

Course Approval Policy and Procedure

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This document outlines the requirements for the approval of new and reviewed taught courses which lead to an academic award of the University. The requirements for proposing new courses are outlined within this document, and the procedures are designed to reflect the University's strategic approach to both portfolio development and the management of quality and standards.
- 1.2 The outcome of standard periodic review of established courses (in accordance with the Course and Unit Monitoring and Periodic Review Policy and Procedure) may require full (re)approval of the course under this policy and procedure. Approval of standalone credit-bearing units (which do not lead to an award) is conducted in accordance with CPD Credit-bearing Units Policy and Procedure.
- 1.3 This Policy uses the term 'student' or 'students' throughout. This refers to all learners at the University, including undergraduate and postgraduate students and apprentices

2. REGULATORY CONTEXT

- 2.1 This policy and procedure has been designed to provide assurance that all taught University provision offers a high quality learning experience and that academic standards are consistent with comparable UK provision. The policy and procedure sets out the ways in which we work to ensure our course approval principles allow us to illustrate how we meet the regulatory requirements set out by the Office for Students in the Conditions of Registration, specifically B1 B2 , B4 and B5 conditions as outlined at the end of this document.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure has been written with reference to the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education- June 2024](#).

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **The Portfolio Review and Development Sub-Group** is responsible for approving initial proposals devised and presented by the Schools and Centre. The group also oversees the portfolio development schedule for the University.
- **The Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group** is responsible for considering and approving proposals for new courses.
- **Academic Board** is responsible for overseeing updates and amendments to policy principles outlined within this policy and procedure
- **Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC)** is responsible for overseeing the application of this policy and procedure, and is the decision making body responsible for the approval of new and redesigned courses. ASQC delegate responsibility for the procedural steps to the relevant Internal and External panels, and oversees the appointment of panel members. ASQC is responsible for overseeing the timelines and milestones associated with this policy and procedure and where necessary, will agree any adaptations for standard procedures or actions deemed appropriate to mitigate actual or perceived risks to quality of provision.
- **Heads of School/ Centre** are responsible for oversight and strategic management of course approval activities within the School/ Centre
- **Course Development Leads** are appointed for each course approval activity and are responsible for establishing and leading the Course Design Team and overseeing the completion of the requirements set out in this policy and procedure. The existing Course Lead will normally act as Course Development Lead when redesigned courses require approval via this policy and procedure. Course Development Leads will lead any discussions relating to curriculum design and re-design and will actively engage with key stakeholders, both internally and externally. The Course Development Lead is also responsible for liaising with relevant PSRBs in relation to requirements and expectations, approval and accreditation arrangements and review periods.
- **Marketing** are responsible for ensuring new and redesigned courses are marketed appropriately in accordance with the requirements of this policy and procedure and the Published Information Policy and Procedure.

- **The Director of Education and Student Experience** is responsible for overseeing the application of the Course Design Framework and for supporting Course Design Teams with the course design activities as referred to in this document and detailed within the Course Design Framework.
- **The Academic Quality team within Academic Registry** are responsible for supporting the procedures set out in this document, setting and managing timelines and milestones, maintaining clear and accurate records relating to course approval activity, and for providing advice and guidance relating to the procedural requirements, stages and timelines.
- **The Assistant Academic Registrar Quality**, in the role as ASQC Secretary is responsible for supporting the oversight of the application of, and reporting on, the principles set out below. They will also oversee the periodic and continuous review of the policy and procedure and associated enhancements and updates.
- **Admissions** are responsible for ensuring new courses are opened to applicants in accordance with the requirements of this policy and procedure.
- **All other teams within Academic Registry** are responsible for providing support to ensure that the principles set out in this Policy and Procedure can be applied operationally, and for supporting post approval implementation.

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- I. The University takes a risk-based approach to the approval of courses.
- II. All courses presented for approval must have been developed with input from relevant external and internal professional and academic individuals, students and/ or organisations or bodies.
- III. Staff involved in undertaking course approval activities will be provided with access to appropriate advice, guidance and support.

Establishing new courses

- IV. New course proposals may be established proactively or reactively.
- V. Proposals for new courses support the mission, values and strategic ambitions of the University.
- VI. Proposals will evidence how courses are relevant and current and reference the market position of similar courses across the sector.
- VII. Proposals provide a summary of stakeholder interactions and feedback, including the views of students and relevant external groups or individuals.

Course Approval

- VIII. All courses presented for consideration via the Course Approval Policy and Procedure are designed in accordance with the requirements set out in the Course Design Framework.
- IX. Approval of any new or reviewed course is dependent on the confirmation of adequate resourcing, in the form of appropriately trained and skilled academic staff, sufficient professional support services resource, adequate facilities and learning resources and the agreed required level of student support provision.
- X. To enable efficiency, Course Approval procedures may be adapted to allow for more than one course to be presented for approval as part of a single External Panel event. Adaptation may also be made to enable course design teams to work collaboratively, but with individual External Panel approval events.
- XI. Courses proposed for delivery in partnership with other organisations are considered via both this policy and procedure and the Educational Partnership Approval Policy and Procedure concurrently.
- XII. To ensure high quality student experience, operational requirements associated with establishing and delivering new and reviewed courses will be considered alongside proposed academic content and indicative learner experience.
- XIII. New and reviewed courses must be considered and scrutinised by a suitable panel made up of internal independent members, learner/ student members and external members.
- XIV. Timelines and deadlines will be set at an institutional and activity level, aligned to the course start dates, and must be adhered to in order to ensure successful completion and approval.

