Module and programme approval

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2.3	Changes to Section 5; reflecting terminology of online education instead of distant learning	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)	July 2023

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON MODULE AND PROGRAMME APPROVAL

1. 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 professional 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 they 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 (e.g., External Examiners and an appropriate module board) so that the programme meets the necessary requirements for quality assurance.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. 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 Research Studies/Directors of Postgraduate Taught Studies) on behalf of the School Teaching Committees are responsible for submitting module and programme proposals for consideration by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) through the Curriculum Approvals Group (CAG).

2.2. Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching)

Responsibility for considering proposals submitted by the School Teaching Committees lies with the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching). The Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) through the CAG has delegated authority to approve new modules and any significant changes to existing modules and/or programmes. Only Senate

can authorise the approval of a new programme or withdrawal of an existing programme. The Vice-Principal (Proctor) and the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) are responsible for the formulation of University policy in relation to curriculum development and provide guidance to Schools in these areas.

2.3. Senate

Senate has ultimate authority for the approval of new programmes and for the withdrawal of existing programmes.

3. Approvals Schedule

Proposals for new programmes and modules, and/or changes to modules and programmes, may be submitted at any time of year. For changes to become effective for the following academic year however, 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 publication timescales, contact <u>Publications</u>).

As a general rule, for modules and programmes to begin in the following academic year (taking into account CPL considerations), proposals must normally be approved by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) via the Curriculum Approvals Group (CAG) or the Cohort, Admissions, and Resourcing Steering Group (CARSG) and where appropriate, Senate, no later than the end of February. Normally, new programmes should be proposed to allow a full year of advertising following approval. Optional modules that offer enhancement to a programme can exceptionally be approved by the end of May, however proposers should where possible aim to meet the end of February deadline, so that modules can be in place during the module and programme requirements proofing process. Only in cases where there are exceptional grounds may proposals be considered for approval during the summer vacation (e.g. in the case of the appointment of new staff).

4. 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 and 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 Curriculum Approvals Group (CAG)

5. Programme Approval and Withdrawal

5.1. Approval of New Programmes

Programme Proposals must have been tested for viability by appropriate market research, for example through Admissions, 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.

Where a new programme proposal requires a new Degree Award, the rationale for this should be discussed during early discussions with the Proctor's and Senate Office and included in the proposal. Consideration should also be given to the extended amount of time required for the approval of new Court Ordinances for a new award, and also the approval of Senate Regulations. It should be noted that these approvals need to be in place before the start of a new programme.

For proposed 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 undergraduate programme proposal forms must be accompanied by a module outline form within the new programme proposal, and C-View module proposals must be submitted to the Curriculum Approvals Group for each new or amended module in the programme in time to meet the February deadline for approval for the academic year the new programme is planned to start.

New Postgraduate programme proposal forms submitted to the Curriculum Approvals Group via C-view must include a copy of the business case which has been approved by CARSG and a form providing an outline of each module in the programme. The relevant C-view forms for each new or amended module in the programme must be submitted to the Curriculum Approvals Group in time to meet the February deadline for approval for the academic year the new programme is planned to start.

5.1.1. 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. Development of all new programmes must, therefore, 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 CAG, nor approval of the business case.

In the case of Postgraduate Taught programmes and significantly new undergraduate programmes, initial strategic approval should then trigger further consideration by the appropriate School Teaching Committee.

The School Teaching Committee should ensure that the proposal for the developed programme prepared for the 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 committee should be consulted in preparation of the proposal papers where relevant.

The committee 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 where relevant, the module proposals prior to these proposal papers being submitted to the CAG and Principal's Office. The committee should ensure that there has been discussion with the following during preparation of the proposal.

- The relevant Associate Dean or Associate Provost
- Director(s) of Teaching (of all Schools contributing to the programme)
- Registry representative (who will relay information to relevant Registry members)
- Admissions representative (who will relay information to relevant Admissions members).
- Proctor's Office / Senate Office
- School(s) finance advisor
- Library Academic Liaison Officer (Library)
- Fees and Funding (Registry)
- Timetabling (Planning)
- Space Allocation (Estates)
- Special Collections (where relevant)
- Health and Safety Office (where fieldwork or safety implications are involved)
- Global Office; where collaborations, study abroad, internships, or placements are involved)

Contact details for the areas mentioned above can be found in Appendix 1.

