

## Arden University Quality Assurance Document QA 54 –Modifications to existing programmes and modules

### Types of Modification and Other Proposals Encompassed

As a general rule, modifications and proposals will normally belong to one (or more) of the categories which are shown in the table at the end of this document with a description of the documentation requirements and approval processes and administrative tasks following approval.

#### Advice and Guidance

Because of the range of possible changes, proposers should seek advice and guidance at an early stage on the precise requirements in particular cases from the Head of Quality. Modifications will normally arise as a result of module review and feedback, programme committee meetings, student satisfaction questionnaires, external examiner or professional body input, examination board recommendations or other elements of the annual monitoring or internal review processes.

It is important, that students and other stakeholders be involved in decisions to make significant changes to programmes. The level of involvement required will depend on the nature of and rationale for the change. Please see the guidance at the end of this document for detailed information on different levels of engagement and the level of engagement required for each type of change.

Should a programme be the subject of a series of proposed modifications within its current approval period which together materially affect more than fifty percent of the programme as experienced by students, then the programme will normally be subject to a periodic review. Such cumulative change is monitored by the Quality Team.

Whilst Programme Committees must approve modifications prior to their submission, it is important to note that no change can be considered as validated until all approval processes described in the Validation Handbook are completed.

#### Documentation Requirements

##### Type A Validations and Revalidations

Validations and revalidations (categories A1 and A2) normally require prior planning approval which is obtained as if for a new programme. Thereafter, documentation requirements are noted in the Validation Handbook.

##### Type B and C Module and Programme Modifications

Module and Programme Modifications are further categorised as minor or major. There is a single template at the end of this document to assist in the presentation of these changes.

#### Approval Processes

##### Minor Modifications

Minor modifications can be proposed and implemented at two points during the academic year:

1. Proposals can be submitted following the Annual Monitoring Review process; these proposals will be considered at Programme Committees in January and February and will then be considered by the Programme and Module Modification Committee in February. This committee will consider the proposals and approve or reject them. These changes will be implemented for the April DL intake and the May SCC intake.
2. Proposals can also be submitted to the April Programme Committees, these proposals will be considered by the Programme and Module Modification Committee in May and will be implemented in the August DL intake and the September SCC intake.

Exceptionally changes may be proposed outside of these two windows, the decision as to whether to allow these changes to be implemented rests with Academic Registrar. Permission will usually only be granted in exceptional cases (for example, external regulatory or PSRB requirements).

All minor modifications will require approval from the Programme Committee and from the relevant External Examiner before they can be considered by the Programme and Module Modification Committee.

### **Major Modifications**

Major Modifications can be proposed at any point. The decision as to when to implement these changes will be made by the Major Modification panel with input from relevant stakeholders.

Any proposed major modifications should be clearly documented and be accompanied by a full set of programme documentation (all Module Descriptor Forms (MDFs) and the Programme Specification and Handbook) as well as further information to support the proposal. The designated Senior Quality Officer will advise on the precise requirements depending on the nature of the change.

### **Administrative Changes**

Administrative changes can be made at any point in the year. These changes require a new version of the MDF or Programme Specification with track changes to be submitted to Quality to be issued and publicised.

### **Modifications to Programmes that have not yet launched**

Modifications to programmes that have not yet launched can be proposed at any point. These will be considered by the chair of the relevant validation panel, who will determine whether it is appropriate to consult with the external subject expert validation panel members. The validation panel chair will then make a decision as to whether to approve the modification. This decision will be reported to the Programme and Module Modification Committee.

### **Minor Modifications to Entry Requirements**

Change to entry requirements can be proposed at any point during the year. The minor modification will be considered and approved by the next Admissions Committee.

## **Guidance and Stakeholder Engagement**

As a university we are required to abide by Competition and Markets Authority and other consumer protection legislation regarding the sale and delivery of programmes. A key element of this is that students must be able to make an informed decision about applying for an enrolling on a programme and the programme that they receive must be what they reasonably expect it to be based on the information provided prior to enrolment. Where changes to a programme are required and where these changes represent a change from what students will have expected, we need to ensure that we have engaged with students and taken their views into account.

The following document provides details about the three different types of engagement that may be required: communication, consultation, and consent. It then gives guidance on which form of engagement is required for different types of change.

### **Guidance on Engagement with Students for Programme Modifications**

#### **Communicate**

The proposed change must be communicated to students, usually by email. No feedback is required.

#### **Consultation**

Students must be informed of the potential change and their feedback sought and this must be taken into account when developing the proposal for a change. Focus groups with small numbers of students can be used as part of the consultation process but the consultation must reach out to all affected students. Useful methods of consultation include via email, online survey, face to face, webinars or online sessions where the proposal can be explained, and students can ask questions; these will need to be repeated more than once at different times of day to ensure that all students have the opportunity to attend. There are no formal rules on the amount of feedback required, but where very little feedback is received teams will be encouraged to reach out to students again or to via a different forum or method to try to improve response rates.

#### **Consent**

Consent requires that students be consulted, as above, and that they consent to the change. Consent can be gained via Microsoft Forms or other online tools or by return of email. Students may be told that they will assume to have consented if they do not opt out by a specific date. Where consent is required, it is advised that as well as the webinars and other forms of consultation detailed above, that students also be offered the opportunity to speak individually to members of the academic team about the change and its implications.