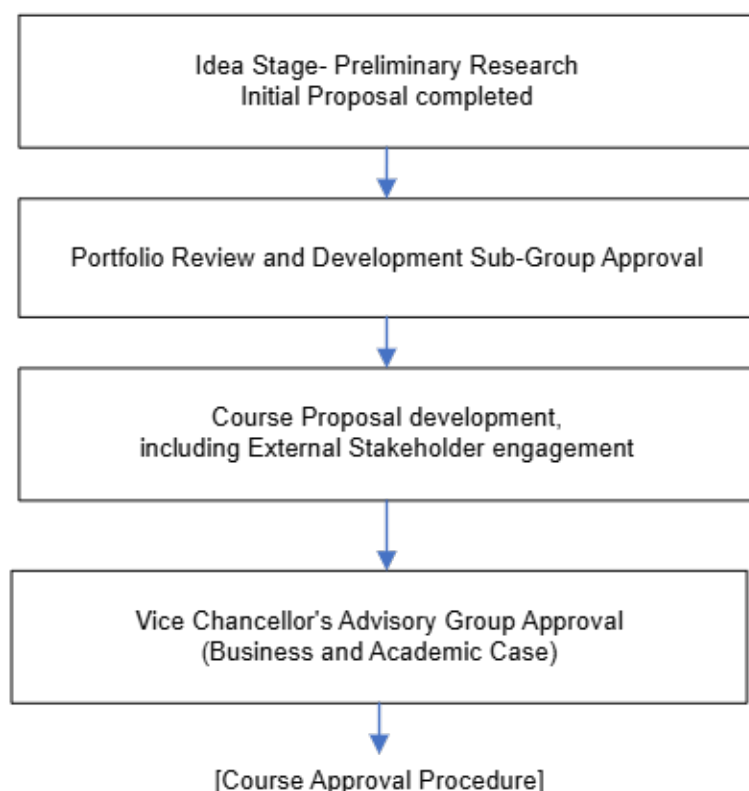
Procedure

5. THE UNIVERSITY'S RISK-BASED APPROACH TO COURSE APPROVAL

- 5.1 The following procedures set out the minimum requirements for all course approval activities. Additional requirements may be defined for individual activities at any point in the procedure, based on perceived risk to either the successful completion of the procedures, or where the course design presented is not felt to meet the quality and standards expected for University provision.
- 5.2 At each stage in the procedures, key indicators of quality and procedural risk flags will be considered, and where the outcome of this consideration indicates any cause for concern, additional requirements will be defined. An indicative list of the indicators and flags is provided in Appendix One.
- 5.3 The decision to amend or make additional requirements to any activity will normally be a deliberative decision. This will be made either via the Internal Scrutiny group, under delegated responsibility from ASQC, or via ASQC where considered necessary.

6. ESTABLISHING NEW COURSES

- 6.1 The procedure steps for proposing a new course are summarised in the diagram below:



- 6.2 A more detailed diagram is available in Appendix Two. The requirements for each stage are outlined in the sections below.

Proposal Procedure

7. IDEA STAGE, PRELIMINARY RESEARCH AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1 Ideas for new courses may be identified in several ways, including as outputs from strategic and business planning. Once an idea is identified, this should be raised informally via any relevant channels. Heads of Schools should discuss ideas with the DVC. Initial research into the idea should be undertaken, and discussions with relevant external and internal stakeholders (including current students where relevant) should be undertaken to inform the potential development further.
- 7.2 Additional information relating to External Stakeholder Engagement is available in the Course Design Framework: Curriculum design and re-design activities.

8. INITIAL APPROVAL

- 8.1 Initial proposals will be presented to the Portfolio Review and Development Sub-Group (PRDSG) utilising the initial proposal template. PRDSG will confirm strategic alignment and request clarification of any detail in relation to the proposal, with a focus on operational requirements, proposed start dates and any potential early identified risks. PRDSG will recommend proposals for consideration and approval by the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group. All proposals recommended for approval will be recorded on the central development and activities list.
- 8.2 This list will form the basis of the 'Course Approval Activities Schedule'.

9. COURSE PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

- 9.1 Once initial consideration has been completed and PRDSG recommend approval, and prior to presentation for approval by the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group, proposals for new courses should be developed taking account of the minimum requirements set out below.
- 9.2 The course proposal is made up of two distinct requirements:

	Business Case	Academic Case
Purpose	The business case sets out the information required to make a judgement in relation to the expected commercial benefit of the course	The academic case proposal provides the preliminary details relating to the course structure, curriculum and resource requirements. These are required to enable VCAG to consider how the proposed course will be consistent and aligned to external and internal frames of reference and that the indicative resource requirements have been considered and approved. VCAG will also utilise the information to deliberate on any impact or risk associated with new types of provision and expected exceptions to standard regulations and policy requirements.
To include	- Core basic information - Confirmation of how the development supports the strategic business priorities - Outline of External and Internal stakeholder feedback - Outline of sector research - Anticipated learner numbers and income - Expected cost of initial set up and projected on-going costs - Details relating to any anticipated additional income (funding etc) - Preliminary Marketing information	- Core basic information - Confirmation of how the development supports the strategic priorities relating to student experience, including the Student Engagement Strategy, quality and standards and specifically, the Education Strategy - Outline of External and Internal stakeholder feedback and how this has impacted the proposal in relation to title, curriculum content etc - Proposed course structure - Initial summary of units and outline of content - Indicative schedule of learning - Confirmation of any expected exceptions to standard regulations and policy requirements - Marketing information to inform the Course Page on the website - Confirmation of anticipated resource requirements

- 9.3 Course Proposal development should be undertaken utilising a team approach, and include (as a minimum) consideration of the aspects outlined above (for both business and academic cases). Development of the proposal should include research into current sector activity, provision and demand and should be informed by feedback from external and internal stakeholders.

