Quality and Standards Handbook

UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER

CELEBRATING 180 YEARS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Section B: Minor Change

CONTENTS

APPENDICIES

APPROVAL OF MINOR CHANGES

A 'Minor Change' is any change to a programme (other than regular expected updates, such as to indicative reading), from that agreed in the Student Programme Handbook at Approval (or Re-Approval).

No new programme, mode of delivery (such as distance learning, for example), programme or named award (regardless of size) can be introduced as a minor change.

The University has adopted a risk-based approach to minor change, whereby the agreement process is dependent upon the change being made, and whether it constitutes a change to the programme or to a module.

Risk	Approval by	Type of change
High risk - major change to **programme**	ASC (requires programme re-approval)	Change to award title Change to mode of delivery (to a programme, part time, full time, online, distance) Change to programme regulations Change to programme aims Change to teaching institution Change to progression requirements/advanced standing
Medium risk including change to core/compulsory **modules**	Director of Quality and Standards or nominee (assuming there are no resource implications that cannot be met by the area)	Changes to ILOs Addition of new modules (with a resource implication) Change to level Change to credit weighting Change in mode of delivery (to an individual module) Removal/addition of a core/compulsory module
Low risk including change to optional/elective **modules**	Director of Quality and Standards or nominee (assuming there are no resource implications that cannot be met by the area)	Change to assessment tasks Change to assessment weightings Change to module title Change to co or pre-requisites Addition of new modules (with no resource implication) Removal of an optional module
No risk	Non-applicable	Indicative reading

Programme teams are encouraged to enhance the content and delivery of their programme, based on feedback, for example from students, external examiners, employers and peer observation of teaching. Minor change is, therefore seen as a natural part of the development of the programme. The procedures are designed to make it easy for programme teams to make these legitimate changes.

However, minor change should not undermine academic standards, the coherence of the approved curriculum or the balance of its assessment regime and should always act to enhance the learning experience of students. To this end, students should always be consulted on proposed changes. It may be necessary to inform prospective students – for example – where core/compulsory modules have been introduced post-offer.

Minor change is carried out on behalf of Academic Board by Academic Standards Committee or AQSS.

Before minor changes can be agreed the Programme Team must demonstrate that the proposed changes have the support of the Department/Programme Board (including its student representatives), timetabling and the external examiner. In some cases, the agreement of all students may be required; for example, where a change is made after students have made module choices for the following academic year. It may also be beneficial to discuss the changes with the relevant Principal Lecturer, Learning & Teaching.

Any minor change should maintain the programme's standards for compliance in keeping the course up to date, providing educational challenge, that students are assessed effectively and that the change maintains the programme's overall coherent structure with an appropriate balance between depth and breadth of content.

It is assumed that minor change will normally carry a neutral or minimal resource impact (since normally changes with major resource implications would trigger re-approval). In all cases where there is any requirement for additional resource, evidence will be needed to demonstrate that this has been recognised and provision has been made for this, including arrangements with support services to allow each module to be effectively delivered by appropriately qualified staff. The addition of new modules will include the removal of extant modules.

Once a minor change has been formally agreed, AQSS will ensure that the Student Programme Handbook is appropriately amended and that the Department has published the new version both on-line and in hard copy. This replaces any previous version of the Student Programme Handbook and becomes the new definitive document for the programme. The revised module descriptor(s) will be added to the existing Student Programme Handbook by AQSS and forwarded to the Department post implementation.

These procedures reflect the recommendations for practice embodied in the *QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education* and addresses processes for managing minor changes to programmes, including their cumulative effect, which may arise from monitoring or review or more organically as a result of ongoing engagement with the programme by staff and students. Higher education providers should be clear about the circumstances in which a programme is required to be re-approved, where it is as a result of significant changes over time. QAA notes that opportunities for changes to a programme may be identified at any time, although processes of monitoring and review provide a formal
opportunity for higher education providers to reflect on their academic provision and consider how it may be changed to enhance the student learning experience.

QAA states that higher education providers ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to making changes to enhance a programme and that it is possible to introduce enhancements in a timely fashion, taking into account the academic interests of students, to ensure they are not disadvantaged by the change. However, higher education providers also oversee the effect of changes on the maintenance of academic standards and the assurance of the quality of learning opportunities. Changes vary in scale and effect, and higher education providers clearly define how they distinguish between different types of change, the process and level of authority needed to agree them, and the period of notice required to enact them. This includes a clear definition of the circumstances in which a programme needs to be reconsidered through any stages of the provider's programme approval processes.

QAA expects higher education providers have in place mechanisms which enable them to consider the cumulative effect of small changes to programmes, to ensure that the programmes continue to align with their aims, intended learning outcomes and the provider's strategy and mission, and that the criteria for

programme design, development and approval are still met. When substantial changes are proposed to the content and/or character of a programme, or any change to the name of the qualification, higher education providers take into account the effect on the student learning experience and take steps to consult all students affected. They consider how the changes may be implemented while maintaining academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, which may include introducing them on a phased basis if necessary. Students receive sufficient notice of forthcoming changes.

