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**Learning and Teaching Committee**

**Subject:** Review of Section 3 of the AQPH: Approval for New or Revised Programmes and Modules

**Origin:** Rob Pearson, Programme Quality & Teaching Partnerships

**Executive Summary:** It is proposed to revise the AQPH policy on programme and module approval with the aim of simplifying and speeding up the approval process.

**Action Required:**  Learning and Teaching Committee is asked to consider the proposed revisions with a view to approval for immediate implementation.

1. **Introduction**

Feedback from various fora has indicated that there is an appetite for reviewing the University’s programme and module approval and update process to ensure that it as efficient and effective as possible.

At its meeting on 4 October 2012, Curriculum Sub-Committee (CSC) considered a series of proposals that were focused on improving the process for approving new and revised programme proposals. Following discussions inside and outside of CSC, it is proposed to:

1. Revise the category of proposals that require approval by Operations Committee
2. Revise the category of proposals that require approval by CSC
3. Bring forward the point at which a new programme can be publicised
4. Revise the forms for submitting proposals to Operations Committee and CSC
5. Adopt a two-stream approach for approving immediate effect changes

Learning and Teaching Committee is asked to consider the proposals, outlined in further detail below, with a view to **approval for immediate implementation** (subject to endorsement of the proposals by Operations Committee).

**2. Proposed revisions**

Outlined below are proposed revisions to Section 3 of the AQPH. Section 3 is presented in Appendix 1, with the proposed revisions incorporated as tracked changes.

* 1. **Revising the category of proposals that require approval by Operations Committee**

There is a two-stage process for approving new and revised programmes and modules: strategic (where approval is required by Operations Committee) and operational (where approval is required by CSC).

CSC is of the opinion that Operations Committee should only be asked to consider proposals that have resource implications (e.g. does the School have the resources to deliver the programme? are there resource implications for other Schools or services?) and / or that have strategic implications (e.g., will the programme attract applicants? what will be the impact of the new programme on the School/University portfolio of programmes?).

However, CSC is aware that the current policy results in Operations Committee being asked to consider proposals where there are no strategic or resource implications. It is therefore proposed to limit the proposals that require strategic approval by Operations Committee to:

* new programme proposals
* substantial revisions to an existing programme with resource or academic implications of a strategic nature (see definitions at appendix 1, section 1.1.ii).

The proposals not within the above categories that have previously been submitted to Operations Committee will now fall under the remit of CSC.

It is anticipated that this change will reduce the volume of proposals that are being submitted to Operations Committee, and as a consequence will speed up the approval process.

* 1. **Revising the category of proposals that require approval by Curriculum Sub-Committee**

All revisions to existing programmes are categorised as either major or minor changes. There is a requirement that all major changes are approved by CSC, with minor changes being approved by the School AD(T).

CSC is of the opinion that it should only consider changes to existing provision if the academic content of the programme is being significantly altered. However, it believes that the current definition of a major change is resulting in CSC considering changes where there is no significant impact on the academic content of the programme.

It is therefore proposed to revise the definition of a major change (see appendix 1, section 1.2.1.iii). As a consequence many proposals will now be categorised as minor changes and can be approved by the School AD(T). This will speed up the approval process.

* 1. **Bringing forward the point at which a new programme can be publicised**

Currently new and revised programmes cannot be publicized to new applicants until they have been approved by Senate. It can therefore be several months after receiving strategic approval by Operations Committee before a School can bring a new programme to market. There is concern that in a fast-moving recruitment environment we are a step behind many of our competitors in this regard.

It is proposed that Schools should be permitted to publicise new programmes once strategic approval has been granted by Operations Committee (see appendix 1, section 1.5). However they would not be permitted to make offers for places on the programme until Operational Approval has been received.

There is currently a delay between the point of time at which CSC gives operational approval for a submission and the point at which formal operational approval is given by the University. At present CSC has to report up to Learning and Teaching Committee, which will then make a recommendation for formal approval to Senate.

