Introduction

1. It is expected that schools/services will seek to continually enhance the University’s portfolio of course and modules, and to improve the learning experience for students in the light of annual course review, professional body or other stakeholder requirements and/or changes in discipline or pedagogic practice. However changes to courses must recognise consumer rights of each individual student and therefore can only be made following: changes to the requirements of external sector bodies; Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements; student feedback; external examiner feedback; or other changes that the school/service believes will enhance the students’ experience and or achievement.

2. There is a balance to be struck between continuous enhancement through course modification and the need to reconsider and update the whole course through the revalidation process. Course modification should therefore only be used for year-on-year enhancements which do not significantly impact on the overall:

   i. student learning experience;
   ii. course aims;
   iii. intended learning outcomes;
   iv. assessment strategy; and/or
   v. resources needed to deliver the curriculum.

3. Where the proposed changes would result in a significant impact (as indicated by volume or balance), or where continuous change has occurred since the last (re)validation, the course should go through the revalidation process earlier than scheduled. Module Approval and Course Modification Group (UACMG) or the relevant Dean (or equivalent for partner provision) can make this recommendation to the Academic Portfolio Strategy Committee.

4. Changes to validated partner provision and apprenticeship programmes will be processed and approved in line with this policy.
Approval authority

5. The Learning, Teaching and Student Achievement Committee (LTSAC) has delegated authority to the UACMG to approve changes to existing modules and courses, and approve new modules or withdraw modules.

6. The process to approve changes to existing courses and modules is dependent on the category of the change(s) requested. Category 1 and 2 changes are classified as documentary updates and minor modifications (respectively) and can be approved on behalf of the UACMG as detailed below. Where a number of changes have been requested simultaneously the highest category of approval will always apply. An indicative list mapping types of changes to the three categories is provided in annex 1.

7. Changes to course templates, i.e. course specifications and module descriptors, approved by the Head of Quality Management and/or a relevant committee will be actioned appropriately by the Quality Management Department.

8. Category 1: Documentary updates
Changes to module descriptors or course specifications to provide minor clarifications or to correct typographical/grammatical errors. These changes can be agreed by the Senior Quality Officer, or Academic Partnership Officer for validated partner provision, in consultation with the Module or Course Leader (or equivalent). A report will be provided to each meeting of the UACMG summarising how this authority has been exercised.

9. Category 2: Minor modifications
Changes that have no impact on the overall course aims, intended course learning outcomes, objectives, structure and balance of the course, subject benchmarks and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements. Changes should not alter the fundamental character of the course. Proposals for minor changes must be endorsed by the Head of Subject (or equivalent) and can be approved by the Head of Quality Management. A report will be provided to each meeting of the UACMG summarising how this authority has been exercised.

10. Category 3: Major modifications
Extensive changes often across multiple modules where a course’s overall aims, intended learning outcomes, structure and balance may be affected. Changes may include those that more significantly affect the course’s awards, aims and objectives, learning teaching and assessment strategy, overall structure or its management. Changes must not be detrimental to the overall student learning experience. Proposals for category 3 changes must be endorsed by the relevant Director (or equivalent) before submission to the Quality Management Department. The UACMG must report annually to LTSAC on how they have exercised this authority.

11. Modules of non-credit bearing (NCB) provision, such as conventional short courses, are approved by schools, and services permitted to develop courses, by following an approved University process established by the Quality Management Department.

12. Provision delivered for industry sectors which require ISO 9001 certification is approved under that process and is outside the scope of this policy.

Approval of new credit-bearing modules

13. New credit-bearing modules, credit rated between 2-60 credits, at levels 3-7, can be approved by applying this policy.
14. Module descriptors should be prepared in accordance with the University template and an appropriate external examiner should be consulted to ensure the proposed module will be comparable with other modules in term of standards and the quality of student learning experience.

15. Where new modules will form part of an existing course structure, this will be dealt with as a course modification, and would need to also meet the requirements as set out below.

16. The UACMG will use the following criteria in deciding whether to approve a new module:

i. clear and coherent rationale for new module;
ii. documentation correct and consultation process completed; and
iii. appropriate learning outcomes, assessment and contents for credit value and level.

### Approval of module and course changes

17. Module and course modifications can only be proposed as a result of:

i. changes to the requirements of external sector bodies;
ii. Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements;
iii. student feedback;
iv. external examiner feedback; and/or
v. other changes for which the school/service has evidence will enhance the students’ experience and or achievement.

18. The following module and course modifications can be approved by this process:

i. changes to the learning and teaching strategy, learning outcomes or assessment of modules;
ii. changes/additions to the mode of module delivery;
iii. changes to credit weightings of modules;
iv. changes to module level;
v. removing, replacing or adding modules in the course structure, including moving modules between years of study on part-time courses;
vi. changes to course aims and course/level learning outcomes; and
vii. changes to the approved apprenticeship programme.

19. All proposed category 2 and 3 course modifications should be discussed by the relevant course committee, which includes student representatives.