Consultation required prior 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
- QAA Characteristic Statements
- Competitor analysis: review of similar programmes offered at competitor institutions and a review of similar programmes offered within the University of St Andrews

All new programmes or new online education programmes must submit the following forms:

- Undergraduate programmes must submit a business case, module outline form and accompanying financial projection for approval by the Master. Following Master approval the proposal and supporting documents will be reviewed by CAG via C-View submission.
- Postgraduate programme must submit a business case, module outline form and accompanying financial projection form to CARSG for approval. Following CARSG approval the proposal will be reviewed by CAG

Undergraduate Joint Degree programmes (combining two already functioning programmes) do not require a business case.

All documents should be sent to curriculum@st-andrews.ac.uk who will forward the appropriate forms to the CARSG group and Master's Office for consideration. Following the Masters and CARSG approval proposals must be submitted to CAG for consideration via C-view. Heads of Schools are encouraged to take advice from the Director of Admissions, and Director of Finance on the completion of the business case. The University Fees Officer should be consulted to ensure that new programmes comply with the University's tuition fee structure.

New Programme Development Flow Chart
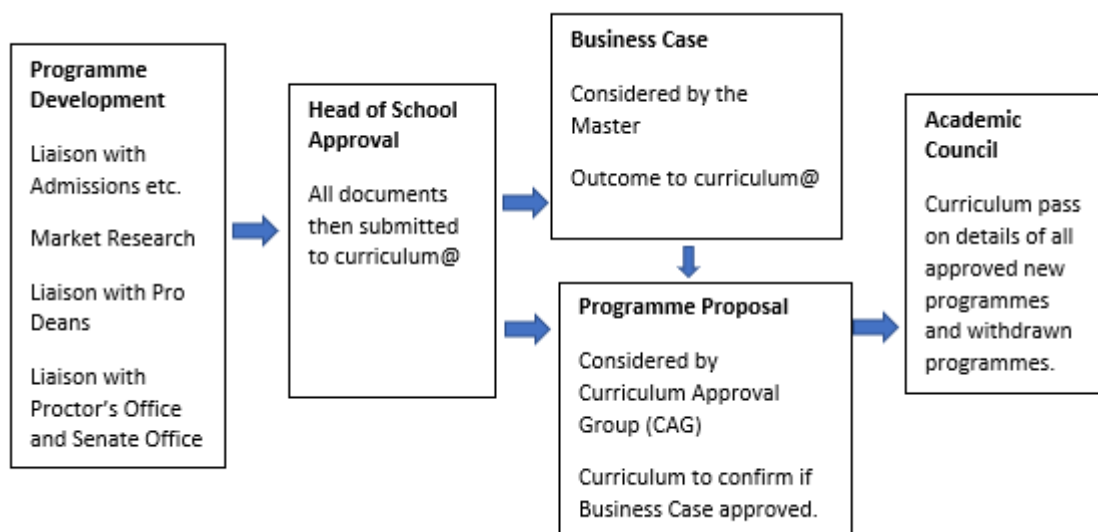
5.2.   Amendments to Existing Programmes

When any changes are to be made to an existing degree programme, the programme amendment form must be completed and submitted to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) (via CAG).

5.3. Withdrawal of Programmes

Withdrawal for programmes, where possible must be submitted before advertisement of the relevant academic year starts. Withdrawal of programmes must be approved by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) and must be checked by Registry and Admissions to ensure that no student has already been matriculated or accepted a place into that programme for the forthcoming academic year. 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 already been 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 Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching), 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.

5.4. Online Education Programmes

Online education poses different challenges with respect to programme administration, student satisfaction, and risk management. Academic staff should consult with the Vice-Principal (Digital Education, Research and Environment) and their Head of School to discuss the proposed programme vis-à-vis University and School strategic plans. The University will consider the potential benefits and challenges before introducing new online education programmes, in line with processes laid out under 5.1.1 of this policy.

5.5. Collaborative Provision

Where the new programme involves study abroad placements or collaboration with one or more external partners, Schools must first consult with the Global Office and follow the appropriate proposal and approval process. Further information on the proposal and approval process for collaborative programmes can be found within the Collaborative provision policy. Flow charts illustrating the proposal and approval process for each type of collaborative provision are available on the Global Office's pages.

