing:**
External Examiner
Head of School(s)

**External documents, research required and sources to consult:**
QAA subject benchmark statements (where available)
QAA guidance on degree structure and SCQF levels
Competitor analysis : review of similar programmes offered at competitor institution and a review of similar programmes offered within the University of St Andrews

Schools setting up a new Taught Postgraduate Masters’ Programme or a new Distance Learning Programme must submit two forms:-
Financial Business Case and accompanying financial analysis – for approval by the Master; New Programme Approval – for approval by the relevant Dean.

Prior to submission, the proposal must be approved by the relevant School Teaching Committee(s) and reviewed and approved by the External Examiner/Adviser. Approval must be obtained from the External Examiner(s) and the Heads of participating Schools. New programme proposals will not be considered without these approvals.

Heads of Schools are encouraged to take advice from the Academic Registrar, Director of Admissions and Director of Finance on the completion of the Business Case. The University Fees Officer should also be consulted to ensure that new programmes comply with the University’s tuition fee structure.

All other Programme proposals do not require a business case and the programme proposal form should be submitted to CAG for approval.

New Degree Programmes Simplified Flow Chart

Amendments to Existing Programmes

When any changes are to be made to an existing degree programme, the programme amendment form must be completed and submitted to the relevant Dean.

Withdrawal of Programmes

On occasion, programmes may be withdrawn for strategic reasons such as lack of recruitment, or because of changes in the subject discipline which render a specific programme unavailable. Withdrawal of programmes must be approved by the relevant Dean, and must be checked by Registry and Admissions to ensure that no student has been matriculated or accepted a place into that programme. In normal circumstances, a programme must be supported for every student who has matriculated, or accepted a place, into that programme.

Only in the most unusual circumstances may a programme on which students have matriculated be withdrawn. Similarly, in exceptional circumstances, a programme may be withdrawn to which students have been admitted, but who have not yet matriculated. In these circumstances, the student(s) must be informed, and the Dean, Head of School, and Admissions must resolve the situation.
No programme to which students have been admitted or on which they have been matriculated may be withdrawn until the University’s obligations to those students have been reasonably and fairly fulfilled.

**Distance Learning Programmes**

Distance Learning poses particular challenges with respect to programme administration, student satisfaction, risk management, and programme reputation. Before undertaking any significant development work staff should consult with the Deans and their Head of School as to how the proposed programme would integrate with the University and School strategic plans. The University will carefully consider the potential benefits and challenges before introducing new distance learning programmes.

**Collaborative Degrees/Exchanges**

Where the new programme involves study abroad placements or Collaboration with one or more external partners, Schools must first consult with the Registry Manager (Collaborations & Study Abroad).

**Module Approval and Withdrawal**

**New Modules**

When any changes are to be made to an existing module, the module amendment form must be completed and submitted to Registry in the first instance. However, if the proposed new module is intended to replace an existing module, it is not necessary to complete a separate module amendment form to request the withdrawal of the existing module.