



Programme and Course Approval and Management

Purpose of Policy

This Policy outlines for staff and students the University's approach to programme and course approval and management (including design, development, approval, changes and closure, but not monitoring) and how Boards of Studies operate.

Overview

The Policy was initially developed following the publication of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

Applies to staff and students who are involved in programme and course design, development, approval, changes and closure and to both taught and research programmes and all Boards of Studies and the staff and student members in every School/Deanery. This Policy covers all credit bearing provision, non-credit bearing online courses for external release, and non-credit bearing continuing professional development courses, including postgraduate research as well as taught courses and programmes, and online learning as well as on-campus provision.

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Document control

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Approving authority	Senatus Academic Policy and Regulations Committee and University Court for the associated resolution
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Consultation undertaken	
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Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services
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Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Curriculum webpages (Academic Services) Course Descriptor Guidance Board of Studies Terms of Reference Assessment and Feedback Principles
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UK Quality Code	Advice and guidance: Course design and development
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Policies superseded by this policy	Draft University Level Principles for Programme and Course Design, Development, Approval, Changes and Closure Non-Credit Bearing Online Course Approval: Procedure for External Release
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Programme and Course Approval and Management

Introduction

The University is required to have strategic oversight of and to consistently apply effective processes for the design, development, approval, changes and closure of programmes and courses. Programmes and courses are defined in the University's [glossary of terms](#).

This Policy, and the [curriculum](#) pages of the Academic Services website, constitute the University's approach to and management of the processes for design, development, approval, changes and closure of programmes and courses. Supplementary College level guidance provides additional information on local practice such as timescales, specific roles and responsibilities, and templates.

Programme and Course Design and Development

Programme and course **design** is a creative activity which may result in innovative ideas for higher education provision. It is followed by a process of **development** which leads to the creation of a programme or course. This is where the content, modes of delivery, structure and components of the programme or course (including assessment and feedback methods and the means by which students will be engaged with the curriculum) are considered and, for programmes, developed into a coherent programme of study. This development process may also be used to enhance an existing programme, for example in response to the outcomes of programme monitoring and review. Programme and course design and development is carried out at the School or subject area level.

Key Issues to Address in proposals for Credit-Bearing Courses and Programmes

Programme and course proposals must demonstrate the following (please note: some aspects are not directly relevant for postgraduate research programmes):

Programmes	Courses
Purpose	
Learning outcomes (LOs) necessary to meet that purpose.	
Mechanisms by which students demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the LOs.	
Organisational aspects such as workload, volume and nature of assessment in order for students to meet LOs.	
Details of the level of award and credits	Details of the credit level and credits
The programme as a whole is coherent	The relationship of the course to programme(s) and how the course delivers and assesses the learning outcomes set out in the Degree Programme Specification (not applicable for standalone courses).
Minimum entry requirements for entry to the programme	
Where other Schools are involved and/or impacted: evidence of consultation; consideration; communication of impact; and support for the proposal. Confirmation of primary responsibility should be defined at the outset (there can only be one owning School).	
Consultation with relevant support services (e.g. Library, Information Services Group) and (where relevant) any external providers/contacts (e.g. employers, alumni, business, industry or professional contacts)	



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Programmes	Courses
Evidence of consideration of Internal Reference Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course and programme proposals should take account of the relevant internal strategic context. This may include: a School strategy; a College strategy; and/or University strategy including Strategy 2030. Degree and Assessment Regulations The Curriculum Framework The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy The Graduate Attributes Framework Work-based and Placement Learning Policy (as appropriate) 	
Evidence of consideration of External Reference Points (as appropriate for courses): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QAA Subject Benchmark Statements Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements Employers and Industry 	
Accessibility Design courses and programmes to be accessible to all students and to avoid any unnecessary barriers to students with protected characteristics	
Student involvement Students must be proactively involved at the earliest practicable point in programme and course design, development, approval, changes and closure processes. Their involvement should be proportional to the activity taking place and representative and could include student feedback from the quality assurance processes (course evaluations, student surveys, Staff Student Liaison Committee minutes etc.). The opportunity to be involved must allow for representation of students with a range of backgrounds and characteristics. Consultation should involve students academically closest to the proposed changes.	
Evidence of expertise from outside the programme In programme approval, the involvement of individuals external to the University is required to offer independence and objectivity to the decisions taken.	

