

Approving changes to courses

1. Overview of process

- 1.1 Changes to **modules** as part of regular updating to ensure that currency is maintained are the responsibility of the course committee. If these changes amount to significant or substantive change across modules, they are considered a change to the **course** and as such would need formal approval by the School Academic Standard and Quality Committee (SASQC) or to be considered through the Course Design and Approval process.
- 1.2 All proposals for changes to **courses** must be recorded on a course change form and submitted to the appropriate Head of Department.
- 1.3 SASQCs have responsibility to maintain a record of all changes to modules and courses, regardless of the extent of the change.

2. Business Evaluation

- 2.1 The requirement to complete a business case in CourseLoop is linked to the business implications identified rather than the impact level of the course change.
- 2.2 Using the course change form, the Head of Department and course sponsor must determine whether or not the proposal has any business implications. For example, a significant change in academic terms may have minimal or no business implications. In addition, it may be that the change can be accommodated within an existing budget, and aligns with University strategy, so business evaluation is not needed.
- 2.3 It is particularly important to consider the impact of the change on any 'material information' that has already been provided to current students or to students who have accepted an offer, including those from progression route partners such as Nottingham Trent International College (NTIC). Any impact on a foundation degree progression route or an apprenticeship should also be identified at this stage. This may affect the decision about when the change should be implemented.
- 2.4 At the Business Evaluation stage, School Executive Team approval (through CourseLoop) is required where a proposed change is considered to have an effect on any material information already provided to students or prospective students.

Explanatory note

- Details of the Business Evaluation processes for collaborative provision can be found on the Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ) webpages. If your School does not have a Business Case Mentor, speak to your School Standards and Quality Manager in the first instance.
- The CADQ Apprenticeships team should be consulted on all changes at any impact level.
- 'Material information' refers to the following aspects: *entry requirements, core and optional modules, information about how the course will be delivered (e.g. contact hours, work placements, expected workloads, levels of staff), methods of assessment, details of the award on successful completion, location of study and placements (where known), length of course, who regulates and accredits, and any surprising or important terms, including those that may prevent a student completing.*
- Advice about the impact of the change on material information should be sought from Legal Services and / or the School Marketing Manager.

3. Mechanisms for academic approval

- 3.1 The approval route for changes to a course or module is dependent on the extent of change and/or the potential impact on standards or on the student experience. The table below provides examples of types of changes with their appropriate approval route, and the consultation and documentation requirements of that route.
- 3.2 Schools should consider the level of academic impact (this may include the volume of change) in order to identify the appropriate approval mechanism. Schools should consult CADQ where this is not clear.
- 3.3 When considering changes, Schools should be aware of possible funding implications or additional support needs from central teams. For example, a change of mode, introducing on-line learning or adding a placement. Schools must undertake consultation with relevant stakeholders as part of the academic approval process (see table below).

Explanatory note

- For medium and high impact changes, the School and CADQ should confirm the level of impact and approval mechanism through discussion prior to the approval process commencing. In borderline cases where there is doubt or difficulty, the Head of Academic Quality will decide.

4. Academic impact and types of approval

- a. Where the overall impact is **very low** and relates directly to the examples set out as described as very low, the change can be approved by SASQC;
- b. Where the overall impact is **low**, and the changes relate to the examples set out above as low or very low (and none would be considered high impact), the change can be approved by SASQC;
- c. Where the overall impact is **medium**, and changes align to those described as medium (perhaps with some low or very low as above), and with no more than one that could be described as high impact, a discussion with the School Standards and Quality Manager and CADQ School Officer should take place to agree and confirm the nature of the approval. The route of approval is likely to be by SASQC with an external reader and NTU (non-School) reader;
- d. Where the overall impact is considered to be **high** and the change(s) relate mostly to the examples set out as high and medium impact, the course change should be approved through the Course Design and Approval process. In this case, discussion between the School Standards and Quality Manager and CADQ will be required in order to agree the timeframe of the approval.

