

Course Development Policy:  
Version I  
January 2017

**Next Review in January 2019**

## 1. Categories of course approval

All College courses are subject to academic consideration and business approval through the College's course development and business planning. This process has been developed to fulfil the expectations of the UK Quality Code, Part B: *Assuring and Enhancing Quality*, Chapter 1: Programme design, development and approval ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)).

- 1.1 A new course or a major change to a course is considered and approved by the Academic Board prior to submission for external approval/validation.
- 1.2 A Modification to a course is considered and approved by the Academic Standards & Quality Committee (ASQC) prior to submission for external approval/validation
- 1.3 Proposals for any and all changes to courses must be submitted to the HoHE prior to consideration by ASQC or submission for external validation.

### Explanatory notes

The process for the consideration of new courses ensures there is:

- A clear demand for the provision;
- A clear plan to implement new programmes with all College stakeholders understanding their role in curriculum development
- Sufficient resourcing and preparation for delivery;
- A sound approach to learning, teaching and assessment.
- Engagement of employers in course development.

## 2. Business planning

All new course proposals, major changes and modifications are subject to business planning within the College.

## Requirements

- 2.1 Once a curriculum area decides on a new HE programme it wishes to undertake, an outline course approval form should be completed. Copies of this form must be submitted to Academic Board and to the Head of Higher Education for discussion at ASQC. Both these committees will make recommendations as to the next actions while Academic Board approves the development.
- 2.2 Modifications must be considered by the HE Manager and the HoHE before ASQC can consider the proposal.
- 2.3 For a course that is being validated or franchised with a HEI partner then their validation process requirements will be followed once Academic Board has approved the development.

## Explanatory notes

- Business planning forms can be found in the HE Quality Handbook

## 3. Pearson Edexcel Programmes

- 3.1 For any programme being approved by Pearson Edexcel, the course will need to go through an approval process. This will consist of the submission of a supporting validation document which will consist of:
  - i. Rationale for the Curriculum
  - ii. Market analysis
  - iii. Curriculum and Programme Structure
  - iv. Teaching Learning and Assessment
  - v. Student Support and Guidance
  - vi. Student involvement in course design and review
  - vii. Employer involvement in course design and review
  - viii. Resources (physical & Staffing)
  - ix. Sample assignment brief
  - x. Staff CVs
  - xi. Programme Specification
  - xii. Support statements from students and employers
  - xiii. Any other documentation deemed relevant

3.2 Final documentation must be received by the Head of Higher Education two weeks before an Approval Event.

3.3 An approvals panel will be convened to form an Approval Event. The panel will consist of:

- Head of Higher Education (chair)
- Higher Education Manager
- Director of Quality Improvement and Student Support
- Quality Manager (HE)
- A Student representative

3.4 The panel will review the documentation and have the opportunity to question:

- The proposed course team
- The Course Manager
- The Subject Leader (or designate)
- A Student

3.5 The panel will consider the documentation at the meeting, and recommend to either:

- a) Approve the running of the programme;
- b) Approve the running of the programme subject to recommendations;
- c) Request additional information and approve the programme through discussion after receipt of the new information;
- d) Request additional information, call an new event, and approve the programme through discussion after receipt of the new information;
- e) Not approve the programme.

Any recommendations and additional information requested will have deadlines set.

3.6 If the outcome of the event is b, c or d then the programme may not be approved to run after additional material is submitted.

3.7 Once the panel has made a recommendation for approval final sign off will come from Academic Board.

3.8 At this point the curriculum team must apply to Pearson for approval to run the course.

## 4. Timescales

**All new HE courses or major changes must be planned in sufficient time to enable compliance with CMA guidelines.**

### Requirements

- 4.1 Schedules and timeframes for course development will be agreed between the course team and the HE Office at the beginning of the year.
- 4.2 Course teams must commence the course development and approval process in sufficient time to allow for the College's business and academic processes to be applied.

### Explanatory notes

- Timelines may be applied flexibly in the context of a specific proposal. Advice can be sought from the HoHE on any aspect of the procedures.