20. Where the proposed change impacts on assessment or the intended learning outcomes, an appropriate external examiner should also be consulted prior to the submission of the proposal to the Quality Management Department.

21. The membership of the UACMG is detailed in the Module Approval and Course Modification Group Terms of Reference available in section 3G of the Academic Handbook.

22. In assessing the change request, feedback received from the external examiner(s), students and the relevant course committee(s) must be taken into account.

23. The following criteria will be used in deciding whether to approve proposed course modifications:
i. The reason for proposing the modification meets one or more of the criteria in paragraph 17;
ii. Documentation correct;
iii. Consultation process completed, confirmation and evidence of consultation with students must be specifically provided;
iv. clear and coherent rationale;
v. maintenance of academic standards;
vi. enhancement of the integrity of the module and/or course(s);
vii. enhancement of the students’ learning experience and/or performance, enabling them to more clearly demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes;
viii. improvement of the overall quality of provision;
ix. improvement in the operational effectiveness of the module and/or course; and
x. volume and impact of changes made and/or proposed to the course since it was approved.

24. The Head of Quality Management or the UACMG may:

i. approve the proposed changes for implementation in the following academic session; or
ii. reject the proposed changes; or
iii. ask for further clarification.

25. Alternatively the UACMG may recommend to the Academic Portfolio Strategy Committee that the course should be revalidated earlier than scheduled.

26. Course documentation/web sites and the student records system must be updated to reflect the approved changes.

Within-session modifications

27. Exceptionally, there may be a need to change a module/course within the academic session it is running. In such circumstances and where appropriate internal and external consultation has been demonstrated and agreement of the students been obtained, the Chair of the UACMG may take Chair’s Action to approve the change. Any such modifications will be reported to the next UACMG meeting.

28. Normally proposals for new standalone modules would be presented to coincide with a full UACMG meeting but occasionally it may be necessary to put forward a new module outside that timeframe. In such circumstances, the Chair of the UACMG may take Chair’s Action to approve the new module where appropriate internal and external consultation has been demonstrated. Any such approvals must be reported to the next UACMG meeting.
Annex 1

Changes and indicative category

UD - Module Descriptor; CS - Course Specification

Category 1 - Documentary Updates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Type</th>
<th>Change Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic/Delivering school/subject</td>
<td>Document changes, depending on whether course or module change (UD and/or CS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrections/clarifications to documents which do not change approved content or intended outcomes</td>
<td>Document changes (UD and/or CS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Module description” section of UD</td>
<td>Document changes (UD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module's areas of study</td>
<td>Document changes (UD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module’s additional assessment information (online submission, grade marking, anonymous marking)</td>
<td>Document changes (UD). (Grade marking exemptions subject to separate scrutiny and approval)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Category 2 - Minor modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Type</th>
<th>Change Impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module title change</td>
<td>System &amp; document changes (UD and CS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to pre/co-requisite details on UD</td>
<td>Document changes (UD).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module learning outcomes</td>
<td>Document changes (UD). Possible impact on assessment and student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Learning and Teaching Strategy</td>
<td>Document changes (UD).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module assessment strategy</td>
<td>Subject to scale and scope- may be treated as major following consideration by the Head of Quality Management. System &amp; document changes (UD and CS). Possible impact on learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module assessment type</td>
<td>Subject to scale and scope- may be treated as major following consideration by the Head of Quality Management. System &amp; document changes (UD and CS). Possible impact on learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module length/duration of assessment</td>
<td>Document changes (UD).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module assessment weighting</td>
<td>System &amp; document changes (UD and CS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module aggregation of assessment</td>
<td>System &amp; document changes (UD and CS). (Separate approval arrangements cover requests to exempt from aggregation, or cessation of exemption.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module re-assessment</td>
<td>Document changes (UD).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course structure changes involving option modules &lt;40 UG / &lt;30 PG credits, including module closure</td>
<td>System &amp; document changes (CS).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Category 3 - Major Modification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Type</th>
<th>Change Impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New module</td>
<td>Likely to require a course structure modification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module credits</td>
<td>System &amp; document changes (UD and CS). May require a course structure modification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module level</td>
<td>System &amp; document changes (UD and CS). Likely to require a course structure mod.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module designation</td>
<td>Document changes (UD). Should only occur where existing module becomes a non-credit bearing module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes/addition to module delivery mode</td>
<td>Document changes (UD and CS). Rationale for new mode- impact on course and student learning experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course learning outcomes</td>
<td>Document changes (CS). Possible impact on student learning &amp; experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course structure changes involving core modules</td>
<td>System &amp; document changes (CS). Possible impact on course learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course structure changes involving option modules &gt;30 UG / 15 PG credits, including module closure</td>
<td>System &amp; document changes (CS). Possible change to balance of course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course aims/intended course learning outcomes</td>
<td>Document changes (CS), but change likely to arise out of other modifications (not likely as a separate occurrence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to apprenticeship programme</td>
<td>Likely to require changes to the apprenticeship structure, e.g. changes to introductory module or end point assessment arrangements. May include system changes.</td>
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</tbody>
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