In practice neither Learning and Teaching Committee or Senate undertake any detailed scrutiny of the proposal as this is done by CSC on their behalf. The requirement to report up through the committee structure inevitably creates delays in the approval process, therefore CSC is of the opinion that Senate should be asked to delegate authority for approval to the Chair of CSC, who is the PVC Teaching. This will speed up the point at which a School can be permitted to make offers and accept applications to a new programme.

* 1. **Revised forms for submitting proposals to Operations Committee and Curriculum Sub-Committee**

At present there is a single form that is used for submission purposes. The first part is submitted to Operations Committee, and once approval at Ops has been received the rest of the form is completed and submitted to CSC along with the first part.

In order to reduce any duplication between Operations Committee and CSC, and in order to focus the submission to the specific remit of each committee, it is proposed to adopt a separate form for each committee and to simplify the information required on each form. The current form is presented in appendix 2, and the new forms are presented in appendixes 3 and 4.

CSC was also of the opinion that Schools should be required to undertake a greater analysis of market demand before submitting a proposal to Operations Committee. Therefore, the submission to Operations Committee should include a Market Demand form which would detail the outcomes of a consultation with Recruitment and Admissions, the International Office, Marketing and the Careers and Employability Centre.

**2.5 A two-stream approach for approving immediate effect changes**

CSC agreed that proposals for immediate changes should be split into two categories by staff within the PQTP Office. First level changes would involve minor changes to modules and/or a programme and would have minimal impact on students. These would be assessed by the PQTP Office after approval by the AD(T). Second level changes would involve a major change and would be referred to the Chair of CSC for consideration. A list of approved immediate changes would be noted by CSC at its meetings.

It was also agreed that the restriction on the withdrawal of optional modules should be extended to all modules and should apply from the point that teaching of the module has begun, rather than week five of semester one (see appendix 1, section 1.3.ii).

**APPENDIX 1**

**Academic Quality Procedures Handbook**

**Section 3 - Programmes of Study**

**.1 Approval for New or Revised Programmes and Modules**

There is a two-stage process for approving new and revised programmes and modules: strategic and operational.

**1.1 Strategic Approval**

(i)    All strategic developments require the production of an outline proposal (template 3.1 from the [Template Shop](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/templateshop/index.htm) ) which should be signed off by the Dean of School and the School AD(T) , and then submitted to Operations Committee for approval. This should be accompanied by a financial assessment form which is obtained from the Finance Office.

(ii)   The following developments are categorised as strategic:

* all proposals for new programmes
* substantial revisions to an existing programme with resource or academic implications of a strategic nature. This includes:
  + a change of programme title or degree award
  + changes to the mode of delivery, such as a switch from conventional to distance learning methods across a whole programme the relocation of teaching e.g. to a site off-campus.
  + proposals to terminate or suspend a programme

(iii) Only once approval in principle has been given by Operations Committee are Schools expected to proceed to Operational Approval (see below) and develop detailed programme specifications, module specifications and evidence of consultations.

**1.2  Operational Approval**

(i) Operational approval is required for all new and revised programmes and modules.  There are two categories: major and minor. Where there is doubt about whether the proposal / change is major or minor, the AD(T) should ask the Chair of CSC to adjudicate.

(ii) Operational proposals will be considered up to one year following strategic approval.  Outside that time limit the procedure for strategic approval will need to be repeated.

(iii) Requirements to consult students/seek students' approval for programme/module changes can be found as item 1.3 at:

<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/lps/programme_admin/index.htm>

(iv) Templates for the submission of documentation are available at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/lps/programme_admin/index.htm>

(v) Full documentation in respect of all proposed changes should be lodged with the Secretary to the CSC at the outset, to be replaced by amended versions as and when changes are made during the course of the approval process.