Proposals should be informed by student feedback. Consideration of which student groups should be engaged, and the most appropriate form of engagement is at the discretion of the proposal development team. The Proposal form should outline a summary of feedback and impact.

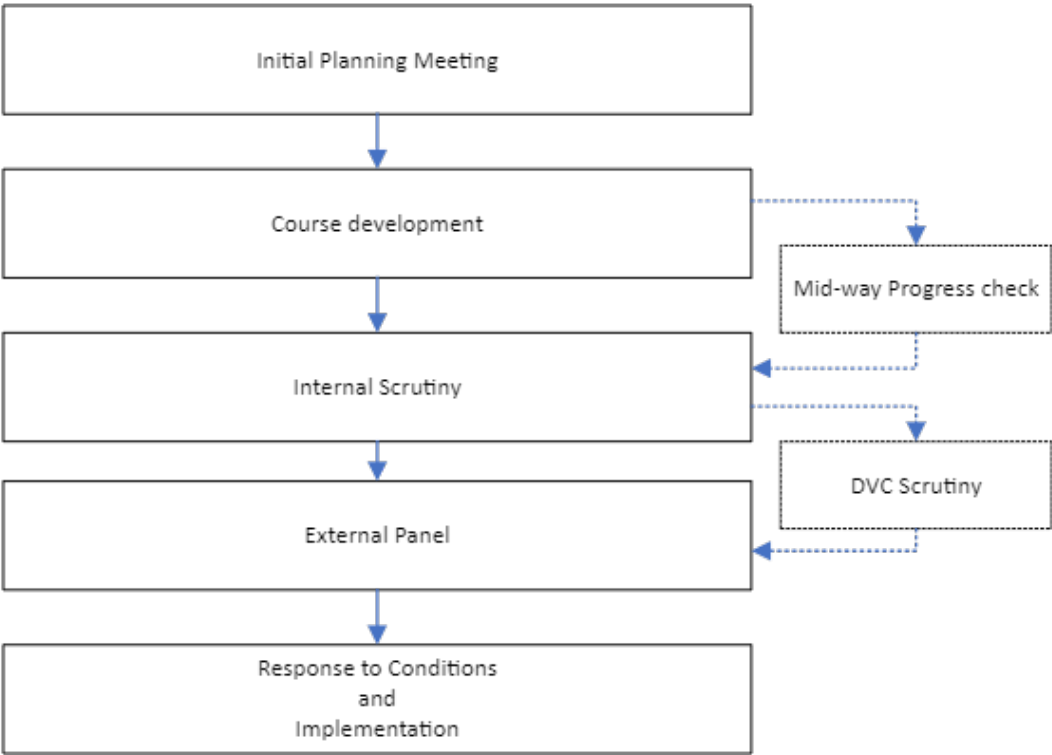
10. COURSE PROPOSAL APPROVAL

- 10.1 Course proposals should be presented to the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group for consideration. The outcome of consideration may be:
- **Approve the proposal** – progress to Course Approval procedure
 - **More information required** prior to Approval (to either be re-presented to VCAG or, at the Chair's discretion, to be confirmed in circulation or via Chair's Action)
 - **Substantial review required** prior to re-presentation to VCAG
 - **Not Approved**- the proposal will not be progressed

- 10.2 The specific deadlines for submission to VCAG will be agreed on an annual basis. The indicative timeline for Course Proposal Procedures is available in Appendix Three.
- 10.3 The date of approval will be added to the 'Course Approval Activities Schedule' and notification of an update will be provided to all relevant internal teams and services.
- 10.4 Following VCAG Approval, Marketing may commence ('subject to approval'). Confirmation of VCAG approval, and notification of an update to the 'Course Approval Activities Schedule' will be provided to all relevant internal teams and services.

11. COURSE APPROVAL PROCEDURE

11.1 The Course Approval procedure steps are summarised in the diagram below:



11.2 Initial Planning meeting

11.2.1 This is a meeting between the Academic Quality team and the Course Design Team to confirm the scope and requirements of the specific course approval procedure. Course Design Teams will be sign-posted to relevant guidance and resources, and the details of workshops and training events available.

11.2.2 The initial planning meeting will be held as early in the cycle as possible. The indicative timeline provided in Appendix Three outlines the optimal timing for this meeting, to ensure Course Design Teams have early access to information, support and guidance and to ensure that deadlines and dates are set as early in the procedure as possible.

11.2.3 The following table provides an indication of the requirements for initial planning:

With reference to the Quality Indicators and risk flags, to include	Required documentation
- Confirmation of the Course Design Team and the experience of the team members - Confirmation of the scope of the approval event, including indicative schedule of meetings and the membership requirements for internal scrutiny and external panel - Confirmation of the requirement to nominate at least two External Panel members (In accordance with the External Panel Members Policy and Procedure) - Agreement of additional requirements for the internal scrutiny panel, including additional professional services attendees for specific operational matters	Attendees should be granted: - Approved Course Proposals (new courses) - Access to Periodic Review report(s) (existing courses) - Access to any preliminary outputs from Stakeholder engagement - Information relating to PSRB requirements - Anything else relevant to initial planning

With reference to the Quality Indicators and risk flags, to include	Required documentation
• Consideration of the tour of resources which may be applicable to the External Panel • Confirmation of all named awards for consideration • Confirmation of relevant External Frames of Reference (EFoR) • Confirmation of involvement required with PSRB(s) • Confirmation of an exceptions to standard Regulations and Policy Requirements • Confirmation of the intended course structure • Confirmation of placement/ practice based/ work-based learning elements (and confirm input from HoPRL) • Confirmation of Marketing and recruitment arrangements • Confirmation of relevant requirements in relation to Competition and Marketing Authority regulatory requirements • Provision of information and guidance to support the Course Design Team • Provision of times and dates for institutional workshops and forums for course development • Agreement of timelines and milestones	Output- Initial Planning Meeting notes and action plan (to include agreed deadlines and milestones)

11.3 **Course Development**

11.3.1 Course Development is the stage in which course design and development activity is completed, including the wide-ranging activities required for curriculum design and consideration of operational requirements. The completion of this aspect of the procedure must be completed as set out in full in the various policy and procedures which make up the Course Design Framework.