Explanatory note

- Some low impact examples may present low academic / student experience impact but have service implications, for example, moving to a different delivery mode or introducing a different mode of study. Schools must consult with the relevant central teams to ensure such changes can be supported.

Impact Level	Type of change and examples	Approval Mechanism	Consultation and External input	Documentation for approval
Very Low Impact	<p>Routine updating of a course, resulting in changes of no more than one third of the course including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to wording of course or module learning outcomes not altering the meaning, or the expectations, placed on students. • Changes to classroom practice not affecting contact time. • Changes of an assessment to or from a sub-element, or to or from an element • Addition of an existing module(s) for use as an option module within an established option set or moving modules from core to optional (but not from optional to core). • Addition to a course of a new experience or opportunity, open to all students and at no additional cost. 	SASQC scrutiny and approval.	<p>Discussion at course committee, including students;</p> <p>Consultation with stakeholders in relation to the proposed change(s) as appropriate e.g. Senior Quality and Standards Advisor; Apprenticeships Team, Employability, CADQ Flex Team, Marketing etc.</p>	<p>Updated student facing documentation, including course and / or module information as appropriate;</p> <p>Updated module specifications/definitive module information in CourseLoop (as appropriate);</p> <p>Updated Curriculum Map and Assessment Schedule if appropriate.</p>
Low Impact	<p>Changes to a course that affect between one third and one half of the total credits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to module learning outcomes that do not affect overall alignment with course learning outcomes. 	SASQC scrutiny and approval.	<p>Discussion at course committee, including students;</p> <p>External examiner consultation;</p> <p>Consultation with School Marketing Manager to</p>	<p>Course change form;</p> <p>Updated course information, for example:</p> <p>Updated CourseLoop information; revised assessment schedule; revised Assessment and Feedback</p>

Impact Level	Type of change and examples	Approval Mechanism	Consultation and External input	Documentation for approval
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving to a different delivery model for a module including SCALE-UP, Online or significant Blending. Changes to a module assessment type. Reduction in option modules within established option sets. Approval of new modules comprising up to one third of modules in a level within a single academic year. Introduction of a Sandwich mode (where the School / Department already has significant experience of delivering Sandwich placements on other courses) where there is no impact on the overall structure or curriculum of the existing course. 		<p>support management of any CMA impact;</p> <p>Consultation with stakeholders in relation to the proposed change(s) as appropriate e.g. Senior Quality and Standards Advisor; Apprenticeships Team, Employability, Student Finance Systems / Student Financial Support, CADQ Flex Team, etc.</p>	<p>Plan; revised Curriculum Map; other student facing documentation;</p> <p>Updated module information in CourseLoop as appropriate;</p> <p>Updated course structure diagram / curriculum map / assessment framework, where applicable;</p> <p>NTIC Progression Route Information form (where applicable).</p>
Medium Impact	<p>Changes to a course that affect between one half and two thirds of the total credits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-writing of some of both module and course learning outcomes. Introduction of new assessment types (where these are not used elsewhere in the course or suite of courses). Changes to modules / new modules comprising between one half and two 	<p>SASQC scrutiny supported by input from an external specialist and an experienced SASQC member from another School.</p> <p>For course title changes, approval for the change must have been secured</p>	<p>Student consultation;</p> <p>External examiner consultation;</p> <p>External expert(s) (subject specialist) written commentary;</p> <p>SASQC member from different School(s);</p> <p>Consultation with School Marketing Manager to</p>	<p>Course change form;</p> <p>Updated course information, for example:</p> <p>Updated course information in CourseLoop; course structure diagram; revised assessment schedule; revised Assessment and Feedback Plan; other student facing documentation;</p>

