

**Subject: Guidance on the Operation of Programme Approval Panels Origin: Learning and Teaching Committee, October 2017**

1. **Introduction**

In December 2015 Learning and Teaching Committee approved the formation of School Programme Approval Panels, which exist to scrutinise programme proposals before formal consideration at Curriculum Sub- Committee (minute LTC15/122 refers). This guidance has been produced to support Schools in the operation of the Panels.

**2 Overview of Programme Approval at Loughborough University**

Programme design, development and approval depend on reflection and critical self-assessment by individuals, Schools and the University. Designing and developing a programme is a creative activity, which leads to an iterative process of development, depending on feedback from a range of sources, which may include other staff, students, employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Programme approval involves a number of steps which have been defined by the University, the two major elements of which are strategic and operational approval:

Strategic programme approval is undertaken by Operations Committee. At this phase of the process outline proposals are scrutinised to ensure that an appropriate level of preliminary planning has been carried out, taking into account the development of the academic portfolio with particular reference to the University Strategy, School Plans and resource implications.

The Operational phase of programme approval is undertaken by Curriculum Sub-Committee in two phases: firstly, in advance of formal approval by Curriculum Sub-Committee, Schools are required to convene Programme Approval Panels to scrutinise the proposals; and secondly, if successful in stage one, submission for formal approval by Curriculum Sub-Committee.

The timescale for each of these steps will vary according to the nature of the programme under development or review. However, table 1 (below) provides indicative timescales for programme approval.

Schools are strongly encouraged to seek the advice of staff within the Centre for Academic Practice when preparing proposals for new programmes or major changes to programme.

Schools are also asked to be aware of the importance of consultation, both internal and external to the University, and the need to allow appropriate time for consultees to consider the proposal and make a response. Schools should then allow appropriate time to consider the responses and make any necessary adjustments / enter into dialogue with the respondent before the Programme Approval Panel.

**Table 1: Indicative timescales for programme approval**

**3. Terms of Reference and Membership for Programme Approval Panels**

Programme Approval Panels should be constituted within each School as required and should have the following terms of reference:

1. To scrutinise proposals for new programmes and major changes to existing programmes, with a view to making a recommendation for approval to CSC. In particular to:
   * have regard to the importance of securing the standards of the University's awards against appropriate external reference points.
   * establish that necessary consultations have been undertaken by the School concerned
   * ensure that satisfactory programme specifications and/or module specifications have been produced.
   * ensure that the design and content of the curriculum and the assessment strategy will allow students appropriate learning opportunities to achieve the intended outcomes of the programmes/modules concerned and with the opportunity to develop Loughborough Graduate Attributes
   * to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the prospectus entry for new programmes
2. To report and make recommendations to Curriculum Sub-Committee.

The membership of the Programme Approval Panel is:

Chair: School AD(T)

Director of Studies from another School

Representative from EAP (*Contact Samantha Chester* [*S.Chester@lboro.ac.uk*](mailto:S.Chester@lboro.ac.uk)*)*

Representative from PQTP (*Contact Caroline King* [*C.J.King@lboro.ac.uk*](mailto:C.J.King@lboro.ac.uk)  *for name)*

Secretary: Programme administrator/School LTC Secretary

In attendance:

Programme Director for the programme under consideration

School Directors of Studies (UG / PG if relevant).

**4. Guidance on the operation of School Programme Approval Panels**

**4.1 Timing of meetings**

The School is responsible for setting the date and time of the Programme Approval Panel. It is recommended that at least one hour should be allocated for each programme proposal.

Invariably issues arise which need further investigation. Hence, the meetings should be convened at least three weeks in advance of the deadline for submission to CSC to allow resolution of any issues prior to the deadline for CSC papers.