Documentation for Proposals

Programme and course proposals must ensure a transparent and auditable 'paper-trail' providing a rationale for decisions. Documentary evidence must include the following:

Programmes	Courses
For taught programmes: Degree Programme Specification (the final version is posted on the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study)	Course creation, approval and maintenance information (EUCLID)
Details of the structure of the programme (informs the Degree Programme Table once the programme is approved)	More detailed documentation requirements will be in College Guidance.
Business case - Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group costings template Also needs to be submitted for approval to Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group for proposals for non-standard tuition fee arrangements	
More detailed documentation requirements will be in College Guidance	

Following approval of a programme: (1) complete [New Programme Request Form](#) and (2) create [Degree Programme Table](#).



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Business Case for New Programmes

All proposals for a new programme, at all levels of study, must be accompanied by a business case.

The Business Case should include:

- Projected student enrolments for year one and four subsequent years
- Projected costs and income for these years, including proposed tuition fee arrangements (tuition fee arrangements not applicable for undergraduate programmes)

Factors to consider in preparing your Business Plan include:

- How the programme contributes to School(s)/ College(s) or University strategic Plans
- How does the programme fit within any existing School or College suite of programmes and how does it relate to active areas of research work?
- How many programmes have been launched within the school in the past 5 years within your subject area and how many existing programmes have been closed?
- Can any existing courses from current programmes be used and of so are there sufficient spaces to accommodate additional students?
- How do you intend on growing the programme over the coming years?
- How will the programme be sustainably resourced (e.g. staffing such as tutors including new and reallocation of existing staff (academic or professional services), additional teaching, laboratory facilities, Library and Computing service provision etc.?)
- Would students on the programme be eligible for any scholarships?
- Does the number of FTE staff per student ratio look realistic given the forecast student numbers?
- If the programme is shared across Schools/Colleges what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure suitable programme management (both academic and administrative)

If the programme is a joint or collaborative programme with an external institution the case must include all relevant documentation such as the memorandum of understanding. Further advice for such partnerships can be sought from [Academic Collaborations intranet site](#).

The Business Case should incorporate the outcomes of market insight, which should address at least some of the following:

- Who is the target market and how will the University specifically market the programme to them?
- What is the forecast market size - how many new students would this programme attract and on what basis are you estimating this?
- Where are these students likely to come from? UK/ EU / Overseas?
- What is the demand for graduates with the qualification?
- What competitor programmes exist, what is the going rate for their fees, what are their unique selling points, and what is the unique selling point of the proposed programme?

The Business Case should also incorporate a marketing strategy. Factors to consider when writing your marketing strategy include:

- Which global and local markets do you think this programme will appeal to?
- What are the proposed tuition fees for both home and overseas students and how does this compare with your competitors?
- What are the possible career destinations for your graduates?



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- Would employers be receptive to employing students who have completed this programme?
Are there any opportunities for employer endorsements?

Communications and Marketing can provide assistance and support for conducting market research (market pulse and competitor analysis). <http://www.ed.ac.uk/communications-marketing/market-insight>

For the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) the point of contact for market research is the College Markets Insights Service: CAHSS Recruitment and Admissions Insights CAHSSinsights@ed.ac.uk

Colleges may provide additional guidance and support for developing business cases and conducting market research, and about how the review of Business Cases relates to the academic approval processes for new programmes.