Impact Level	Type of change and examples	Approval Mechanism	Consultation and External input	Documentation for approval
	<p>thirds of the total credits proposed within a single academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of optionality, or introduction of optionality to a course which has not had any. Introduction of a Sandwich mode (where the School / Department does not already offer Sandwich placements). Changes to a course within an apprenticeship not affecting the operation of the apprenticeship. Change of course title where there is limited change to learning outcomes. 	from Strategic Planning and Change.	<p>support management of any CMA impact; Senior Quality and Standards Advisor.</p> <p>Consultation with stakeholders in relation to the proposed change(s) as appropriate e.g. Apprenticeship Team, Employability, Student Finance Systems / Student Financial Support, CADQ Flex Team, etc.</p>	<p>Revised / new module information in CourseLoop (as appropriate);</p> <p>Updated course structure diagram / curriculum map / assessment schedule / assessment and feedback plan (where applicable);</p> <p>NTIC Progression Route Information form (where applicable);</p> <p>External expert (subject specialist) written commentary.</p>
High Impact	<p>Changes across the whole course or level of a course affecting more than two thirds of the credits at any level including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full update of course learning outcomes and related changes to module learning outcomes. Change to a course assessment strategy impacting assessment across a level or course. Introduction of a new mode of study (including part-time but with the exception of a sandwich mode – see above). 	Course Design and Approval process	<p>As specified in the Course Design and Approval Process; and</p> <p>Student consultation;</p> <p>External examiner consultation;</p> <p>Consultation with School Marketing Manager to support management of any CMA impact;</p> <p>Consultation with stakeholders in relation to the proposed change(s) as</p>	<p>As specified in the Course Design and Approval process; and</p> <p>Course change form</p>

Impact Level	Type of change and examples	Approval Mechanism	Consultation and External input	Documentation for approval
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to a course affecting the operation of an apprenticeship. Introduction of a new award within a suite or new pathway to a course or suite of courses. Change of course title where there are associated changes to course learning outcomes and modules. 		appropriate e.g., Senior Quality and Standards Advisor, Apprenticeship team, Employability, Student Finance Systems / Student Financial Support, CADQ Flex Team, etc;	

5. Consultation and notification

- 5.1 Whilst the University reserves the right to modify its courses and assessment regulations at any time, it is expected that proposed changes will be discussed with staff, students and external examiners (and NTIC and other collaborative partners if applicable). Particular thought should be given to the timescale for enacting changes and the effect on current cohorts of students – those affected should be provided with details and given an opportunity to comment on the changes before they are implemented. Proposed changes may be modified in the light of feedback.
- 5.2 All changes must be considered by the relevant external examiner(s).
- 5.3 Course teams must ensure that students are inducted into the new or revised course, and that the course handbook reflects the changes (including any made as a result of meeting conditions of approval).
- 5.4 In liaison with Admissions and School Marketing teams (and NTIC where applicable), appropriate notification to students holding an offer should also take place in order to meet the guidance of the Competition and Markets Authority (see Section 2.2).
- 5.5 When making changes to modules, the Course Leader of the course regarded as the 'home' of the module, should consult with the Course Leaders of all courses making use of the module.
- 5.6 Where SASQC is responsible for approving a course title change which has only medium impact, agreement from Strategic Planning and Change must have been given. SASQCs are also responsible for communicating the outcome of this change to all relevant stakeholders.

Explanatory notes:

- For course title changes, a formal minute note from SASQC is required to be distributed to (as a minimum): the Head of School Operations; the School Administrative Manager; Marketing; Admissions; CADQ; Academic Registry; the Course Leader and to the named contact for collaborative courses.
- The process by which Strategic Planning and change approves a proposal for a medium impact title change will be confirmed as part of the review of business case evaluation for implementation via CourseLoop.

6. Updating definitive course and module information in CourseLoop

- 6.1 The Course Leader is responsible for ensuring that the definitive course information in CourseLoop is up to date. This information constitutes a definitive description of the course for staff, students (potential and existing), parents,

external examiners, employers and for internal and external quality assurance purposes. All other staff and student documentation should correspond with the components of the definitive course information in CourseLoop.