## 4. Approval Criteria

**Course approval decisions are informed by full consideration of academic standards and of the appropriateness of the learning opportunities which will be offered to students.**

### Requirements

- 4.1 Academic Board and ASQC will exercise a professional academic judgement, at a threshold level, to assure itself of the following:
  - a. the course is consistent with the College's mission and strategic plan and there is a demand for it through the application of market intelligence (market intelligence may initially be gathered and signed off as part of the Business Planning process and due consideration will be taken during academic approval);
  - b. the course is at the appropriate standard for the level of the award(s) involved and takes account of subject and qualification benchmark statements;
  - c. the curriculum is current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the subject;

- d. the course reflects/is aligned to relevant College priorities;
- e. the course prepares students for the world of work and enables them to gain the attributes of the Moulton College graduate;
- f. the course has been thoroughly thought out and adequately specified;
- g. the course team has a shared understanding of its aims;
- h. the resources (including staff resources) available to support the course are (or will be) satisfactory (the business planning process will sign off the physical and financial resources to support the new course or course change and due consideration of this sign off will be taken during academic approval).

4.2 In seeking to achieve these objectives, the focus will be on outcomes and standards.

## 5. Consultation

**The College processes will ensure that new and major change course proposals are effectively developed, designed and documented according to best practice – prior to testing at the scrutiny stage.**

### Requirements

- 5.1 The HOHE will hold an initial consultation with the course sponsor(s) as soon as the proposal has some shape.
- 5.2 The consultation will precede submission of the pre-course approval form
- 5.3 At the consultation, the course sponsor(s) will brief the HOHE on its outline plans. HOHE will:
  - a. inform the course sponsor(s) about relevant Moulton College higher education policies, and priority developmental themes;
  - b. offer advice on good practice in course design and sources of expertise and support within the College;
  - c. alert the sponsor(s) to any issues it should consider in the design of the specific proposal;
  - d. ensure the course sponsor(s) have engaged with the Learning Resource Centre team at an early stage of the development process;
  - e. set a deadline for submission of the pre-course approval form to Academic Board.
- 5.4 The course sponsor(s) will be responsible for course planning and must liaise with the HOHE during this phase.

- 5.5 The consultation can be shaped to the scale and externally imposed timetables such that it can be expedited or short-circuited.

## 6. Externality

**The Head of Higher Education will make use of external participation at key stages of the process, acknowledging that independence and objectivity are essential to provide confidence that the standards and quality of our courses are appropriate.**

### Requirements

- 6.1 The approval panel may contain one or two members who are external to the College where this is deemed appropriate.
- 6.2 Irrespective of whether an external member(s) is part of the approval event, a course team must consult and take feedback from a range of external and internal interested parties and external reference points during course planning, and a note on that consultation must be included in the contextual document. Such consultations – and written evidence of it taking place – will moderate the need for HOHE to seek external panel membership.

### Explanatory notes

- Externality is vital for ensuring that a course is designed, developed and approved in the light of independent advice, for ensuring a transparent process and for the confirmation of standards. The use of externality also enables course teams to discover, evaluate and implement enhancements.

## 7. Outcomes

**Course approval outcomes as a result of consideration by Academic Board will be clear, comprehensive and justified.**

- 7.1 Outcomes of Academic Board consideration are fully documented in board minutes and constitute one of the following:
- a. Approval to proceed to HEI validation or Pearson approval (with or without recommendations);
  - b. a decision to require further course planning before reconsideration for approval;
  - c. rejection of the proposal.

## **8. Monitoring the process**

**The College will assess the effectiveness of its course development and approval practices.**

## **9. Teach-out**

**The learning experience of students on courses in teach-out will be maintained.**

## **Requirements**

- 9.1 When a course ceases to recruit students, Academic Board, via ASQC has to ensure that adequate standards are maintained for any remaining students or that such students are enabled to transfer to a suitable alternative course elsewhere. Teach out arrangements are reported to ASQC, and where ASQC considers that the arrangements do not meet College expectations, it may refer the matter to the Deputy Principal for resolution.