Key Committees Responsible for Programme and Course Approval, Changes and Closure

School Boards of Studies

See below for information regarding the membership, remit and operation of Boards of Studies

College Committee

Each College should produce a clear Terms of Reference setting out the remit, membership and operation of their Committee(s) responsible for programme and course approval and management.

Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

The membership, remit and operation of APRC are detailed in the [Committee's Terms of Reference](#).

School Boards of Studies

The constitution, composition, and number of Boards of Studies are regulated by Court Resolution No 05/2019. The following are the key points:

Remit

- Each School has at least one Board of Studies which considers proposals for new, changes to, and/or closure of existing courses, programmes and awards. They cover all credit-bearing provisions, non-credit bearing online courses for external release, and non-credit bearing continuing professional development courses. They also keep teaching, learning and assessment methodologies under review and offer advice on the School's portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Boards of Studies ensure that proposals are academically appropriate and supported by evidence and documentation. They ensure that all interested parties in the University are aware of proposals.
- Boards of Studies annually approve UNISTATS (formerly Key Information Set) Learning, Teaching and Assessment course information and Degree Programme Accreditation information, recording this approval in the Board of Studies' minutes.
- Boards of Studies have responsibility for the formal oversight of programme and course handbooks. In practice the approval of handbooks can be delegated to members of staff within a School as part of an approvals process that ensures accuracy of information and all handbooks are approved prior to the commencement of a course or programme. Boards of



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Studies need to have formal oversight of the approvals process and would be expected to record that handbooks had been approved at the relevant Board of Studies meeting.

- Boards of Studies consider and report their views on any other academic matter to the appropriate College(s) and/or Colleges committee(s), whether independently or in response to a College or University request.

Composition

- The Head of the relevant School appoints a Convener and Deputy Convener, who must both be academic members of staff, for each Board of Studies in the School. The Convener and Deputy Convener are eligible for appointment for a period of three years and may be re-appointed. In the absence of the Convener at any meeting, the Board of Studies is chaired by the Deputy Convener. The Convener or Chair of the meeting shall have both a deliberative and a casting vote. The Convener of a Board of Studies cannot also convene the College committee to which the Board reports.
- Boards of Studies consist of academic and administrative staff in the University and other people appointed by the relevant College(s). All staff involved in the teaching of a degree programme should be a member of the relevant Board of Studies.
- Each Board of Studies has at least one student member from a relevant discipline. Student members need to represent the range of subjects covered by the Board and to be linked to the appropriate School Representation structure. If student members are unable to attend, it is appropriate for them to send an alternate student representative or provide comments to the Board of Studies in advance. For student members, the School can invite the Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and/or Postgraduate Research School Representative who was elected in the Edinburgh University Students Association (the Students' Association) elections in the first instance. If they are unable to attend, other possible student members are other Student Representatives who have attended the Students' Association's representation training, for example, Programme Representatives.
- Each Board of Studies has at least one external member from another Board of Studies within the University. This may be a representative or representatives from other Schools with subject areas with strong links to the Board of Studies' discipline areas.
- The Head of School and the Director of Teaching or equivalent in a School, are members of each Board of Studies in their School.
- The Head of College has the right to appoint an ex officio College member to every Board of Studies in the College.
- Boards of Studies can include members from other areas of the University, for example from other Schools or from relevant support services.
- At the beginning of each academic session each School produces an agreed list of the members of its Board(s).
- There is no formal quorum for the Board of Studies, but the minimum composition of Board of Studies meetings needs to provide effective academic oversight of the decisions made by the Board and therefore some roles may have to be represented for the Board to be considered robust.

Governance

- Boards of Studies may make nominations for representation of their members on relevant College committees.
- Boards of Studies shall report direct to the relevant College committee(s) as necessary, but at least annually.



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- Boards of Studies shall liaise with relevant School and College committees and with specific managers and offices in respect of issues or instances where matters of academic policy intersect with management issues.