**4.2 Paperwork**

The AD(T), as Panel Chair, is responsible for assuring that the paperwork is all present and correct before it is circulated to panel members. For each new programme / major change to a programme that is being submitted for approval to the Programme Approval Panel, panel members should receive a completed coversheet (see Appendix 1), along with the following attachments:

* Programme Approval Panel Terms of Reference
* Programme Specification
* New and Revised Module Specifications
* Curriculum Map
* Assessment Matrix
* Proposed prospectus entry
* External and internal consultation responses (required for all new programmes and required for major changes*only* where it is considered that the changes are of a nature where there will be a significant change to the curriculum and / or an impact on another School or a Professional Service).

Paperwork should be made available to the Panel a week in advance of the meeting to allow time to scrutinize, and should be circulated electronically, ideally as a single, assembled document rather than a series of files.

All paperwork should be present (consultations undertaken in advance of the meeting etc.). If not available, the Chair should consider postponing the Panel.

**4.3 Conduct of the meeting**

The AD(T) should Chair the meeting, welcoming members and reminding them of the terms of reference.

The Programme Director should be invited to briefly introduce the new programme / outline the changes to an existing programme.

The Panel should be invited to comment on the proposal, receiving responses from the Programme Director as appropriate. In line with the expectations of the terms of reference, the Chair should direct discussions to ensure that:

* + programme design has taken account of appropriate external reference points (e.g. Subject Benchmark Statement, accreditation requirements).
  + necessary consultations have been undertaken
  + satisfactory programme specifications and/or module specifications have been produced.
  + the design and content of the curriculum and the assessment strategy will allow students appropriate learning opportunities to achieve the intended outcomes of the programmes/modules concerned and with the opportunity to develop relevant Loughborough Graduate Attributes
  + the prospectus entry for new programmes is relevant and accurate.

At the end of the meeting the Chair should allow time for agreement on the decision of the Panel and to agree any actions. The decisions that the Panel can take are:

* + Approve: recommend approval to CSC.
  + Approve: subject to issues being resolved to satisfaction of Chair and/or Panel (then recommend approval to CSC)
  + Approve: subject to matters of principle being resolved by CSC.
  + Reject: with recommendations, with a view to submission to a Panel at a later date.
  + Reject.

It is recommended that the Programme Director presenting the programme is present for the whole discussion so that they are fully aware of any the decision taken and of issues raised by Panel members.

**4.4 Record of the meeting**

The Programme Approval Panel Report Form (see Appendix 2) should be completed.

There is no expectation that minutes are taken, but a note of outstanding actions should be taken and followed up to the satisfaction of the Chair before the Chair formally submits the report to CSC. The record of the meeting should ideally be taken by a School programme administrator.

**4.5 Outstanding Issues**

If there are matters to be resolved before the Panel can sign off a proposal these may be followed up electronically outside of the meeting (i.e. by email), and signed off without the need to physically reconvene the Panel. However, on occasion the matters to be resolved may be so significant / numerous, that the Chair may decide to physically reconvene the Panel.

**4.6 Report to Curriculum Sub-Committee**

For each new programme / major change to a programme that is being submitted for approval to CSC, the AD(T) should submit a completed coversheet to Curriculum Sub-Committee (see Appendix 3), along with the following attachments:

* Report from the School Programme Approval Panel (Appendix 2)
* Programme Specification
* Curriculum Map
* Assessment Matrix

**APPENDIX 1**

**Coversheet: School Programme Approval Panel:**

**Proposal for a New Programme / Major Change to an Existing Programme**

New Programme Proposal

Major Change Proposal

*Note: Where there are resource implications strategic approval will need to be in place prior to consideration by Curriculum Sub-Committee.*

1. **Proposal Outline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Name of School | |
| 1. Award and Title of proposed new programme, or existing programme\* | |
| 1. Name of Programme Director | |
| 4. Programme code *Existing programmes only* | 5. Proposed JACS code *New programmes only* |
| 6. Mode of delivery  full-time  Blended learning  part-time  100% Distance learning  full-time and part-time  collaborative / off campus | |
| 7. Proposed month and year of implementation | |
| 8. Overview of the new programme / description and rationale for major changes to existing programme (expand as necessary): | |
| 9. For major changes only: Impact upon existing and prospective students:(expand as necessary)  Will the change have an impact upon:  (i) existing students (including those on placement/ leave of absence/ resitting elements of the course)  (ii) prospective students | |

