

Section 6



Nottingham Trent
University

Quality Handbook

Part C: Assuring and Enhancing Quality

Section 6: Course Review and Re-approval Policy

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1. Purpose of Course Review at NTU

- 1.1 NTU's six principles of '*Creating Opportunity, Valuing Ideas, Enriching Society, Embracing Sustainability, Connecting Globally and Empowering People*¹' guide the expectations of the ongoing operation of its courses. As such, all NTU courses are subject to regular review. This ensures that all learners have a high quality learning experience which is aligned to the University Strategic Plan, NTU's definition of educational gain, the [Advance HE Students Needs Framework](#) and meets the [Office for Students \(OfS\) B conditions](#) of registration.
- 1.2 Course review is an annual activity which informs changes to be made to courses that will enhance outcomes through delivery or operation, and ensures the continued academic currency, coherence and overall health of provision. Regular review supports the ongoing evaluation of courses to ensure that they remain up to date and continue to provide educational challenge and a coherent student experience, from design and subsequently through to effective delivery.
- 1.3 As with the University's Course Design and Approval processes, re-approval of courses has two routes depending on the nature of the proposal and/or the volume of the change proposed - through Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) via the Academic Course Approval Sub-Committee, and through School Academic Standards and Quality Committees (SASQCs).
- 1.4 Through adherence to this policy, course teams and Schools reflect on a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence, including evidence of student experience, outcomes and external perspectives. This evidence-informed approach supports continuous enhancement, enables proportionate responses to identified risks or concerns, and provides assurance to the University regarding the quality and standards of its courses.

2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 The primary audience of this policy are course leaders, Heads of Department (or equivalent) and Deputy Deans. Roles and responsibilities, including those of SASQCs, are provided, outlining the responsibilities of each of these groups.
- 2.2 This policy states the minimum requirements to ensure course teams identify, consider and address risks to the quality of their provision. In doing so it also enables continuous enhancement of courses. This will be led by course leaders and overseen by School Leadership.
- 2.3 All 'Category 1' and 'Category 3'², including both Undergraduate (UG) and Taught Postgraduate (PGT) are in scope of this policy. However the types of performance data and evidence that course teams have access to will vary dependent on type of provision.

¹ [NTU Reimagined Strategy](#)

² Category 1: Courses (including apprenticeships) solely leading to a University award; Category 3: Courses (including apprenticeships) jointly leading to a University and PSRB award, accreditation or some other form of recognition (please see Quality Handbook Supplement 5i).

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- 2.4 All non-collaborative provision will have a maximum of a 5-year approval period. Academic Collaborative provision will have an initial 3-year approval period, increasing to up to 5 years after the first Re-approval.

3. Requirements for the review of NTU courses

- 3.1 Course teams must undertake an annual review of their course using a **Course Review Plan** (QHS 6B). In this Plan, course teams are required to:
- Iteratively track approved changes, including changes to learning and teaching approaches and/or course structure;
 - Maintain a record of approved deviations from the Course Design Requirements ([Quality Handbook Section 12](#));
 - Track and action the stated metrics which fall below minimum thresholds and benchmarks (information on Schools Insights can be found below);
 - Note and respond to feedback from External Examiners and students;
 - Agree on and record appropriate course development priorities to mitigate the areas of risk identified in the qualitative insights and quantitative data (please see information on [Roles & Responsibilities](#), below);
 - Monitor priorities and identify how the impact on student experience and outcomes will be evidenced.
- 3.2 The outcomes and identified priority areas or changes arising from the review must be recorded in the Course Review Plan.
- 3.3 Course development priorities or interventions may be associated with academic practice enhancement implemented by the course team or may involve a change to the approved course design. Where a course design change is required, refer to NTU's Course Design and Approval policy ([Quality Handbook Section 5](#)).
- 3.4 The course committee plays an important role in ensuring that the course remains current. At each course committee, the course team must discuss the ongoing implementation of the chosen course development priorities, with discussion outcomes and agreed actions captured in the minutes and reflected in the updated Course Review Plan.
- 3.5 Heads of Department (or equivalent) must maintain oversight of the course review process and course performance trends, reporting these to the Deputy Dean. The Deputy Dean maintains oversight of course review and trends within the School and reports annually to ASQC via SASQC.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 In addition to the maintenance of a Course Review Plan, the policy requires action from department and School-level stakeholders:

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Level	Output / outcome	Role	Associated activity	Minimum frequency (fixed milestones)
1. Course-level	Completed Course Review Plan (requirements as above in section 3).	Course Leader	The Course Review is completed and any appropriate interventions identified. Changes, to either academic practice or course design, must be noted in the Course Review Plan ³ .	Annually (October onwards; due to relevant data becoming available from late September)
	Updated Course Review Plan.	Course Leader	Any chosen interventions/changes are monitored for effectiveness. Further action is identified, as required.	Termly (at Course Committees)
	Marketing materials confirmed up to date.	Course Leader School Marketing Manager	Marketing materials must be checked to ensure that what is advertised accurately reflects the latest version of the course.	Annually
2. Department-level	Oversight is provided.	Head of Department (or equivalent) Deputy Dean	An oversight of the department's courses must be provided to the Deputy Dean providing information on which courses are below minimum threshold or benchmark (where available), and their agreed interventions. Department-wide trends must also be discussed.	Annually
3. School-level	SASQC report template is completed and sent to ASQC.	Deputy Dean SASQC	Deputy Deans consider School trends and complete SASQC template (QHS 6C) for ASQC. SASQC must approve and submit to March ASQC.	Annually (for March ASQC)
	Confirmed list of courses to	Deputy Dean	Decision is made in consultation with Heads of	

³ An academic practice change broadly defines an adjustment or refinement to the way a course or module is delivered, managed, and taught, without altering its formally approved design.

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	undertake Re-approval the following year: captured in the SASQC report to ASQC.		Department (or equivalent) as to whether the course will undergo School Re-approval or University Re-approval.	Annually (for March ASQC)
	Re-approval notification.	Deputy Dean	Course is reapproved through either the School or University Re-approval process .	At or before Year Five (or sooner if decided by the School). Please refer to QHS5K for information on which types of course changes would require a longer post-approval lead time.

Further information

- For collaborative provision the Academic Partnership Sub-Committee (AcaPSC) can decide whether Re-approval is required earlier than the 5-year cut off point.

5. Course performance data and usage

Course performance data

- 5.1 Undergraduate course data is accessible to course teams via the Course Review & TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) dashboard in Schools Insights. This has been especially designed for the Course Review and Re-approval Policy.
- 5.2 These data identify the course performance against contextual benchmarks and minimum thresholds associated with student outcomes and experience.

Further information

- School Insights is NTU's repository of current and archival data on student profile and performance. The dashboard is held in Power BI and is accessible to all.

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Using course performance data

- 5.3 For undergraduate courses, at minimum, course teams must consider data in the Course Review & TEF dashboard. The TEF data is regulatory and related to the Office for Students' student outcomes (continuation, completion and progression).
- 5.4 Course performance data in the data dashboard will be presented in comparison to Office for Students subject-level benchmarks, and given a TEF comparable rating as Bronze, Silver and Gold⁴.
- 5.5 The dashboard will indicate course performance against OfS minimum B3 thresholds for each year in the relevant rolling four year period. Using the Course Review Plan, Course teams must identify their course performance in relation to these contextual benchmarks and minimum thresholds. The course performance data will be rated for each of the relevant metrics.
- 5.6 Postgraduate courses must consider data in the relevant School Insights Course Review lens in addition to other qualitative insights available to course teams (postgraduate data is not included in the TEF).
- 5.7 Undergraduate and postgraduate Course teams are encouraged to explore other metrics in School Insights, in addition to existing qualitative insights (such as, but not limited to, External Examiner comments and mid-module evaluation comments).
- 5.8 Exploring other evidence is particularly relevant where data in the Course Review & TEF dashboard indicates performance is falling below, or declining towards, the benchmark. School Insights reports can provide further data to be used to determine appropriate intervention or action.

6. School Re-approval and University Re-approval

- 6.1 There are two routes to re-approve a course at the end of its approval period: School-level Re-approval or University-level Re-approval.
- 6.2 The Head of Department (or equivalent) together with the Deputy Dean will decide the Re-approval route for the course. Course performance, the extent of required change or other course features may mean that the course needs re-approving by the University Academic Course Approval sub-committee rather than by a School managed Re-approval.
- 6.3 As with the usual course change process, when deciding the most appropriate Re-approval route, Quality Handbook Section 5 (specifically Appendices 1 & 2) must be referred to.
- 6.4 For undergraduate courses, the table below stipulates how course performance as per School Insights reports and changes to external benchmarks dictate the appropriate Re-approval process:

⁴ OfS subject-level benchmarks are calculated by the OfS (the sector regulator) and take into account NTU's student profile.