Operation

- Boards of Studies must meet at least once in each academic year.
- The timing of Board of Studies meetings should align with the School and College committees to which the Board reports, and any other key dates. Boards of Studies shall hold such meetings as the Convener may call, including electronic or virtual meetings.
- The Convener must call a meeting of the Board when at least one-fifth of its members request this meeting in writing.
- Boards of Studies may appoint sub-committees which at the discretion of the Board may report either to the Board or direct to the relevant College(s) or College committee(s).
- A College may nominate another committee to operate as a Board of Studies. All provisions of these Terms of Reference apply to that committee when it is functioning as a Board of Studies.
- The Head of School or their nominee will be responsible for ensuring the provision of secretariat support for the Board of Studies.

Key Issues to Consider when Scrutinising Proposals for Credit-bearing Courses and Programmes

When reviewing proposals, Boards of Studies and College Committees should consider:

- Whether the proposals adequately address the Key Issues set out above;
- Whether the proposals are academically rigorous and would lead to a high quality student experience;
- Whether the documentation is complete;
- Whether the business case is robust (Note that in some cases Schools / Colleges will consider the business case via a separate route to the Board of Studies / Committee).

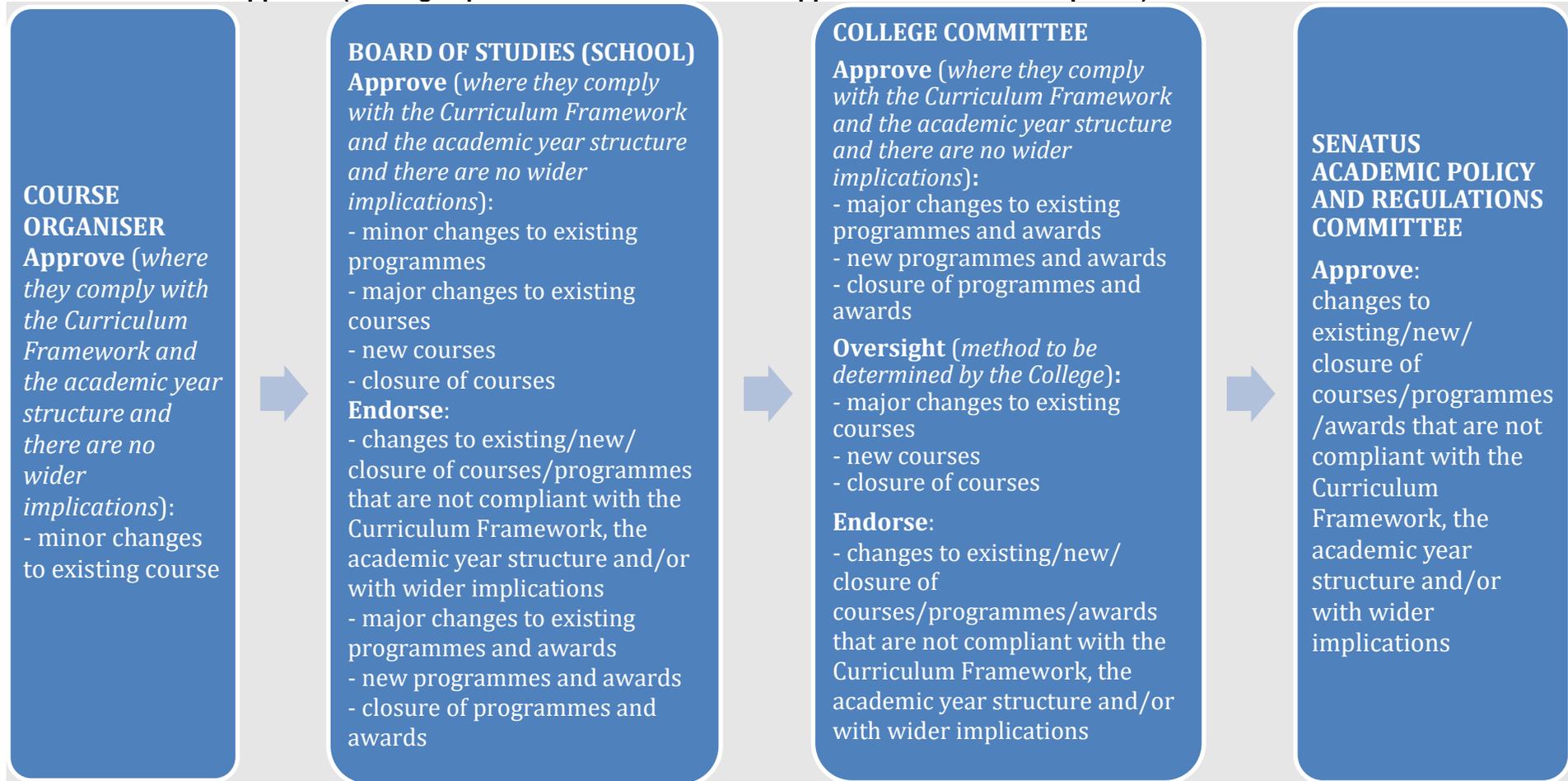
Credit-Bearing Programme and Course Approval, Changes and Closure – Levels of approval