Type of change	Details/Examples	Category of change	Stakeholder Engagement									Rationale
			Current students			Offer holders			Applicants			
			Communicat e	Consult	Consent	Communicat e	Consult	Consent	Communicat e	Consult	Consent	
Change to programme/module leader		Administrativ e	<b>X</b>			<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			No change to material information
Minor changes to wording within the specifications that provide clarity but do not change content or outcomes		Administrativ e	<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			No change to material information
Correction of typographical errors		Administrativ e	<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			No change to material information
Updates to reading lists and online resources		Administrativ e	<b>X</b>			<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			We are required and expected to ensure that resources are up to date
Update reference to QAA subject benchmark statements (where no programme updates are required)	This will normally be reviewed and updated through the AMR process	Administrativ e	<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			No change to material information
Reference to PSRB accreditation	Updating information with reference to PSRBs to confirm a pending accreditation	Administrativ e	<b>X</b>			<b>N/A</b>			<b>N/A</b>			This is simply confirming previously communicated information

Change to module code	Changing the module code	Administrative	X			N/A			N/A			No change to material information
Change to owning school	Changing the school that owns a specific module	Administrative	X			N/A			N/A			No change to material information
Change to owning programme	Changing the programme that owns a specific module	Administrative	X			N/A			N/A			No change to material information
Change to programme content/LOs	Updating the content or LOs of programme to maintain currency	Minor	X			X			X			Updating the content and LOs to maintain currency and reflect developments in the field is both expected and required to maintain quality of education
Change to module content/LOs	Updating the content and LOs of a module to maintain currency	Minor	X			X			X			Updating module content and LOs to reflect developments in the field and in response to stakeholder feedback is required to maintain the student experience and quality of education
Changed module title	Changing a module title to better reflect the content or common practice in the field	Minor		X			X		X			This is a change to material information so requires consultation
Withdrawal of core module	Completely withdrawing a current core module from a programme	Minor			X			X	X			This is a change to the material information
Core module to become optional	Changing the designation of a module from core to optional	Minor		X			X		X			Whilst this changes the material information, students can still choose the module so do not lose out
Addition of new core module	Adding either an entirely new module or changing an	Minor			X			X	X			This is a change to the material information

	optional module to a core module											
Withdrawal of optional module	Withdrawing a previously offered optional module	Minor		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		As this is an optional module there is scope to change the offering. Please note, if a module has moved from core to optional and then is withdrawn then the process for withdrawing a core module will apply for those students who applied at the time it was core and who would be affected by the change
Addition of new optional module	Adding a new module to the list of optional modules	Minor	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>		Whilst this changes the material information it is providing increased choice
Change to assessment weighting	Changing the weighting of components on a multi-part assessment	Minor	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>		Where assessment types remain the same but the weighting changes there is no change to the material information
Change to assessment type – core	Changing the assessment type, either in whole or in part, on a core module	Minor		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		Changing assessment types is a change to the material information that may have affected students' decisions on where to study
Change to assessment type – option	Changing the assessment type, either in whole or in part, on an optional module	Minor	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>		As the change is to an optional module and students can choose not to study it, they simply need to be informed
Change to running order or to pinned/paired modules	Changing the module running order or which modules are pinned and paired	Minor	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>		No change to material information
Change to entry requirements	The entry requirements are	Minor	<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		This is a change to the material information but does not impact on

	changed either to make them tighter or looser											current students; offer holders should have their offers honoured (even if they would no longer be eligible) but should be consulted in case they want to choose a different programme, applicants must be informed as soon as possible
Change to programme title or award	Changing 'Business' to 'Business and Management', or a BA to a BSc (includes renaming a named route)	Major			X			X	X			This is a significant change to the material information
Creation of new target award	Addition of Cert HE/Dip HE or PG Cert/PG Dip	Major	N/A			N/A			N/A			No change to material information
Creation of named route	Adding a new named route to a programme	Major	N/A			N/A			N/A			No change to material information
Addition of delivery mode	Adding a new delivery mode	Major	N/A			N/A			N/A			No change to material information
Contextualisation of programme for specific cohort/market	Making changes to an existing programme to tailor it to a specific cohort or market	Major	N/A			N/A			N/A			No change to material information unless existing students will be transferred to the new version; in this case, please consult Senior Quality Officer
Removal of delivery mode	Removing a previously validated delivery mode	Programme Closure	N/A			N/A			N/A			Removing a delivery mode means closing delivery of that version of the programme and follows the programme closure process
Removal of named route	Removing a previously offered named route	Programme Closure	N/A			N/A			N/A			Removing a named route means closing that version of the programme and follows the programme closure process

Loss of or change to PSRB status	PSRB accreditation being withdrawn or a change to the benefits offered by a PSRB	N/A	<b>Consult with Senior Quality Officer</b>	<b>Consult with Senior Quality Officer</b>	<b>Consult with Senior Quality Officer</b>	The nature of engagement will depend on the nature of and the reason for the change, please consult with the Quality Team
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**Notes:**

Some of these changes will require another change at the same time (withdrawing a core module will, unless there are already optional modules, require either optional modules to be added or a new core module to be added; withdrawing an option module where there are only two options will require the other module to be made core or a new option module to be added). In these cases, only one form of engagement will be required for both changes, but it will be the more stringent of the two.

Where changes are required by a PSRB or other external regulatory body then only consultation will be required, even if consent would usually be required for the change.

The engagement only applies to those stakeholders who will be affected by the change (i.e., those who have already completed a module do not need to be involved in the engagement for change, although it may be good practice to gain their views and feedback to see if they think it would be beneficial or to inform them if the change is based on feedback from students who have completed the module).

Modules can be shared on more than one programme and may be core on one programme and optional on another; in these cases, all students affected must be engaged but the level of engagement will differ for the different groups of students.

For optional modules, if the change occurs at a point when students have already chosen the option then the criteria applied will be those for core modules.

Policy Name:	Procedure for Minor Modifications to Existing Programmes
Policy Reference:	QA54

Approval Authority:	Quality & Standards Committee
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Responsible SMT Lead:	Academic Registrar
Responsible Department:	Academic Affairs
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