11.3.2A mid-way check point will be established for the Course Development stage. This will be an opportunity for the Course Design Team and the Academic Quality team to review the progress of the procedure and to identify any potential risk flags or quality indicators, particularly relating to the procedural minimum requirements. At this point, additional requirements may be defined and specific actions and timelines will added to the action plan derived at the Initial Planning meeting. The mid-way check point may include a meeting or desk-based communication.

11.3.3The Director of Education and Student Experience will be consulted and included where flags have been raised in relation to curriculum design or learning and teaching matters more generally. The Head of Practice Related Learning will be consulted and included where flags have been raised in relation to placement or practice based learning elements or requirements (including operational).

11.3.4Where the mid-way check point identifies any concern relating to deadlines and milestones being met, this will be presented to ASQC for consideration. (This may, at the discretion of the Chair, be via circulation or Chair's Action).

11.3.5Where the mid-way check point identifies any substantial concern relating to the quality of documentation, arrangements will be made to ensure the additional DVC sign-off stage is included prior to External Panel.

11.4 **Internal Scrutiny**

11.4.1 Internal Scrutiny is undertaken by internal staff, appointed as a sub-group of ASQC and delegated responsibility by ASQC to confirm course developments can progress to External Panel.

11.4.2 Internal Scrutiny is a meeting between the Course Design Team and the appointed Internal Chair and Panel Member(s) and Academic Quality team member(s). This stage of the procedure allows the Course Design Team to show-case their development and proposal, and for robust scrutiny of the full academic proposal, operational impact and arrangements, and the full set of documentation supporting the proposal, prior to the External Panel event.

11.4.3The Academic Quality team will ensure that documentation and meeting invites are provided to all relevant attendees at least two weeks prior to the event.

11.4.4Specific and careful attention will be given to operational matters which should be agreed and confirmed prior to External Panel and will have less relevance to External Panel members. This may require specific attendees to be invited to confirm or advise on arrangements.

11.4.5The Internal Scrutiny is a collegiate and collaborative event which aims to ensure that the External Panel event will be successful. The panel will support the Course Design Team to identify any required adaptations

to the course design or the documentation in order to mitigate any risk of an unsuccessful external panel as far as is possible.

11.4.6 The following list provides an indication of the requirements for Internal Scrutiny:

With reference to the Quality Indicators and risk flags, to include	Required documentation
- Full review of the documentation - Course Design Team over-view, including details of any PSRB involvement in Course Approval Procedure Specific discussion points (as applicable): - Course Development, Course Design activities and curriculum (Including alignment with Internal and External frameworks) - Entry requirements, including Exceptions to Standard Admissions requirements - Exceptions to Standard Assessment Regulations - Course aims and learning outcomes - Learning, teaching and assessment, feedback strategies and methods (Including alignment with Internal and External frameworks) - Student educational experience - Resources Review of the Course Documentation - Course Specification(s) - Unit Specifications Confirmation of Operational arrangements - Marketing - Common Units - Transitions mapping (Periodic Review only) - Additional or unusual operational aspects (admissions/ enrolment/ timetabling/ SRS/ standard academic policy and procedure) Confirmation of the External Panel Schedule Consideration of any additional requirements previously defined through the Course Approval Procedures.	Panel Members and all attendees must have access to: • Relevant Policy and Procedure • Completed Course Design Summary and all appendices • Completed Resources template, including confirmation of resource requirements and arrangements for these to be fulfilled • Completed Course and Unit Specifications • Evidence of EFoR and PSRB mapping • Approved Proposals (new courses) • Periodic Review report(s) (existing courses) • Detailed outputs from Stakeholder engagement, including an articulation of how this has impacted the course development • Nominations for proposed External Panel Members, signed off by the Head of School/ Centre • For pre-existing courses, details of the relevant requirements in relation to Competition and Marketing Authority regulatory requirements, including proposed transition arrangements, including timelines and confirmations of actions already undertaken Output- Internal Scrutiny report and action plan Confirmed deadline for response Confirmation of arrangements if DVC sign-off is defined as an additional requirement (previously or as an outcome of IS) Annotated documentation for the Course Design Team to refer to

11.4.7 Course Design Teams are required to undertake any defined required actions by the confirmed deadline. Updated documentation must be provided in accordance with the advice provided by the Academic Quality team.

11.4.8 The Academic Quality team will circulate the updated Internal Scrutiny action plan and documentation to the Internal Scrutiny panel for review and confirmation prior to documentation being circulated to External Panel.

11.4.9 Confirmation of Internal Scrutiny completion will be added to the 'Course Approval Activities Schedule' and notification of an update will be provided to all relevant internal teams and services.

11.5 **Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Sign off**

11.5.1 Where it has been defined as an additional requirement, the full set of documentation which is to be provided to the External Panel will be provided to the DVC for full review prior to circulation.

11.5.2 The DVC (via the Academic Quality team) will outline any queries, required amendments or updates, and a deadline will be set. Depending on the nature of the amendments, the DVC may request a review of the updates, or may delegate responsibility to the Assistant Academic Registrar Quality to review and confirm the updates have been undertaken appropriately.