The University programme and course approval, changes and closure processes ensure institutional oversight of standards and quality. Authority is delegated by the University, via the Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), to Colleges and, where appropriate, to School Boards of Studies. Colleges may elect to wholly delegate the authority to approve all major changes to existing credit-bearing courses, proposals for new courses, and closure of courses to Schools but must retain a method of oversight, particularly to ensure that decisions are taken independently of the home subject area of the course. Colleges must retain authority to approve major changes to existing programmes and new programmes, and the closure of programmes. All programmes and courses are approved indefinitely unless otherwise stated.



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Minimum Levels of Approval (all stages prior to where a decision is approved should be completed)



Minor and Major Changes to Existing Programmes

Changes to any of the following are **major** and require College approval:

- The name of the programme: any change made to the name of a programme, other than to correct spelling or syntax, is considered a 'major change' and requires a new programme to be proposed and approved.
- The overall content of the programme: major change to the content of a programme is defined as the addition or closure of courses or major changes to existing courses (see below 'Minor and Major Changes to Existing Courses') comprising 20% of the total credit volume of the programme, or at least 50% of the credit volume in any single year of the programme.
- The overall approach to assessment for the programme.
- The structure of a programme: major change to the structure of a programme is defined as a change in the balance of credits between different components of the programme (e.g. between core/option courses or dissertation/taught courses) comprising 20% of the total credits of the programme, or at least 50% of the credits in any single year of the programme.
- The mode of study – part time, full time or intermittent
- The place of study - on campus or distance learning
- The period of study
- Collaboration or change of partner
- The home School or College

All other categories are regarded as **minor** change and therefore can be approved at School level.

Minor and Major Changes to Existing Courses

The categories outlined below are regarded as **major** changes:

- Name of the course*
- Level of the course*
- Credit value*
- Learning outcomes
- Balance of assessment types and their weightings (components of assessment)
- Home subject area*

* Will result in a new course being created

Changes to all other categories, which generally cover course content and administrative aspects, (e.g. course descriptions, transferable skills, reading lists/learning resources, Course Organiser and Secretary, and delivery information) are regarded as **minor**. As a minimum, Course Organisers can approve these changes (with the exception of changes to the Course Organiser and Course Secretary) although Schools may choose to add an additional level of approval for these changes, for example, to ensure programme coherence. Decisions regarding changes of Course Organiser and Course Secretary are management decisions made by the School in line with normal practices.

