

Procedure for the Approval of New Undergraduate and Master's Level Programmes

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document is intended for use by the Registry's Quality Assurance & Enhancement (QA&E) Team, Online Learning Innovation Group (OLIG), Programmes Committee and Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC), to maintain oversight of the approval process for new undergraduate and Master's level programmes.
- 1.2. This document should be used to assist and guide Programme Directors (or equivalent) through the approval process for new undergraduate and Master's level programmes.
- 1.3. Master's Level programmes refers to the following awards: MSc, MRes, MEd, MPH, MBA, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate.
- 1.4. Undergraduate programmes refers to the following awards: BSc, MSci, BEng, MEng and MBBS.

2. Principles

- 2.1. All programme proposals must have approval from their department and faculty before they can proceed for consideration for approval by the Online Learning Innovation Group (OLIG) (if applicable), Programmes Committee, QAEC and Senate.
- 2.2. All programmes must conform to the College's [Academic Regulations and Regulations for Examination](#).
- 2.3. All qualifications must be positioned at the appropriate level and each programme must have programme learning outcomes aligned with the relevant qualification descriptor in the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland \(FHEQ\)](#).
- 2.4. From 2017-18 the College only expects to receive programmes which are designed in a modular format where the base module size is 5 or 7.5 ECTS (or multiples thereof).
- 2.5. All programmes must be affiliated to a department within the College. In cases where a programme crosses departmental- or faculty boundaries a 'lead' department should be identified.

3. Process

- 3.1. Proposals for a programme in a new discipline or subject not currently taught at the College and/or which is distinct in format or structure from existing programmes at the College should seek strategic approval from the Programmes Committee before developing the proposal further. Online programmes (e.g. distance, blended or e-learning programmes) need to seek strategic approval from the Online Learning and Innovation Group (OLIG). In all cases, this approval is distinct from the full

programme approval which is also carried out by the Programmes Committee. Please contact the QA&E Team for advice on the strategic approval process.

- 3.2. Before submission new programme proposals must be approved by the relevant department and faculty. (Programme Directors are encouraged to use at least Form A – General Programme Information and Form B – Planning and Resources at this stage).
- 3.3. All proposals for new programmes should be made using the New Programme Proposal Forms and Templates and include any relevant appendices. The new forms are divided into 5 sections; A - General Programme Information, B - Planning and Resources, C - Quality Assurance and Standards, D - External Reviewer Nominations, and E - Distance/Blended & E-Learning Programmes. The templates for completion include the Programme Specification, Module Outline, Project Outline and ECTS spreadsheet. All forms and templates can be found [here](#). The QA&E Team are happy to assist with the completion of the forms and templates. Please contact them at an early stage for advice and assistance.
- 3.4. After formal submission to the QA&E Team proposals are to be circulated amongst key College level staff for internal review. This is to ensure the suitability of the proposal for external review and compliance with College regulations and guidelines. Amendments may be required.
- 3.5. Following internal review proposals are to be submitted for external review by the QA&E Team. The chair of the Programme Committee (or deputy chair, in cases of conflict of interest) must select two academic referees and two referees from industry or the health service from the list of referees provided in the programme proposal (See Form D – External Reviewer Nominations).
- 3.6. A minimum of two external reviews from academic referees and two external reviews from referees in industry or the health service must be received before the proposal can be considered by the Programmes Committee.
- 3.7. External reviewers will be asked to complete the New Programme Proposal (External Review) Form.
- 3.8. Once the completed external reviews have been received by the QA&E Team the Programme Director will be asked to write a response to the reviews. The Programme Director may also choose to make further amendments to the proposal at this stage.
- 3.9. The final proposal including the external reviews and the Programme Director's response are submitted to the Programmes Committee where the Programme Director is invited to present the proposal.
- 3.10. The Programmes Committee may recommend the proposal for endorsement by QAEC, with or without amendments, or reject the proposal. In some cases where the Programmes Committee has requested substantial amendments a revised proposal should be submitted to the next meeting of the Programmes Committee before it can be submitted to QAEC.
- 3.11. Following a recommendation for approval by the Programmes Committee, the programme may be advertised to potential applicants but this must include the caveat 'subject to College approval'.

- 3.12. QAEC has delegated authority to approve a new programmes on behalf of Senate. QAEC may approve with or without amendments, or reject the proposal. In some cases where the QAEC has requested substantial amendments a revised proposal should be submitted to the next meeting of QAEC. In exceptional circumstances, QAEC may refer new programmes to Senate for final approval.
- 3.13. If approved by QAEC (with any recommendations having been addressed) the programme code(s) will be set-up and applications for admission to the programme can be accepted. The programme will also be reported to Senate via QAEC.

4. Timeframe

- 4.1. The minimum time required for a proposal to be approved by QAEC from the date at which it is formally received by the QA&E Team is 26 weeks (6 months). However the timeframe can vary significantly depending on the time of year, the dates of the various committee meetings, and whether significant amendments to the proposal are required. Programmes which are in a new discipline, otherwise distinct from existing College provision or online may also require longer.
- 4.2. Ideally proposals should be submitted to the QA&E Team 78 weeks (18 months) in advance of the proposed start date in order for an approved programme to meet recruitment deadlines for UCAS (undergraduate programmes only) and the printed prospectus.
- 4.3 The steps in the process for standard programmes are as follows:
- I. The programme proposal is considered and approved by the relevant department and faculty.
 - II. The draft proposal is submitted to the QA&E Team.
 - III. The proposal is circulated for internal review (2 weeks).
 - IV. The proposal is submitted for external review (6 weeks).
 - V. The Programme Director 'responds' to the external reviewers' comments and may make amendments to the proposal in the light of these (1-2 weeks).
 - VI. The proposal, including the external reviews and the Programme Director's response, are submitted to the Programmes Committee. The Programmes Committee can recommend the programme for QAEC endorsement with or without amendments or reject the proposal.
 - VII. The proposal is considered by QAEC. QAEC can approve with or without amendments or reject it. (Note: any amendments required by QAEC are normally submitted to the following meeting for consideration).
 - VIII. Where the programme is approved the programme code(s) are created and applications can be accepted. The programme is reported to Senate.

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