Imperial College London

Guidance on Programme and Module Modification Procedure during Covid-19 Version 3, (Updated 1 February 2021)

1. The College's approved [Programme and Module Modification Procedure](#) has been designed to support the College to maintain the academic quality and standards of its awards whilst supporting the continuous enhancement of the student learning experience.

2. The College is faced with an unprecedented situation with the growing impact of Covid-19 and has responded to the challenges it presents, needing to make difficult decisions.

3. In approaching the discussion about the delivery of approved programmes of study, the following key factors have been considered:

   (a) The ongoing need to maintain the quality of our degree provision;
   (b) The ongoing need to ensure that our students can demonstrate the learning outcomes;
   (c) The obligation to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on progression and award;
   (d) The requirement to be aware of the possible knock-on effect of regulatory bodies, such as the Professional bodies that recognise our degrees, and the Office for Students.

4. Until the 31st March 2021 the following interim arrangements apply to Departments wishing to make in-year minor and major modifications to their modules or programmes to deal with amendments necessary as a result of the College move to remote teaching and assessment. The approved Programme and Module Modification Procedure is still in place for any planned modifications that Departments had planned to put in place for 2021-22 which are not Covid19 related.

5. All modifications will need to be clearly recorded with a clear indication of whether they are temporary amendments to cover this period and reported so that the College has a clear log of changes that have been made to modules and programmes as a result of Covid-19.

Time-Limited Remote Assessments

6. Approval for formal written examinations to be delivered as time-limited remote assessments has already been given and took effect from 18th March 2020, when it was agreed that the College would move to remote assessment. There is therefore no need to report on this.

7. The guidance issued on time-limited remote assessment allows Departments to make the following amendments:

   (a) To make changes to the questions to be asked;
   (b) To change the number of questions;
   (c) For all time-limited remote assessments in a Department, to increase the time allowed for students to complete the assessment, noting that no assessment duration should be increased by more than 25% of the originally planned formal written exam (i.e. no more than by 30 extra minutes for a 2 hour exam);
   (d) To change the start time of the already timetabled assessment by up to 5 hours

   It is recommended that a log of these decisions is kept as a record.

8. No other amendments will be allowed for the time-limited remote assessments, given the adjustment already made and the flexibility allowed in 7 above.

Interim Process for approval of minor modifications due to Covid-19

9. This does not apply to modules now being assessed by time-limited remote assessment, but it does apply to other modifications that need to be made as a consequence of the move to remote teaching.

10. All in-year minor modifications can be approved by the Departmental Teaching Committee and reported to the Quality Assurance Team. Departments will also need to follow the guidance on communications to students as set out in paragraphs below.

11. Examples of interim minor modifications:

    • Remove an assessment from a module and change the weighting of remaining assessments
    • Introduce an alternative method of assessment to a module to replace an assessment that cannot be replicated remotely

12. Departments should report approved minor modifications to the Quality Assurance Team by the 31st March 2021 in order that changes to the programme or module information can be amended on Banner where this is required. Changes must be communicated to the Quality Assurance Team via the adapted Minor
    Modifications audit spreadsheet. The Quality Assurance Team will circulate the adapted Annual Minor Modifications Audit spreadsheet to allow for changes to be communicated to the Team. This also makes clear to Departments what information is required. Departments should send returns to Men-Yeut Wong – Assistant Registrar (Programme Development) men-yeut.wong@imperial.ac.uk, and copy them to Faculty Education teams, if they specify this.

Interim Process for approval of major modifications due to Covid-19

13. All major modifications to programme level information for 2020-21 must be recommended by the Departmental Teaching Committee and the Faculty Education Committee before being reported to the Quality Assurance Team, who will seek approval from the Programmes Committee or directly from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, where necessary. Approved major modifications will be reported to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

14. Examples of interim major modifications that can be considered:

    • Change the programme level learning outcomes
    • Change the designation of a module from core to elective
    • Change the designation of a module from elective to core
    • Change of the grouping of electives, which may lead to more restrictive student choice
    • Change the programme structure to accommodate the move of modules which cannot be delivered remotely, including fieldwork

    • Change the duration of the programme
    • Change the programme start and end date

15. Departments should submit Faculty endorsed modifications to the Quality Assurance Team by the 31st March 2021 in order that changes to the programme or module information can be amended on Banner as required. The proposed changes must be communicated to the Quality Assurance Team via the Excel Spreadsheet link (sharing of this spreadsheet across Faculties/Departments and the Quality Assurance Team will be more efficient). Departments should send returns to Men-Yeut Wong – Assistant Registrar (Programme Development) men-yeut.wong@imperial.ac.uk, and copy them to Faculty Education teams, if they specify this. Departments may wish to seek advice from their Faculty Education teams.

16. In making these proposals, Departments will need to take into consideration the impact of these changes on students in particular any impact on their finances, their ability to complete the degree on time as well as their ability to meet the learning outcomes of the programme.

Maintaining a log of the approved modifications

17. Maintaining a clear record of modifications and the rationale for approval will enable the College to respond quickly to any related external queries from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies and for dealing with any related student complaints in a timely manner. The log will also aid communication with External Examiners. The College modifications log may be reported to Senate and Council, or to the Office for Students, as required.

18. Where the modifications have been indicated as being temporary to manage the current situation, there will be no requirement for the module or programme specification to be updated. Where a department subsequently decides that they wish to make a modification approved under this interim process a permanent change, the Quality Assurance Team must be told of the decision and department should submit a revised module or programme specification.

Communicating to Students

19. Departments should ensure that they communicate all approved modifications to their students by email, explaining how and why changes have been made. It should be made clear how students will be supported in managing their studies in light of the modifications.

20. Students will need to be made aware of the approved modifications with sufficient notice to take into account the changes. It should be made clear how students will be supported in managing their studies in light of any approved modifications.

Communicating to External Examiners

21. Departments should ensure that they communicate all approved modifications to their External Examiners by email explaining how and why changes have been made. It should be made clear how students will be supported in managing their studies in light of the modifications. External Examiners are facing the same disruptions within their own institutions so should be familiar with the interim measures being put in place across the sector.