Timescales for approval of proposals for new/changes to existing for-credit courses and programmes

It is important that accurate information regarding programmes is available to applicants when they submit their applications, and to offer-holders when they decide whether to accept offers. As such, Colleges need to approve new programmes and significant changes to existing programmes sufficiently early that accurate and complete information can be included in the relevant corporate publications. Failure to meet these timescales will result in Schools / Colleges having to undertake

additional communications with applicants and offer-holders. It may also create additional obligations towards those applicants and offer-holders, and expose the University to reputational and financial risk.

It is also important that accurate information regarding courses is available in advance of the academic session, to enable students to make informed decisions regarding their choices of courses and to prepare for their studies.

Schools / Colleges should therefore normally approve proposals within the following timescales (see [Student Systems Key Dates](#) for the DRPS publication date).

	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
New programmes	November, for the admissions cycle starting the following September (ie 21 months in advance of entry of students onto the programme)	By April, for the admissions cycle starting in October, for entry the following September (ie 16 months in advance of entry of students onto the programme) – to allow for inclusion in Print School-level Brochures. In principle, if the programme is not to be included in the Print School Brochures, Schools could approve new programmes later than this (eg as late as July for programmes opening for applications in October). However, in practice, this is rarely advisable since it leaves little time for recruitment.
Major changes to existing programmes	Aim for same timescales as for new programmes, although it can be possible to approve changes as late as August, for the admissions cycle starting in September, as long as the Print Prospectus entry has anticipated these changes.	Aim for same timescales as for new programmes, although it can be possible to approve changes as late as September for the admissions cycle starting in October, as long as the entry in the Print School Brochure has anticipated these changes.
Programme closure to new entrants	Timescales as for new programmes. In exceptional circumstances, a programme may be closed later, providing no applications have been received.	Timescales as for new programmes. In exceptional circumstances, a programme may be closed later, providing no applications have been received.
New courses	By the DRPS publication date for the following session unless in exceptional circumstances and providing that students are able to take the course (e.g. the course	By the DRPS publication date for the following session unless in exceptional circumstances and providing that students are able to take the course (e.g. the course

	can be resourced, timetabled and students are able to sign up), in which case prior to the Semester in which they are to run.	can be resourced, timetabled and students are able to sign up), in which case prior to the Semester in which they are to run.
Changes to or closure of existing courses	<p>Where this would constitute a major change to published information about the future structure and content of a programme, the same timescales apply as for major changes to existing programmes</p> <p>Otherwise, Schools should aim to make changes by the DRPS publication date, for the following session (although minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August, for example to take account of issues raised during the course review and monitoring)</p>	<p>Where this would constitute a major change to published information about the future structure and content of a programme, the same timescales apply as for major changes to existing programmes</p> <p>Otherwise, Schools should aim to make changes by the DRPS publication date, for the following session (although minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August, for example to take account of issues raised during the course review and monitoring)</p>

Arrangements for publishing information on approved courses and programmes

Programme and course information is entered into EUCLID, which feeds information to the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS), and forms the definitive record of programmes and courses. In addition to these publications, Schools / Colleges are responsible for publishing accurate, complete and up to date information on approved courses and programmes in other corporate publications for recruitment purposes. The timescales for publication are as follows:

Publication	Type of information	Timescales
EUCLID Course Descriptor	Detailed information regarding the course	Annual update to be complete by the DPRS publication date, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session. Minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August.
Degree Programme Specification	Summary information including programme learning aims and objectives and how they are demonstrated and achieved	Annual update to be complete by the DPRS publication date, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session.