**1.2.1    Major proposals / changes**

(i) Major proposals / changes require approval by Curriculum Sub-Committee (CSC), using template 3.1 from the [Template Shop](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/templateshop/index.htm).  The proposal / change should be signed off within the School by the Dean or Head of Department. The School AD(T) should then scrutinise the proposal / change on behalf of CSC before formal submission to CSC for approval via the Secretary. Copies of all major proposals will be circulated to all AD(T)s, who are invited to forward any observations to CSC.

(ii) Major proposals / changes include:

* all new or revised programmes and modules that have received strategic approval by Operations Committee (see 1.1.ii above)
* any new modules
* proposals to change existing programme specifications and module specifications which have implications which warrant institution-wide consideration.  For example, changes to:
  + - progression rules
    - degree qualification rules
    - changes to the programme or module learning outcomes that will significantly change the nature of the programme or module
    - changes to the learning and teaching activities and the assessment activities for a programme that will change the KIS report for that programme by more than 10% or below the minimum expectations set by the University

**1.2.2    Minor proposals / changes**

(i) All proposals / changes not included in 1.2.1 are considered Minor and are subject to the approval of the School AD(T) on behalf of CSC, using template 2.4 from the [Template Shop](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/templateshop/index.htm) for programmes and template 2.3 from the Template shop for modules.

**1.3 Immediate Effect Changes**

(i)    A proposal to make a change to a module or to a programme with immediate effect must be submitted for approval by the Chair of CSC using template 3.5 from the [Template Shop](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/templateshop/index.htm). The AD(T) should decide whether immediate effect changes are of such a nature as to require the consent of all the students currently registered on the module(s) or programme subject to change and, if so, ensure that such consent has been obtained before submitting the proposal (for guidance see item 1.3 at:  
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/lps/programme_admin/index.htm> )

(ii) Only in the most exceptional circumstances can modules be withdrawn once teaching of the module has begun.. Exceptional circumstances would include the unexpected absence of a key member of staff, but exclude non-viability of student numbers or sabbatical leave of key staff.

**1.4 Reporting Procedures**

(i)    Once approved, major proposals / changes are reported from CSC to LTC, and thence to Senate. When a major proposal / change results in the creation of a new programme, discontinuation or suspension of a programme, or change of programme title or award, the approval of Council is required.

(ii)   Minor changes are recorded by the Secretary to CSC.

(iii) Schools are responsible for ensuring that approved specifications for all modules are entered into the central LUSI database and published via the University's web site. The positive intervention of each School is required to carry forward any module specification from one year to the next. There is an annual procedure for updating module specifications and programme regulations/specifications for the next academic session. The relevant pro-forma and guidance notes for the annual update are available as downloadable templates from the [Template Shop](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/templateshop/index.htm) (items 2.3 and 2.4) and are included in Appendix 4.

(iv) Schools are responsible for informing provider and user Schools of all relevant curriculum changes once approved.

**1.5  Publicising New Programmes**

(i) A new programme may be publicised to potential applicants once strategic approval has been given by Operations Committee. Any publicity should state that the programme is subject to approval.

(ii) Schools are not permitted to make offers and accept applications for admission on a programme until Operational Approval has been given by Learning and Teaching Committee.

**APPENDIX 2**

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**Proposal for a New Programme**