- 6.2 Where changes to definitive course information in CourseLoop are made that are intended to affect existing students on the course, the change must be made according to the principles set out in the Quality Handbook Section 5 and the (approved) updated definitive course information should be distributed to students.
- 6.3 Where changes to the definitive course information in CourseLoop are made after students have accepted an offer for the course, these students must be notified in time to be able to alter their decision. In these circumstances, Legal Services and / or School Marketing should be consulted.
- 6.4 Additionally, the Module Leader is responsible for ensuring that the definitive module information in CourseLoop is up to date. All other module documentation provided to staff and students should correspond with the definitive module information in CourseLoop. This applies irrespective of the nature of the change or whether modules are amended as part of routine updating.
- 6.5 Changes to courses are only formally approved once the definitive course and module information in CourseLoop has been updated and approved.
- 6.6 Selected sections of the definitive course and module information in CourseLoop will be scrutinised as part of the three-yearly Periodic Review cycle.

7. Collaborative provision

- 7.1 Changes to partnerships and School-based collaborative provision should follow the mechanisms described in this Section; subject to any course committee decisions being agreed by the parent committee rather than any committee operating within a collaborative centre (see QH Sections 10A, 10B and 10C).
- 7.2 For information about making changes to Validation Service provision, please see Quality Handbook Section 10C.

8. Changes to a course not requiring academic approval

- 8.1 A change to a course may be proposed that does not require academic approval. For example, changes to the admissions requirements (e.g. UCAS points) or an additional course start date / cohort. Changes of this kind should be managed and signed off at School level. Advice is available from CADQ.
- 8.2 The addition of another start date for a course would be agreed by the School. A change form should be completed, and any business implications identified. The School may opt to use the Business Evaluation Process to determine the associated costs and business implications of an additional cohort(s).
- 8.3 Changes to the admissions requirements should be managed at School level. Information on admissions requirements is provided in the 'Apply' tab on the online course search.

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
<i>Version:</i>	<i>Approval date:</i>	<i>Implementation date:</i>	<i>Nature of significant revisions:</i>
Sept 2016	30.09.16	01.10.16	New 'routes' for approval of different kinds of changes Additional requirements in order to meet CMA guidance New documentary requirements for new courses and course changes
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	Addition of documentary requirements to include course operational document and assessment and feedback plan
March 2018	15.02.18	15.02.18	Significant modification category expanded to include the addition of a Sandwich mode on an existing full time course (or vice versa) where there is no impact upon overall course structure or curriculum
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	Embedding of NTIC progression route requirements Removal of requirement for a Curriculum Refresh course roadmap as part of approval documentation Added Degree Apprenticeship Manager to list of external consideration requirements (where appropriate) Explanatory note added regarding requirement for UET agreement of proposed changes for approvals scheduled after 15 January 2019 (UG) and mid-July 2019 (PGT)
Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	Updated explanatory note regarding approval of late course changes and consequent impact on material information Significant modification category expanded to include the addition of a supplementary (placement) award within an approved placement framework
Nov 2020	2.12.20	9.12.20	Removal of thematic changes route for academic approval Details of impact level approach to determining academic approval required Introduction of sprint development approach to academic approval
Oct 2021	21.10.21	21.10.21	Removal of all references to Development and Approval Groups. Clarification of the different impact associated with changes to course title, and the consequent implications for approval route. Emphasis on the need for Sprint scheduling to be agreed with CADQ. Reference to Central Course Portfolio Database added which will negate a future requirement for routine publication of Course and Module Specification word documents.
March 2022	11.03.22	11.03.22	Updates for clarity to consultation and external input, and documentation for approval, requirements for high impact changes
Sept 2022	22.09.22	01.10.22	Updates to reflect introduction of new curriculum management system (CourseLoop)

			for the recording of definitive course and module information
Nov 2023	02.11.23	23.11.23	Removal of any reference to Design sprints and minor change to name of supplement.

Equality Analysis		
Version:	EA date:	Completed by:
Sept 2016	01.09.16	CADQ