

# PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE

## Issue 9

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a framework for the creation of a new programme or the development of existing or constituent parts of a programme of learning. By using a common framework informed by current best practice, programme and curriculum managers may address criteria essential to the requirements of both internal (Validation and Approvals Committee) and external awarding bodies and agencies. The quality and rigour of the design and review process ensure relevant responsibilities are identified, stakeholders consulted and the resulting proposal meets the necessary academic requirements and expectations of the Awarding Body, the QAA UK Quality Code and regulatory requirements of the Office for Students (OfS).

This procedure should be considered together with the *Validation and Approvals Procedures*, the *Guidance on Completing Programme Specification Forms* and the *Guidance on Completing Module Specification Forms*. Together, these documents encompass all activities associated with the development, consideration, and approval of relevant and pertinent programmes of learning.

This procedure shall be followed for all FE and HE programmes as a precursor to submission to the Validation and Approvals process.

### *Responsibilities*

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (HE Curriculum and FE Principal) is responsible for commissioning the writing of new programmes, or of substantially amended or revalidated programmes.

The Quality Team is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the development and for registering the programme with the relevant awarding body, where appropriate.

The Academic Board, through its Validation and Approvals Committee is responsible for approving any proposal for a new, amended or re-validated programme, either delivered at UCB or via a collaborative arrangement.

### *Reference Points*

The development of new and existing programmes should be carried out with reference to appropriate external reference points:

- For HE provision: Guidance on programme content, levels and other matters provided by QAA, subject representative bodies and others, such as the QAA UK Quality Code, the relevant subject benchmarks and any professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements.

- For FE provision: Guidance on programme content, levels and other matters provided by Awarding Bodies, subject representative bodies and others, such as
  - Awarding Body specifications for programmes, where they exist and any professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements.
  
- The local, regional and national agenda, with reference to economic and other data including, for instance:
  - Employment trends identified by the relevant Local Enterprise Partnerships
  - Issues and skills shortages identified by industrial liaison groups which support programme areas and ensure close contact with local employers is maintained.
  - Birmingham City Council’s Economic Development Strategy labour market intelligence on “hard to fill” vacancies and demand for “new skills”.
  - Contribution to social inclusion by widening participation by disadvantaged and under represented groups and promoting lifelong learning.
  - The opportunities for our students to progress from FE to HE programmes within UCB, rather than transfer to another institution.
  - Acknowledgement of the student support and funding arrangements that are causing students to think harder about the benefits of studying while staying in the family home.
  - The probability of attracting students to the programme in Birmingham.
  
- The National agenda, which needs to be considered for several reasons:
  - The provision of similar programmes at other institutions is increasingly significant in geographical terms because of the tendency for an increasing proportion of students to study from the family home.
  - UCB will normally seek to have some distinguishing or unique characteristics that differentiate its programme from similar programmes at other institutions.
  - Successful students are potentially very mobile in terms of employment opportunities.
  - Any identified skills shortages in the service sector nationally.
  
- The international agenda, resulting from sector globalisation and:
  - Responding to the needs and interests of the significant proportion of overseas students who enrol at UCB because of its international reputation and the offering of specialist programmes not available in other countries.
  - Encouraging students to adopt an international perspective on the issues that they are studying. This will be pertinent because of the international dimensions of the service sector and the role of international organisations in promoting marketing and providing services.
  - Reflecting the fact that a proportion of successful students will find employment overseas

## *Procedure*

### *1. New Programmes of Higher Education*

To ensure the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment process and the relevance and currency of the proposed programme the following procedure shall be followed.

No new programme may be delivered without the prior approval of its design by the Validation and Approvals Committee.

Proposals for new programmes should be made to a member of the Academic Management Team, normally the Executive Dean or Deputy Dean of the School relevant to the programme proposed. The Academic Management Team will discuss possibilities for such developments and refer them to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (HE Curriculum and FE Principal).

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (HE Curriculum and FE Principal) will decide if a proposal for a new programme is worthy of proceeding to detailed development.

The Quality Team will work with the Development Team to compile relevant information regarding the programme, including: student demand; industry relevance; teaching, learning and assessment information and an outline of each module to be taught for example, within the standard format for Programme and Module Specification. The completed Programme Specification will enable a Validation and Approvals Committee to make an informed judgement on the suitability of a proposal to offer a new programme.

The Quality Team will facilitate a meeting of the Validation and Approvals Committee which will consider the suitability of the proposed programme. Further details of this are provided in the *Validation and Approvals Procedures* document.

## *2. New Programmes of Further Education*

Where the design of the new programme differs from the awarding body standard specifications, a Programme Specification will be created in a standard format.

To ensure the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment process and the relevance and currency of the proposed programme the following procedure shall be followed.

Proposals for new programmes should be made to a member of the Academic Management Team, normally the Executive Dean or Deputy Dean of the School relevant to the programme proposed. The Academic Management Team will discuss possibilities for such developments and refer them to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (HE Curriculum and FE Principal).

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (HE Curriculum and FE Principal) will decide if a proposal for a new course is worthy of proceeding to detailed development.

The Quality Team will arrange for suitable members of staff to compile relevant information regarding the programme.

This will be compiled in a form suitable for the programme - normally the forms of the awarding body relevant for the programme. If no such forms are available, the standard format Programme Specification should be used. The completed documentation will enable a Validation and Approvals Committee to make an informed judgement on the suitability of a proposal to offer a new programme.

The Quality Team will facilitate a meeting of the Validation and Approvals Committee which will consider the suitability of the proposed programme. Further details of this are provided in the *Validation and Approvals Procedures* document.

### *3. Programme Amendment (HE)*

The Quality Team will determine awarding body regulations with regard to the re-validation of approved programmes of study and will inform programme management of the requirements for gaining a further period of programme approval. The re-validation process is often an opportunity to review the design, content and relevance of an established programme.

The re-validation team will investigate the currency of the programme in terms of industry relevance, community and student demand, student satisfaction and external verifier/moderator/examiner reports. Progression opportunities, curricula content, delivery methods and assessment strategies will be reviewed.

The Chair of the Validation and Approvals Committee will agree a Committee membership which is appropriate to the agenda of the re-validation event in line with the *Validation and Approvals Procedures*. Any validation meeting will take a form similar to that for new programme approvals.

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