Where modules are shared across programmes at the University, care must be taken by the departments concerned to ensure that changes made at one (which must necessarily be made at the other) do not affect that which is not proposing the revision or addition of the module. Again, students must be consulted in regard to any revisions or additions to be made if such change is likely to affect them.

To this end, the University has adopted a risk-based approach, risk defined by the effect of minor change on intended learning outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

1. Modules cannot be started in their revised form until approval has taken place. The number of changes to any programme should be recorded by the appropriate Department, and copied to the Academic Quality and Standards Service.
2. The minor change process enables staff to make amendments to extant modules, or add new modules. Any such changes are considered to be minor provided that they do not bring about requests for additional resourcing. Changes to modules that will affect students will require consultations with and the agreement of the affected students. The pro forma provides space for confirmation that this has taken place. It is not good practice for students to have made module choices when changes are made and they must be informed of any proposed changes.
3. **Changes should be submitted to AQSS by December 2022 for amendments for provision being taught from September 2023. Changes must be completed by the end of January for the forthcoming academic year, in accordance with the requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority. It is equally important to note that the online selection guide is published shortly thereafter. It is obviously best practice that students are presented with accurate information in the Guide.**
4. **In addition, for timetable planning the curriculum should be stable in order to avoid unnecessary complications. However, once this window has passed, changes for the following year should not be made. Please bear in mind that module information is made available online.**
5. External examiners do not have the right of veto over minor changes, but must be consulted (the consultation should be evidenced with an email, for example). Minor changes to the curriculum are made with advice from relevant external examiners.
6. At the last ASC meeting of the academic year (i.e. the July meeting) an annual summary of all changes made to individual modules should be provided by AQSS, to assure the University that programmes are maintaining academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

PRINCIPLES

The approval of Minor Change is based on the following principles:

i. Programme teams are encouraged to enhance their provision, in response to a wide variety of feedback on the experience of delivery.

ii.   Minor change should enhance the student experience: it should not impact adversely on academic standards, the coherence of the curriculum or intended learning outcomes, and the balance of assessment or the quality of student support.

iii.   In order to encourage the enhancement of provision by the teams delivering programmes, the procedures for minor change should be easy to access by any member of staff and straightforward to implement.

iv.   Minor change should involve consultation between the programme team and the students, external examiners, the Department's Management Team (or equivalent) and other relevant stakeholders;

v.   Minor change should not be used to replace a programme 'by stealth' in order to avoid Re-Approval. Where the Director of Quality and Standards (or nominee) suspects that this is the case, the Chair of ASC should be notified of the concern.

vi.   In the event of an irresolvable disagreement over whether a proposal can be contained within minor change, the final judgement will lie with the Chair of ASC.

vii.   The procedures for the approval of minor change are the responsibility of AQSS.

viii. The Periodic Review of the programme will consider the impact of accumulated minor change, confirming that the above principles have been applied (see Section D of the *Quality and Standards Handbook:* Periodic Review).

ix.   Minor change should maintain the principle of including optional modules within Level 5 and Level 6

ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

For partner organisations running courses, this procedure should also be followed by the host department within the University. However, in addition, the department has a responsibility to confirm that the partner organisation has resources available to deliver any new or revised modules and, therefore, staff CVs and a list of relevant resources must be attached to the minor change checklist received in order to allow an informed decision to be made as to whether or not to approve any new or revised modules. The department must also take due consideration of whether any new or revised modules to be delivered at partner organisations will impact upon resources.

Where identical modules are delivered at both the University and partner organisation, care must be taken by partner organisation and the University to ensure that changes made at one (which must necessarily be made at the other) do not affect that which is not proposing the revision or addition of the module. Again, students at partner organisations must be consulted in regard to any revisions or additions to be made if such change is likely to affect them.

Where individual new modules are proposed, care should be taken to ensure the module can be adequately resourced, particularly with regard to Library, ICT, physical space and timetable requirements.

DOCUMENTATION

The documentation presented for minor change is: -

A cover sheet signed off by the Head of Academic Department confirming that all processes internal to the programme have been completed satisfactorily and enclosing relevant documentation (see template at Appendix 1). The Head of Academic Department's signature on the cover sheet will guarantee that any resource implications relating to the proposed minor change can be met within the normal Faculty resourcing and that no additional resources are required.

The cover sheet will be accompanied by:

- the rationale for the proposal (together with the proposal itself – e.g. a new or revised module description);
- the minutes of the Department/Programme Board agreeing that the proposal may go forward;
- the written comments of the appointed external examiner;
- the written comments of the representative for employability;
- the signature of the Timetabling Systems Manager;
- the overall schedule of assessment for the programme/subject area and a summary of all the minor changes effected by the programme since its last formal Approval.