11.5.3 With reference to the quality indicators and risk flags, the DVC may decide that the External Panel must be delayed, paused or cancelled.

11.5.4 Confirmation of DVC sign-off will be added to the 'Course Approval Activities Schedule' as applicable.

11.6 **Preparation for External Panel**

11.6.1 Based on the agreed External Panel Schedule, the Academic Quality team will ensure that documentation and meeting invites are provided to all relevant attendees at least two weeks prior to the event.

11.6.2 The documentation provided is outlined in the table below:

Required documentation
Panel Members and relevant attendees must have access to: • Summary information about the University, including the information relating to the mission, values and strategic ambitions • Relevant Policy and Procedure • Completed Course Design Summary and all appendices • Completed Resources template, including confirmation of resource requirements and arrangements for these to be fulfilled • Completed Course and Unit Specifications • Evidence of EFoR and PSRB mapping • Approved Proposals (new courses) • Periodic Review report(s) (existing courses) • Detailed outputs from Stakeholder engagement, including an articulation of how this has impacted the course development • Nominations for proposed External Panel Members, signed off by the Head of School/ Centre • For pre-existing courses, details of the relevant requirements in relation to Competition and Marketing Authority regulatory requirements, including proposed transition arrangements, including timelines and confirmations of actions already undertaken • The course set up form, outlining operational requirements post approval Course Design Teams should ensure that students attending the 'meeting with students' are provided a copy of the 'Guidance note for students invited to meet with Course Approval External Panels'

11.7 **External Panel**

11.7.1 The External Panel has delegated authority from ASQC to grant approval of courses.

11.7.2 The External Panel is made up of Internal and External Panel Members, Student panel member(s), Quality panel member(s) and where relevant or required, PSRB representatives. External Panel meetings are normally scheduled over the course of a single day and will include meetings with relevant external stakeholders, current students, the Course Design Team and senior leadership from the School/ centre. Panel members should be provided the opportunity to tour resources as applicable. This may be performed virtually.

11.7.3 The External Panel are required to consider and confirm that they assured that the course(s) presented for approval:

- Is consistent with sector standards and includes the academic content expected for the subject
- Will provide a high-quality, inclusive learning experience
- Aligns with key external frames of reference, including relevant qualifications frameworks and the FHEQ Descriptors, relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, the QAA UK Quality Code, and any professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements
- Meets the requirements of the University Course Design Framework

11.7.4 In addition, as applicable, the Panel will be required to confirm that they are assured that:

- Apprenticeship courses have been designed with reference to the specific regulatory requirements
- Where courses are being proposed for delivery in partnership, the additional scrutiny and approval requirements set out in the Educational Partnerships Approval Policy and Procedure have been completed and the approved delivery and operational arrangements for the course will support the quality of the learning experience

11.7.5 The outcome of the External Panel will be one of the following:

- i to recommend unconditional approval, subject to normal periodic review;
- ii to recommend approval subject to conditions and/or recommendations and subject to normal periodic review;
- iii to recommend approval for a limited period only with or without conditions and/or recommendations, after which a review will be held;
- iv to recommend that approval be withheld.

11.7.6 When defining the outcome, the Panel will take the following into account:

- The maximum, and **standard period of approval** is six years.
- The Panel may agree a shorter approval period if there is rationale to support this. Reduced approval period is not intended to be utilised to mitigate any concerns relating to assurance requirements as outlined in section 12.7.3. Panels are requested to take consideration of PSRB periodic review requirements, and where possible support alignment. It is essential for the review period to be agreed as part of the outcomes of External Panel, and for a rationale for the period to be recorded in the formal report.
- **Conditions** should be defined where full assurance is not confirmed in relation to the aspects outlined in section 12.7.3 above. Conditions must be met before the course can be formally approved and delivered
- **Recommendations** are made over and above the required assurance and can be completed over a longer period of time. The Course Design Team must add the recommendations to the Course Action Plan and ensure these are monitored via Course Steering Committee (and reported to ASCQ)
- Panels may define conditions or recommendations to be addressed by the Course Design Team, the School/Centre or for the institution.
- Where conditions of approval and/or recommendations are set, the Panel will state the timescale for the team to respond. The timescale will normally be agreed in discussion with the Course Design Team and will not exceed three weeks.

11.7.7 The Panel are also encouraged to identify commendations to the Course Design Team for anything that they agree stood out in relation to the development of the course.

11.7.8 The panel may define actions required in order for operational implementation to be effectively and efficiently progressed. This may require an update to the Course Set up form. Required actions may also be determined in relation to the content of definitive documentation (Course and Unit Specifications). Completion of required actions should be confirmed by the same deadline as response to conditions.

11.7.9 Outcomes will be provided verbally as part of the External Panel and provided in writing within 3 working days of the External Panel meeting.

11.8 **Response to Conditions**

11.8.1 The Course Design Team are required to lead on ensuring Conditions are met and a response provided by the agreed deadline. This includes progressing any institutional actions, with the support of the head of School/ Centre.

11.8.2 Response to conditions and confirmation of completion of required actions must be provided to the Academic Quality team by the end of the day on the deadline provided. The Academic Quality team will ensure that the response document and all supporting information and documentation are provided to the panel, and request their review and response within a maximum of two weeks as standard.

11.8.3 When all panel members have confirmed approval, the Academic Quality team will notify all relevant internal teams and services. Confirmation of Approval will be added to the 'Course Approval Activities Schedule'.

12. **IMPLEMENTATION STAGE**

12.1 Following confirmation of approval, the Academic Quality team will provide the final Course Set up form to the Course Design Team and all relevant internal teams and services (as specified within the form). Provision of the form demarcates the need for relevant teams to take action in order to ensure the course is ready for delivery by the agreed date.