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Factor	School Re-approval	University Re-approval
1. Course performance data over a period of 3 years	Course performance data in the TEF data remained above gold benchmark over the four years, and there is no consistent downwards trajectory of data in other available evidence.	At least one course performance metric in the TEF data has fallen, and remains, below a B3 minimum threshold.
	or Course performance data has fallen below the relevant gold TEF benchmark but does not indicate any areas of concern based on the three- year trend, and there is no consistent downwards trajectory of data in other available evidence.	The course is identified as requiring additional scrutiny and likely re-design due to performance data falling below relevant minimum thresholds, or below benchmarks.
2. Extent of change proposed	Change can be approved at School level as outlined by Quality Handbook Section 5.	Change requires University level approval as outlined by Quality Handbook Section 5.
3. External benchmarks	There have been no substantive changes to the relevant subject benchmark (QAA), associated accreditation or the needs of industry relevant to course graduates.	There have been substantive changes to the relevant subject benchmark (QAA), associated accreditation or the needs of industry relevant to course graduates.

- 6.5 For postgraduate courses, Schools will decide on the Re-approval route based on the trends of the available data (including Graduate Outcomes and PTES), extent of change required (referencing Quality Handbook Section 5) and whether the relevant QAA subject benchmark or accreditation has undergone substantive change.
- 6.6 If a course wishes to retain existing approved deviations from the Course Design Requirements, as per [Quality Handbook Section 12](#), then Re-approval for these must be sought from ASQC *before* either School or University-level Re-approval. Information on the University Exceptions Register can be found [here](#).
- 6.7 If a course wishes to retain existing approved exceptions from specific features of the semester model, these must be approved by the Semester Compliance Group prior to School or University-level Re-approval taking place.
- 6.8 At the time of Re-approval the School may take the decision to suspend or discontinue the course. A teach out plan must be completed and approved by SASQC for discontinued courses.

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- 6.9 University Re-approval is undertaken by the ASQC Academic Course Approval sub-committee and follows the standard course design and approval process described in [Quality Handbook Section 5](#). As noted above, University Re-approval is required for courses that:
- a. Require substantive (University-level) changes as expressed in Quality Handbook Section 5 for other reasons; and/or
 - b. Have shown concerning course performance over period of 3 years; and / or
 - c. Have seen substantive change to the relevant subject benchmark or accreditation.
- 6.10 If none of these criteria apply, a course may undergo School Re-approval. Each School must implement a SASQC Re-approval process. This must include:
- a. the course team,
 - b. an external familiar with the discipline,
 - c. a non-School member, and,
 - d. a student from the School.
- 6.11 The School can decide whether School Re-approval is required earlier than the 5-year point. This may be due to PSRB timelines and requirements or course performance.

7. Links to other Academic Policies

- 7.1 The below policies and guidance are relevant to the understanding of this policy. They can be found in NTU's Quality Handbook here: [NTU Quality Handbook | Nottingham Trent University](#).
- a. [Section 1: Academic Quality Governance](#), including SASQC Terms of Reference
 - b. [Section 5: Course Design and Approval QHS-05A-Approving-changes-to-courses.pdf](#)
 - c. [Supplement 5C: Course Design and Approval School Leadership checklist](#)
 - d. [Supplement 5G: Teach-Out Arrangements](#)
 - e. [Supplement 5I: Approval and Quality Management of Different Categories of Courses](#)
 - f. [Supplement 5K: Course approval and course operational change deadlines](#)
 - g. [Section 8: Student Representation and Voice](#), including Course Committees

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Policy owner
EQP

Change history			
<i>Version:</i>	<i>Approval date:</i>	<i>Implementation date:</i>	<i>Nature of significant revisions:</i>
May 2025		September 2025 (transition year)	New Section (approved at May 2025 ASQC)
Sept 2025			Following feedback from School Standards and Quality Managers, reference to 'priority course' has been removed from the Course Review Plan requirements. References to the new 2-year lead times post-course approval have also been added. Clarity with regards to which datasets must be considered in Review Plans at a minimum have also been added (i.e. the TEF data dashboard and School Insights Course Review lens). References to types of course and module change added: course design change or academic practice change.
Jan 2026			Updates to include linguistics of the CRP and clarify the 5 year Re-approval process and reference Course Development priorities rather than course 'change'. Clarification on the provision in scope of the policy. Clarification that courses with exceptions to Course Design requirements (QH12) can be Reapproved at School level but <i>only after</i> receiving approval from ASQC. Clearer articulation of expectations for postgraduate review and Re-approval. Clarification regarding factors which would impact the appropriate Re-approval routes. Reference to course currency, and the importance of course committees, taken from QHS1A and added to the policy (QHS1A to be retired).
Sept 2026	01.09.26	01.09.26	As part of standard updates, references to QHS5A replaced by new location for this information: Quality Handbook Section 5. Policy renamed Course Review and Re-approval policy.