Degree Programme Table	Information regarding the curriculum structure for the programme	Annual update to be complete by the DRPS publication date, prior to publication of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) for the next session.
UniStats Key Information Sets (UG only)	Information regarding aspects of programmes including types of assessment and contact time.	End June, for the UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Undergraduate Prospectus (Print)	<p>General subject/discipline overview, year by year breakdown of courses studied (relevant to the whole subject area), additional costs, and approach to learning and assessment, along with careers outcomes.</p> <p>Details of any professional accreditation, placements and careers opportunities.</p> <p>Location of study.</p> <p>Any significant changes to programmes anticipated, the details of which cannot yet be confirmed.</p>	Annual update to be complete and returned to Communications and Marketing by December for publication in March – for UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Undergraduate Degree Finder (Online)	<p>Subject information as above for print prospectus.</p> <p>In addition, for programmes:</p> <p>Overview of the programme.</p> <p>Details of courses studied each year.</p> <p>Details of any professional accreditations, placements and careers opportunities.</p> <p>Location of study.</p> <p>Approach to learning and assessment.</p> <p>Any significant changes to programmes anticipated, the details of which cannot yet be confirmed.</p>	Timescales in line with Undergraduate (Print) Prospectus. Amendments approved after the December deadline can be made up to early August, before UCAS applications open.

	Entry requirements. Additional costs.	
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)	Brief summary regarding the reasons for studying the programme, along with brief information about career opportunities	Annual update to be undertaken by end of March for UCAS applications opening in September that year with entry the following September
Postgraduate School-Level Brochures (Print)	Programme level information including: summary description and structure; breakdown of compulsory and optional courses offered. Careers opportunities and additional costs Entry requirements	Annual update to be complete by July for publication in September to apply to applications for entry the following September.
Postgraduate Degree Finder (Online)	Programme title, award and study modes. Programme description (PGT only) Programme structure (PGT and PGR) Learning outcomes (PGT only) Career opportunities (PGT only) Online learning (PGT only) Work placements / internships (PGT and PGR) Research profile (PGR only) Training and support (PGR only) Facilities (PGR only) Entry requirements Additional costs Scholarships and funding	Annual update to be complete by the end of September for applications opening on the first Monday in October for entry the following September (note however that agreement for any changes to entry requirements must be secured early in line with Student Recruitment and Admissions policy)

Changes to programmes – responsibilities to students, offer-holders and applicants

If, after starting to accept applications for a programme of study, a School or College approves any changes to the programme or to courses within it which lead to a divergence from that described in the published information regarding the programme, the School or College owning the programme is responsible for amending the published information at the earliest possible opportunity. This applies irrespective of the School which owns the individual courses that are changing.

If the approved changes are significant the School or College is also responsible for:

- Informing all students, applicants and offer-holders about the changes at the earliest possible opportunity;
- Where students / applicants / offer-holders request this, seeking to offer a suitable replacement programme for which they are qualified at the University, or, if the University is unable to offer a suitable replacement programme, seeking to refer students / applicants / offer-holders to a comparable higher education institution offering a suitable replacement programme;

While it is not possible to provide a comprehensive definition of what may constitute a 'significant' change in a programme of study for these purposes, the following are examples of significant changes:

- 'Major' changes to the programme (in the terms set out in the section above)
- Any removal from the programme of courses that published information had indicated would definitely be available, and any introduction of new mandatory courses which reduces a student's choice
- The professional accreditation / recognition status of the programme changes
- The location at which the programme is taught changes significantly (for example, the location of the owning School changes from one campus to another)

In the event that students, offer-holders or applicants choose to withdraw as a result of significant changes to a programme, the University may also consider making an appropriate refund of tuition fees and deposits paid prior to notification of the change.

Student Recruitment and Admissions and Academic Services are able to provide Schools and Colleges with advice regarding whether any changes to a programme should be treated as 'significant' for these purposes.

Programme Closure – Responsibilities to Students

Only in the most exceptional circumstances may a programme on which students have applied for, been offered a place on, have been accepted on, or are matriculated on be closed. In the event of such a decision the situation must be resolved in line with the University's admissions [Terms and Conditions](#). No programme may be withdrawn until the University's obligations to those students have been reasonably and fairly fulfilled. In addition, the University can have obligations to applicants to programmes even if no offer has been made. These obligations should also be considered before making a decision regarding programme closure.

In the event of closure of a programme, Schools must ensure appropriate management and resourcing of the final student cohorts in the programme to be closed. Collaborative partners must also be informed in a timely manner.