12.2 Implementation will be monitored by the Academic Quality team, based on the dates provided within the Course set up form. Where there are any delays or concerns are raised, these will be discussed informally with the relevant service or team (and the Course Design Team) in the first instance. Any matters which are not resolved, or appear to be of a systemic nature, will be raised for consideration via ASQC.

13. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

- The definitive record of information relating to all course approval activities the 'Course Approval Activities Schedule' is maintained and managed by the Academic Quality team within Academic Registry. Notification of updates will be provided to all relevant teams and services on a regular basis.
- Course Approval reports are presented to ASQC for ratification and published internally as part of the committee documentation.
- The Course Approval report will provide the detail relating to the reasons for the Conditions, Recommendations and Commendations. The report will be drafted and provided to the Chair of the External Panel for sign-off within one month of approval being granted. This report is presented to ASQC as part of ratification of approval.
- Formal confirmation of approval will be communicated by the Academic Quality team within Academic Registry.
- A list of approved courses (definitive awards of the university) is maintained by the Academic Quality team within Academic Registry and published internally.
- Approved entry requirements are recorded and maintained by the Admissions team.
- Details of courses which are published on the University website are overseen and maintained by Marketing.

14. REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT REQUIREMENTS

14.1 PRDSG oversee the HSU portfolio, and report directly to VCAG. ASQC oversee Course Approval activity.

14.2 Course approval activity is reported via the Annual Quality Assurance report, presented to the Board of Governors following review and endorsement via ASQC and Academic Board.

15. APPENDICES- SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION, TEMPLATES AND GUIDANCE

Appendix One- Key indicators of quality and procedural risk flags

Appendix Two- Detailed Proposal procedure diagram

Appendix Three - Indicative Course Approval procedure timeline

Templates and forms:

Establishing new courses

- Initial course proposal form
- New Course Proposal form (standard provision)
- New Course Proposal form (Apprenticeship provision)

Course Approval Procedures

- Course Design Summary template
- Resources template
- Transitions mapping template

Implementation

- Course set up form

Templates designed to inform and document the Initial Planning Meetings, Internal Scrutiny and External Panel activities are developed and implemented outside of formal procedure and will be made available as part of the Course Approval Toolkit, and will be adapted to meet the specific needs of the course approval activities.

Additional Guidance is provided via the Course Approval Toolkit.

Mapping to the OfS Conditions of Registration	
This policy and procedure has been designed to support illustration of alignment to the following conditions of Registration:	
• B1.2, B1.3a, B1.3b, B1.3c, B1.3d, B1.3e • B2.2a, B2.2b • B4.a,B4.b, B4.c, B4.d • B5.1, B5.2	

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Policy Owner	Assistant Academic Registrar Quality
Date approved	10 June 2026
Effective from	11 June 2026
Review date	2027/28
Target Audience	Staff External staff (EEs, EPMs, Partners) Students
Publication	Public
Equality analysis	

Appendix One- Key indicators of quality and procedural risk flags

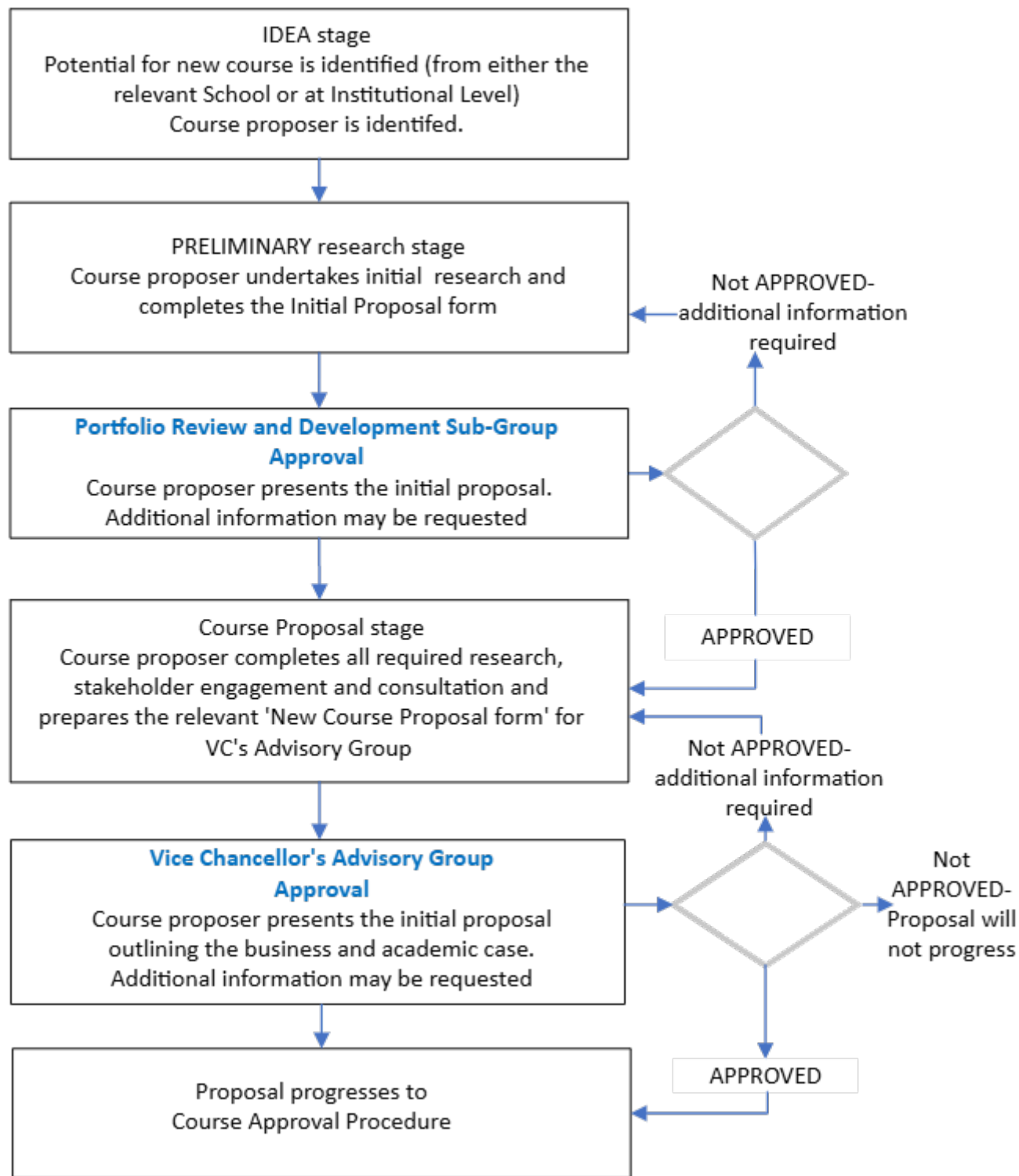
The following are some of the indicators and flags that are utilised throughout the procedures:

Indicator/ Flag	Description of indicator	Potential risk
Application of external frames of reference	All relevant frames of reference have been utilised in the design of the course, in accordance with the detailed guidance set out in the Course Design Framework.	Courses designed without reference to relevant external requirements and expectations, or where there is evidence that provision is not consistent with relevant sector frameworks, are unlikely to be comparable to those offered across the UK. This should be considered a fundamental risk and it is highly unlikely that approval will be granted.
Application of internal frames of reference	The proposal and design align with the requirements of the Course Design Framework, and any exceptions to standard Academic Regulation, Policy and Procedure are outlined and supported by a clear rationale and confirmation of approach to implementation (where necessary).	Courses should align with the institutional approach for course design unless there is a clear rationale for exception. The institutional strategic approach to course design is fundamental to the strategic approach to securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality, and also supports effective and efficient operationalisation of provision. This should be considered a fundamental risk and it is highly likely that additional requirements will be defined during the course approval procedure. Where requirements are not met it is likely that approval will not be granted.
Appropriate approvals gained	All required approvals have been granted by the relevant committees within the timelines agreed	Deliberative approval of proposals is a requirement in accordance with the University's governance structure. Proposals which have not been considered and approved as requirements define will not progress to the next stage in the procedure.
Engagement with external stakeholders	Feedback and critique from relevant external stakeholders (employers/ patients and service users/ PSRBs/ placement providers etc) have been requested throughout the procedure and has informed the development at the point of proposal, development and final design	Input and feedback from relevant external stakeholders is an essential part of forming proposals (in relation to both the Business and the Academic case). External Stakeholder engagement is a requirement in accordance with the institutional strategy and external input is required throughout the approval procedure. Proposals which have not been informed by external stakeholder feedback are unlikely to progress to the next stage in the procedure. It is highly likely that additional requirements will be defined.
Internal stakeholder engagement and agreement	The new course and impact on procedures and process has been discussed with all relevant internal stakeholders, for information and or planning and actions (as required)	Courses designed in isolation of the operational requirements and arrangements will not enable the best possible learning experience for students. Lack of prior planning for University wide implementation of courses (whether standard or new types of provision) increases the likelihood of negative impact on learners and staff experience. Where it is apparent that aspects of course design have not been discussed with relevant internal stakeholders it is highly likely that additional requirements will be defined during the course approval procedure.
Learner involvement	Relevant groups of students and apprentices have had the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed course	Student engagement in all aspects of assuring and enhancing the quality of learning experiences is fundamental to the institutional approach.

Indicator/ Flag	Description of indicator	Potential risk
	throughout the development and approval process	Learner input on proposals and curriculum design provides a unique and specific view on potential learning experiences, and taking account of learners' views across the approval procedure increase the likelihood of positive student experiences for the new or redesigned course. Where it is apparent that proposals and courses have not been informed by the student voice, it is highly likely that additional requirements will be defined during the course approval procedure.
Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PSRBs)	The nature and scope of PSRB involvement and (re)accreditation varies course from course.	The University approach is that wherever possible, courses should be designed to facilitate accreditation, recognition or approval from relevant PSRBs. Where assurance is not provided at any point in the Course approval procedure in relation to PSRB arrangements, additional requirements will be defined. The added complexity of multiple PSRBs will require adaptations to standard procedures (for example extended timelines are a likely additional requirement).
New or non-standard types of provision	Proposals for types of courses which the University has either not previously offered, or have very recently been implemented, or for types of provision which require additional or adapted operational implementation (e.g. Apprenticeships, fully online courses)	Procedure and process requirements relating to the operationalisation of new or non-standard types of provision will very likely need special and specific attention. This is likely to include, in some instances, new procedures and processes being agreed institution-wide. Additional requirements will be defined for proposals for new and non-standard types of provision. This is likely to include extended timelines and additional internal stakeholder requirements throughout the procedure.
Course design team constitution	The number of staff involved in the design and approval activities, and the combined experience and knowledge of the team.	It is important that course development and design is undertaken by a team to ensure the form, structure and content are given thorough consideration at the point of design. Appointing teams and allocating responsibilities and tasks will also ensure that timelines can be adhered to, and will allow for activities to continue in the case of staff absence. Where a team has not been identified, or if it is deemed that the number of staff involved or their experience is not adequate, additional requirements will be defined and the development may need to be paused until the additional required action can be completed.
Sector/ market research	Information relating to other comparable provision to the proposed course, and the local and national need for additional graduates, informs the proposal, the nature and content of other comparable courses informs course design and encourages identification of unique selling points for the proposed course.	Without an awareness of the market for the proposed or redesigned provision, it will be unlikely that marketing and recruitment activities will be as successful as they could be. An understanding and awareness of the current market will provide both potential examples of innovative and current practice in design of content, learning and teaching, and will also enable Course Design Teams to understand how the provision and level of the qualification is comparable to other UK provision. Where there is no evidence of sector/ market research it is likely that additional requirements will be defined at the point of Business case and Academic case approval.
Nominations for external panel members	The Course Design Team consider and approach external experts (both academic and professional) to act as external panel members	External expert involvement in the final approval stage of the procedure provides the University with assurance that the courses being approved meet the sector standards, consistent with relevant sector frameworks, are comparable to those offered across the UK. Course design teams are responsible for researching, approaching and nominating External Panel members. Deadlines for submissions of nominations are set in order to ensure panel members can be approved and all relevant HR procedures are completed well in advance of External Panel.