6. Module Approval, Amendment and Withdrawal

New module proposals should be submitted through C-View, accompanied by external examiner approval.

When any changes are to be made to an existing module, please refer to the Module Amendment Categories document located on the Module and programme approval pages, and where required submit the module amendment through C-View.

If the proposed new module is intended to replace an existing module, please also complete a module withdrawal. In addition, if a change to programme requirements is needed, please submit a programme amendment.

7. Module and Programme Structure (Taught Postgraduate)

All new full-time residential taught postgraduate programmes will be constructed of equally weighted 60 credit semesters. Each of the taught semesters will deliver 60 taught credits constructed from either all 15 or all 30 credit modules, or a combination of 15 and 30 credit modules. The final element is the 60-credit final dissertation or project module. Changes to the credit structure of existing programmes is not required, however the assumption is that such amendments will be put in place where Schools identify opportunities and benefits to changing existing 10, 20, and 40 credit modules to either 15 or 30 credit modules.

Application of this programme structure enables:

- Innovation of new interdisciplinary programmes enabling new programme designers to 'tile' modules together to build new programmes from modules offered in different Schools.

- Students to select relevant modules from other Schools, where permissible in their programme, and easily incorporate them into their programme of study.

- Students to exit with a Postgraduate Certificate 60 credits at the end of Semester 1 or a Postgraduate Diploma 120 credits at the end of Semester 2 should personal circumstances prevent continued study.

- Students to receive feedback on 60 credits of modules at the end of first semester with time to respond appropriately in second semester.

Appendix 1

Area	Contact	Contact E-mail
The Relevant Associate Dean/Provost	Associate Dean Curriculum (Science)	assocdeansci-curr@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Associate Dean Curriculum (Arts and Divinity)	assocdeanarts-curr@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Associate Provost Education	assocprovost-education@st-andrews.ac.uk
Director(s) of Teaching	Art History	arthistdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Biology	biodot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Chemistry	chem-dot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Classics	classicsdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Computer Science	dot-cs@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Divinity	divdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Earth and Environmental Sciences	dot-earthsci@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Economics and Finance	econdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	English	engdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Film Studies	filmdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Geography and Sustainable Development	ggdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Graduate School for Interdisciplinary Studies	depdirgs@st-andrews.ac.uk
	History	histdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
		ie-dot@st-andrews.ac.uk

	International Education Institute	
	International Relations	irdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Management	mgmtdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Mathematics and Statistics	maths-dot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Medicine	medicaldot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Modern Languages	langsdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Music	mcjf@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Philosophy	phildot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Physics and Astronomy	physdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Psychology and Neuroscience	psydot@st-andrews.ac.uk
	Social Anthropology	socanthdot@st-andrews.ac.uk
Registry representative	Curriculum Officer	curriculum@st-andrews.ac.uk
Admissions representative	Assistant Director Recruitment and Marketing	cfc@st-andrews.ac.uk
Proctor's Office	Proctor's Office	proctor@st-andrews.ac.uk
Senate Office	Court and Senate Office	Senate@st-andrews.ac.uk
School(s) finance advisor	Finance Advice and Support Teams	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/finance/financialadviceandsupportteams/
Library Academic Liaison Officer (Library)	Academic Liaison Team	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/library/contact/academicliaison/
Fees and Funding (Registry)	Fees	fees@st-andrews.ac.uk

Timetabling (Planning)	Timetabling Co-ordinator	timetabling@st-andrews.ac.uk
Space Allocation (Estates)	Estates	estates@st-andrews.ac.uk
Special Collections (where relevant)	Special Collections	speccoll@st-andrews.ac.uk
Health and Safety Office	Environmental Health and Safety Services	ehss@st-andrews.ac.uk
Global Office	Global Office	globaloffice@st-andrews.ac.uk

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Amendments made to bring policy in line with current practice.	Updated	-	June 2020
2.0	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated	-	February 2021
2.1	Changes to Associate Provost title	Updated	Emily Feamster	August 2021
2.2	Changes to PGT approval processes	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)	December 2022
2.3	Changes to section 5, reflecting terminology around online education instead of distant learning	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)	July 2023