In addition, the cover sheet will demonstrate the way in which the proposal for minor change articulates with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the appropriate subject benchmark statement. Module descriptors should adhere to the template provided.

PROCEDURES

Any proposed minor change must first be discussed with AQSS to agree the level of risk – low, medium or high (see the summary). AQSS will then advise on the correct procedure to follow, dependent upon risk identification.

AQSS will work with Programme Co-ordinators throughout the year to identify upcoming proposals for minor change and to facilitate their consideration.

AQSS will consider the following in relation to minor changes:

a. That the proposal resonates with e.g. assessment regulations and the requirements for e.g. module descriptors;
b. That the proposal is articulated against external benchmarks such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications;
c. That consideration is given to the validity of the proposal within the context of the programme;
d. That consideration is given to the currency of the Programme Specification, and a formal note made of any proposed changes;
e. That the documentation is guaranteed to be free from typographical and other textual errors;
f. A timeframe will be set and mutually agreed for the production of final, definitive documentation.

REPORTING AND ACTION

AQSS will work with the Programme Co-ordinator to ensure that the documentation is amended as appropriate and published as definitive within the agreed timeframe.

At the conclusion of minor change activity, AQSS will notify all relevant colleagues, including the Marketing team, within the University, through an e-mail which will summarise the changes made. A copy of the amended documentation will be lodged in the Academic Quality and Standards Service, within the Programme Approval documentation.

A list of all changes made will be kept by AQSS and presented to ASC at its final meeting of the academic year.

APPENDIX 1 – MINOR CHANGE PROPOSAL FORM

PLEASE NOTE that no application for Minor Change will be considered until all sections are completed and all signatures obtained.

1	Institute/Department	
2	Name of Programme	
3	Module code	
5	Type (core/compulsory or optional)	
6	Contact for the proposal for Minor Change	
7	Date changed module is due to commence / module to be replaced if a new module is proposed	
8	Brief summary of changes requested	
	Please tick that all required documentation is appended: -	☐ Module descriptors – existing and new ☐ Minutes of the Department or Programme Board, agreeing that the changes should be proposed. This must include discussions with students and their agreement. Material changes will require the consent of <u>all</u> students (and potentially includes prospective students). Date of meeting: ……………………………………. ☐ The written comments of the appointed External Examiner ☐ The written comments of the representative for Employability ☐ A summary of all Minor Changes undertaken by this programme since it was last formally Approved/Re-Approved Where modules are shared with other programmes or where the modules are taken by joint/combined students, the signature here ……………………………………… of the other the Director/Head of Institute/ Department (i.e. the one not requesting the change). Where modules are offered by partners of the University, please sign here ………………………………………………… to

		confirm that the partner has been consulted and will amend their documentation once agreed. The signature here …………………………………………………… of the Timetabling Systems Manager/Student Records Manager that this proposal **can / cannot*** be accommodated. * Reason: ………………………………………………………….. **Note**: If this cannot be accommodated this will be referred to the DVC by AQSS.
10	Please confirm that, where appropriate, the following have been consulted:	☐ LIS (Learning and Information Services) ☐ Apprenticeships Manager
11	This form and its appendices are submitted to AQSS by:	Signature: Role: Date:
12	Signed confirmation from the Director/Head of Institute/ Department that this application for Minor Change will not lead to any overall increase in resourcing. I confirm that all resources (e.g. provision of new library materials) will be met from within existing resourcing provision.	Signature: Role: Date:
13	Signed confirmation by Director of Quality and Standards (or nominee)	Signature: Date:

APPENDIX 2 – MODULE DESCRIPTOR

Module code	*(To be assigned by Academic Registry)*
Title	
Programme	
Level	
Credits	
ECTS*	
Contact time – in hours	Directed learning:
	Independent learning:
Acceptable for	
Excluded combinations	
Mandatory/Optional	
Module Co-ordinator	

Description

Outline Syllabus & Teaching & Learning Methods

Intended Learning Outcomes	How assessed**
	i.e. presentation, essay

Cognitive Skills, Practical, Transferable Skills, and Professional Competencies

Assessment Scheme	Weighting %
Formative***:	0%

Assessment Scheme	Weighting %
Summative: **Assessment criteria (indicate which ILOs are tested by each individual criterion and requirement for technical proficiency in written English)**	

Re-assessment Scheme	Weighting %
Summative: **Assessment criteria**	

Resource lists now available on TALIS within Moodle – removes duplication

* ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System): Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area recommend that two UK credits are equivalent to one ECTS credit

** e.g. examination, presentation, coursework, performance, case study, portfolio, etc.

*** [QAA Glossary](): Formative assessment comprises feedback on students' performance, designed to help them learn more effectively and find ways to maintain and improve their progress. It does not contribute to the final mark, grade or class of degree awarded to the student**.** See also summative assessment, which is a formal assessment of students' work, contributing to the final result.
**** Must be provided for each assessment task