Indicator/ Flag	Description of indicator	Potential risk
		Where there are delays, this may impact the experience of the external panel member (or nominee) which poses a reputational risk and may impact their engagement with the procedures. Delay or non-submission of nominations will result in a requirement to reschedule or cancel events which must be avoided due to the impact on broader management of quality procedures.
Appointment of internal panel members	On behalf of ASQC, the Quality team appoint Chairs and Independent Panel members to specific course approval activities (internal scrutiny and external panels)	Internal Panel members play a vital role in the internal and external procedures for course approval. Chairs and independent panel members are allocated following initial planning meetings. Where allocations are not filled this may pose a risk to the internal or external events happening as planned and additional requirements will be defined prior to the mid-way check point.
Quality of content of documentation	The documentation submitted to support a proposed course must be clear, consistent and provide the information specified as required within the template(s).	Documentation produced in the support of proposed course approval is the definitive record of procedures, is shared with internal and external audiences and as such should be of a quality which best represents the reputation and standing of the University. Where concerns relating to the content quality of required documentation are raised at any point in the procedures, additional requirements will be defined and monitored.
Submission of documentation	Documentation must be submitted in full by the deadlines confirmed, and in the agreed format and method.	Documentation must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided by the Quality team at the point prior to the next submission. This will be especially important during periods of infrastructure change where methods of sharing and collaborating on documentation may be required to change. Actions relating to securing a low-risk approach to document and information management are assigned to the Quality team within Registry and additional information relating to requirements will be added to the policy and procedure at the point that they are agreed.
Milestones/ deadlines	Timelines are agreed at an institutional level. Specific milestones, deadlines and event dates are confirmed for each event.	In order for the University to successfully undertake the number and range of course approval activities as agreed by the Executive, the portfolio of activities must be managed as a whole. Deadlines are set at initial planning meetings and should not change. Where there are circumstances which require a proposed change to dates previously confirmed, this should be formally outlined in writing and communicated to the Quality team. Where elongated timelines are defined as an additional requirement to mitigate any of the risks outlined above, the new timeline should be discussed and agreed in an effort to ensure the approval event can be supported to successful completion.

Appendix Two- Detailed procedure diagram- Course Proposals



Appendix Three- Indicative timelines- Course Approval Procedures

These timelines are provided as indicative only and outline the latest possible dates for core procedure activities to ensure effective operational set-up.

*Course design activities can be undertaken in less time than stipulated in this indicative timeline. Where Course design teams are confident that they can design curriculum effectively in less time than stipulated, adaptation to approval timelines can be considered and adjusted accordingly, and will be reported to and monitored via ASQC.

Minimum requirements in relation to document submission and circulation will remain a requirement.

Specific deadlines for each activity will be agreed at the Initial Planning Meetings for each development.

Stage in Procedure	Indicative Deadlines/ milestones for September Start Courses	Indicative Deadlines/ milestones for January Start Courses	Indicative Deadlines/ milestones for May Start Courses
VCAG Approval	IDEAL SEPTEMBER MEETING (LATEST DECEMBER MEETING see note*)	IDEAL JANUARY MEETING (LATEST APRIL MEETING see note*)	IDEAL MAY MEETING (LATEST AUGUST MEETING see note*)
Initial Planning Meeting	OCTOBER	FEBRAURY	JUNE
*Course Development	OCTOBER to FEBRUARY	FEBRUARY to JUNE	MAY to OCTOBER
Mid-way check point	END NOVEMBER/ EARLY DECEMBER	END MARCH/ EARLY APRIL	END JULY/EARLY AUGUST
DOCUMENTATION SUBMISSION: Internal Scrutiny	FEBRUARY/MARCH	JUNE/JULY	OCTOBER/NOVEMBER
Documents circulated to Internal Scrutiny	2 weeks prior MARCH/APRIL	2 weeks prior JULY/AUGUST	2 weeks prior NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
Internal Scrutiny	MARCH/APRIL	JULY/AUGUST	NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
Documents circulated to External Panel	2 weeks prior APRIL/MAY	2 weeks prior AUGUST/SEPTEMBER	2 weeks prior DECEMBER /JANUARY
External Panel	MAY/Early JUNE	SEPTEMBER/ Early OCTOBER	JANUARY/Early FEBRUARY
Responses to External Panel completed	Maximum 3 weeks	Maximum 3 weeks	Maximum 3 weeks
Panel review and final approval	BY 30 JUNE	BY 31 OCTOBER	BY 28 FEBRUARY
Implementation	JULY/AUGUST	NOVEMBER/DECEMBER	MARCH/APRIL