**This form is available for downloading from admin/ar/templateshop (item 3.1)- spaces can be expanded as required.**

**This proposal is in Strategic Phase**

**Operational Phase**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Name of School and School contact:  Name of intended Programme Director: | |
| 2. Award and Title of proposed new programme *(see \* below)* | Proposed JACS code  (see \*\* below): |
| 3. Award(s) for a postgraduate programme   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Please circle the award(s) available on this programme | Indicate the award(s) that students should be able to register for (rather than receive as an exit award only) | | *MSc/MA/MBA/MDes/MRes* |  | | *PGDip* |  | | *PGCert* |  | | |
| 4. Month and Year of first intake to the programme:    Will the programme be offered as:  full-time  part-time  full-time and part-time | |
| 5. If the proposed new programme is a revised version of an existing programme, state how this will be phased in, i.e. - year(s) that Parts B, C, D will commence; pathway for students currently on placement/leave of absence and resit students | |
| 6. List the module codes of any new modules proposed.    List the module codes of any restructured modules (changed credit weighting) proposed. | |
| 7. Is it intended that any modules will be available by full/partial Distance Learning?  Yes  No  Is it intended that the programme will be fully Distance Learning?  Yes  No  *Guidance on full/partial DL provision is available on the intranet at:*  [*https://internal.lboro.ac.uk/admin/registry/uniwide/*](https://internal.lboro.ac.uk/admin/registry/uniwide/)  *The QAA Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning*  *(including e-learning) should be followed and is available at:*  [*http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/code-of-practice/Pages/default.aspx*](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/code-of-practice/Pages/default.aspx) | |
| 8. Reasons for the proposal: its purpose and relevance; how it will enhance calibre of teaching and learning; implications for existing programmes and modules in the department *(see \* below)* | |
| 9. Expected student numbers | |
| 10. Staffing implications - adequacy of existing departmental resources; net increase/reduction in staff teaching effort or demands on support staff | |
| 11. Additional Library requirements | |
| 12. Additional Computing Support required  Network/Software (*please elaborate*):  Lab Space (*please elaborate*): | |
| 13. E-learning support requirements | |
| 14. Other resource implications, e.g. - lecture room, lab and other space requirements (lecture capture for example); equipment, materials; timetabling constraints (block-teaching for example); any special residential requirements | |
| 15. Implications for other Schools both providing and receiving (strategic or otherwise) | |
| 16. Evidence of demand and suitability; views of lecturers; current/prospective students; external examiners/ assessors, professional/industrial bodies etc. | |
| 17. Implications for employability | |
| 18. Any other relevant information | |

*\* A School proposing a group of new programmes/titles with a high proportion of common modules, or proposing to add a new programme/title to an existing group of this kind, should produce information clearly defining the award pathways and justify the differentiation of the award titles. Proposals of this type should be flagged up during the strategic phase, bearing in mind that the case may be driven by non-pedagogic issues (such as marketing, recruitment or administration). For proposals of this kind, Schools are advised to produce a single set of Programme Regulations and one Programme Specification, identifying clearly the pathways to, and the ILOs for, the award titles.*

*Where programmes are grouped within a suite with a generic title they should be referred to within the Programme Regulations and Programme Specification as degree paths.*

*\*\* For the complete list of JACS codes see:* [*http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com\_content&task=view&id=158%Item*](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=158%25Item)

*Advice may be sought from Tom Wale (*[*t.f.wale@lboro.ac.uk*](mailto:t.f.wale@lboro.ac.uk)*, extn 222235) in the Planning Office.*

**STRATEGIC PHASE**

Financial Statement attached

Sarah Hannaford (Student Recruitment and Admissions) and

Charlie Carter (International Office) have been consulted about the proposed title

of the programme)

For undergraduate programmes only:

Comments attached from Sarah Hannaford (Student Recruitment and Admissions) on market opportunities for the programme

Departments having terminology in common in their programme titles   
and for which this may be a concern have been consulted   
e.g Management, Business, Design. Consultation forms are attached

**Dean of School Signature**:…………………………………………………………….

**Date**: …………………………………..

**Comments from Associate Dean (Teaching):**

This proposal has been discussed with the School and can now be submitted to Operations Committee.