1. **Attachments**

Required for all new programmes and major changes:

Programme Approval Panel Terms of Reference

Item 3.3 in the Template Shop

Programme Specification

New and Revised Module Specifications

Curriculum Map

Assessment Matrix

Proposed prospectus entry

Required for all new programmes. Required for major changes ***only*** where it is considered that the changes are of a nature where there will be a significant change to the curriculum and / or an impact on another School or a Professional Service:

External Consultation (with academic and/or industrial reviewer)

Internal Consultation Forms (if appropriate):

Note: Can be summary of forms already provided to Operations Committee for strategic approval

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

Centre for Academic Practice

**APPENDIX 2 School Programme Approval Panel**

**Report to Curriculum Sub-Committee**

New Programme Proposal

Major Change Proposal

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Name of School: |
| 1. Name of Programme: |
| 1. Date of the Programme Approval Panel: |
| 1. As Chair of the School Programme Approval Panel, I can confirm that the above programme has been scrutinised by the Panel and that a recommendation for Operational Approval is made to Curriculum Sub-Committee. In scrutinising the programme, the Panel considered whether :  * the programme complies with appropriate external reference points * necessary consultations have been undertaken with relevant Schools and Professional Services * satisfactory programme specifications and/or module specifications have been produced * the design and content of the curriculum and the assessment strategy will allow students appropriate learning opportunities to achieve the intended outcomes of the programmes/modules concerned and with the opportunity to develop Loughborough Graduate Attributes * the prospectus entry for the new programmes is relevant and accurate.   I confirm that changes recommended by the Panel have now been made and that the programme meets with the above requirements.  AD(T) signature: |
| 1. Curriculum Sub-Committee is asked to note / consider the following issues in relation to the programme that arose at the meeting of the Programme Approval Panel: |

**Decision of the Programme Approval Panel**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Approve.** Recommend approval to CSC |  |
| **Approve**, subject to issues being resolved to the satisfaction of the Chair and/or Panel (then recommend approval to CSC) |  |
| **Approve**, subject to matters of principle being resolved by CSC (see 5. above) |  |
| **Reject** with recommendations (please state), with a view to submission to a Panel at a later date. |  |
| **Reject** |  |

**Actions Identified by the Programme Approval Panel**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Action** | **Response from proposer** | **AD(T) Decision**  **(approved/further action required)** |
| **1** | *Example:* Seek advice from CAP regarding module ILOs and revise accordingly |  |  |
| **2** |  |  |  |
| **3** |  |  |  |
| **4** |  |  |  |
| **5** |  |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |  |
| **7** |  |  |  |
| **8** |  |  |  |

*Expand table as necessary*

**APPENDIX 3**

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

New Programme Proposal

Major Change Proposal

*Note: Where there are resource implications strategic approval will need to be in place prior to consideration by Curriculum Sub-Committee.*

1. **Proposal Outline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Name of School | |
| 1. Award and Title of proposed new programme, or existing programme\* | |
| 1. Name of Programme Director | |
| 4. Programme code *Existing programmes only* | 5. Proposed JACS code *New programmes only* |
| 6. Mode of delivery  full-time  Blended learning  part-time  100% Distance learning  full-time and part-time  collaborative / off campus | |
| 7. Proposed month and year of implementation | |
| 8. Overview of the new programme / description and rationale for major changes to an existing programme (expand as necessary): | |

*\* For MOOCs, not all categories of this form will be applicable. Please seek advice from PQTP Office*

1. **Attachments**

Report from the School Programme Approval Panel

Programme Specification

Curriculum Map

Assessment Matrix