Collaboration/Partnerships

In addition to following the normal development and approval processes for for-credit courses and programmes, all for-credit courses and programmes that involve collaboration with another institution require additional development and approval stages.

Details about the University's collaborative agreements and arrangements, and guidelines for developing and approving collaborative provision, are available from the [collaborations SharePoint site](#)

Introducing New Degree Qualifications and deleting Degree Qualifications

New degree qualifications, with degree titles not already used by the University, need to be approved by APRC, on the basis of a proposal from the relevant College committee. APRC asks the University Court for any necessary degree Resolution and adds the degree qualification title to the list of degrees in the annual Court Resolution on undergraduate or postgraduate degree regulations. The Resolution to create the degree qualification needs to come into effect before the University opens the programme for applications. The Secretary to APRC can advise on whether a degree needs a Court Resolution. For example, an MA or BSc for a new discipline does not need

a Resolution. Colleges report the closure of degree qualifications to APRC for approval and reporting to the University Court, for the annual degree regulations Resolution.

Distance / Flexible PhDs

Guidance on what Schools can consider when developing proposals for Distance / Flexible PhDs is available at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum>

Non-credit Bearing Provision – General Points

Boards of Studies are responsible for approving all new or revised non-credit bearing courses for external release and non-credit bearing continuing professional development courses. Approval processes are different to those for credit-bearing provision and are detailed below.

While the standard requirements and processes for credit-bearing courses and programmes do not all apply to non-credit provision, many of the principles do.

Non-credit Bearing Online Courses for External Release (including Massive Open Online Courses, MOOCs)

Course proposers must design and plan courses in consultation with Information Services Group, taking account of resourcing and establishing an appropriate timeframe.

Course proposers must complete documentation which includes course aims, purpose and estimates of teaching support required for each course instance. Course documentation must be signed off by the appropriate Head(s) of School to provide confirmation that adequate resources are in place for delivery. Applications must include a letter of support from the relevant strategy owner (usually an Assistant or Vice Principal) and proposals should clearly link to the University Strategy 2030.

Academic aspects of the course are considered by the appropriate Board(s) of Studies for approval. Timely consideration by the Board may be required to meet the established timeframe for release.

For Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) only: a MOOC proposal form [Submit a MOOC Proposal | The University of Edinburgh](#) is also required for any new MOOC. The proposal form and course documentation is considered by the MOOC Strategy Group who must be assured that the School has adequate resources in place for the creation and delivery of the course, that adequate risk analysis has been carried out and that the relevant statutory requirements are met. The MOOC Strategy Group is authorised to trigger the release of the course, once all course materials have been developed and the appropriate Board(s) of Studies has approved the academic aspects of the course.

Non-credit Bearing Continuing Professional Development Courses

Boards of Studies are responsible for considering and approving proposals for new or revised non-credit bearing continuing professional development courses. Proposals should detail the course aims, purpose and resourcing requirements as a minimum.

Programme and Course Management – Responsibilities

Programmes

The Head of College is formally responsible for degree programmes. Within this overall responsibility each programme, and course within it, is owned by a particular School which

ensures its management. The Head of School or Director of Teaching delegates responsibility for the management of a degree programme to a Programme Co-ordinator or Director (or equivalent).

Courses

Course Organisers are responsible for individual courses within a School. The Head of School or Director of Teaching appoints Course Organisers to take responsibility for individual courses. The scope of the Course Organiser's remit varies according to local School organisation, but in outline the Course Organiser is responsible for:

- general course management
- assessment and feedback
- advising and supporting students on course-related matters
- monitoring and reviewing courses
- agreeing minor changes to courses

[Course Organiser: Outline of Role](#)

Staff Support and Development

Training and support is available for those involved in programme and course design, development, approval, changes, and closure from the [Institute for Academic Development](#).

25 May 2023