Yes/No

**Associate Dean (Teaching) Signature:** ………………………………………………………..

**Date:** ……………………………………

*Forms not including both the Dean and Associate Dean (Teaching)'s signature will not be accepted.*

**OPERATIONAL PHASE**

Programme Regulations attached

(*see* [*Template Shop website*](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/templates/index.htm) *– item 3.10/3.11 - for Programme Regulations Template)*

Programme Specification attached

(*see* [*Template Shop website*](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/templates/index.htm) *– item 3.2 - for updated Prog Spec Template and Guidance Notes)*

New and Restructured Module Specifications (*LUSI* versions) attached

*(to include a completed proposal form for module changes as used for*

*the Annual Update process, excluding the Approval Route page for signatures  
 –****ONE*** *form will suffice for common responses)*

Curriculum Map attached

Assessment Matrix attached (for *all* modules)

Evidence of External Support attached

*(N.B. see guidance notes for requirements)*

Consultation forms attached and considered:

*Other Academic Department*s/Schools

*(Please list)*

*Library*

*Careers and Employability Centre*

*IT Services*

*Facilities Management*

*Teaching Centre (including for the development,*

*support and provision of distance learning and e-learning)*

Quality Assurance Statement attached (for collaborative proposal only)

**Dean of School Signature**:…………………………………………………………….

**Date**: …………………………………..

**Comments from the Associate Dean (Teaching):**

This proposal can now be submitted to Curriculum Sub-Committee

**Associate Dean (Teaching) Signature:** ………………………………………………………..

**Date:** ……………………………………

*Forms not including both the Dean of School and Associate Dean (Teaching)'s signature will not be accepted.*

**WHEN SUBMITTING OPERATIONAL PROPOSALS please forward an electronic copy of the proposal form and the programme regulations/specification as an email attachment to M.A.Ashby**

(July 2012)

**APPENDIX 3**

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**Proposal for a New Programme**

**Strategic Approval for submission to Operations Committee**

1. **Proposal Outline**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Name of School |
| 1. Name of intended Programme Director |
| 1. Award and Title of proposed new programme (see \* below) |
| 4. Proposed JACS code (see \*\* below): |
| 5. Mode of delivery  full-time  Blended learning  part-time  100% Distance learning  full-time and part-time  collaborative / off campus |
| 6. Month and Year of first intake to the programme |
| 7. Structure of the programme (Overview of programme content and programme aims; number of new and existing modules for proposed programme) |
| 8. Reasons for the proposal (relevance to strategic priorities; implications for existing programmes and modules in the School; evidence of market demand) |
| 9. Resource implications (staffing implications; response to issues raised in the Internal Consultation Process) |

*\* Indicate the award(s) that students should be able to register for (rather than receive as an exit award only)*

*\*\* For the complete list of JACS codes see:* [*http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com\_content&task=view&id=158%Item*](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=158%25Item)

*Advice may be sought from Tom Wale (*[*t.f.wale@lboro.ac.uk*](mailto:t.f.wale@lboro.ac.uk)*, extn 222235) in the Planning Office.*

**2. Attachments**

New Course Costing Form

Market Demand Form

Internal Consultation Forms (if appropriate):

Schools which have common terminology in their programme titles, relevant expertise or common interests for which this may be a concern e.g. Business, Management, Design

Schools which will provide teaching to the programme

The Pilkington Library

Facilities Management

IT Services

The Teaching Centre

**3. School Approval**

Associate Dean (Teaching) Signature: ………………………………………………………..

Date: ……………………………………

Dean of School Signature:…………………………………………………………….

Date: …………………………………..

**APPENDIX 4**

Description: logotype

**Proposal for a New Programme**

**Operational Approval for submission to Curriculum Sub-Committee**

1. **Proposal Outline**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Name of School |
| 1. Name of intended Programme Director |
| 1. Award and Title of proposed new programme |
| 4. Proposed JACS code |
| 5. Mode of delivery  full-time  Blended learning  part-time  100% Distance learning  full-time and part-time  collaborative / off campus |

1. **Attachments**

Programme Specification

New and Revised Module Specifications

Curriculum Map

Assessment Matrix

External Consultation Form

**3. School Approval**

Dean of School Signature:…………………………………………………………….

Date: …………………………………..

Associate Dean (Teaching) Signature: ………………………………………………..

Date: ……………………………………