Curriculum Modification Procedures

2021-22

Index

Committee Approval

Committee	Committee Action	Date
QAEC	Recommended approval	20 January 2021
Academic Committee		24 March 2021
	Date in force	**1 September 2021**

This Curriculum Modification Procedures document will be reviewed annually by our Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. Any amendments require the approval of our Academic Committee.

1.   Introduction

Bloomsbury Institute offers higher education courses accredited by University of Northampton (UoN) for our degrees. This Procedures document applies to our UoN validated provision.

To supplement the UoN's policies and procedures, we have developed our own internal procedures for modification of programmes and modules. The design of these procedures, which are applied prior to those of the UoN, has been informed by the QAA Quality Code[1] and reflects our commitment to assuring appropriate academic standards and student learning opportunities are maintained in pursuit of our vision, mission and values.[2] Our procedures also ensure that due consideration is given to the ongoing need to meet the requirements of the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, the FHEQ, any related Professional/Statutory/Regulatory Body (PSRB) and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements.

These procedures primarily relate to modifications at the module level; however, the policy also covers modifications such as the introduction of a new pathway to an existing programme using either new or existing modules. Additionally, multiple modifications at module level may trigger the Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures.

Any new degree course proposals for validation or amendments to existing validated degrees will need to be submitted to the UoN for approval following the latter's relevant policies and procedures[3] and advertised deadlines[4]. This is so that the UoN can be assured that appropriate academic standards continue to be maintained and that the learning opportunities offered to students remain appropriate following any changes. For that reason, amendments cannot be unilaterally approved by Bloomsbury Institute.

These internal procedures may be amended by the Academic Registrar (with the final approval of the Academic Committee) to ensure our procedures do not conflict with any additional requirements imposed by the University of Northampton.

2.   Stakeholders in the process for change

We are committed to the continuous improvement of the student experience at Bloomsbury Institute and so embedded within our annual monitoring and evaluation processes[5] is the need for reflection and review on the part of our academic community as a whole. Included within that community is our student body, whose involvement in both the design and development of our programmes is considered crucial. This recognition of the key role students have to play is formally embodied within our Corporate and Academic Governance Framework, which states that "Course Committees consider proposals for major and minor modifications to courses, and submitt any modification proposals to the QAEC in accordance with our Curriculum Modification Procedures".   When considering our proposals for significant changes, the UoN will seek to satisfy itself that we have recognised our obligations to our students and, where appropriate, applicants. The UoN will therefore request evidence of consultation with students and, for us, that evidence will take the form of minutes of the relevant Course Committee, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC), and Student Staff Consultative Forum (SSCF). Current students may also be consulted via emails.

Consequently, any proposed changes (seen as the sign of a healthy and developing programme) should be considered and developed formally at the relevant Course Committee prior to submission to

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[1] QAA Quality Code – see UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Course Design and Development

[2] As set out in our Strategic Framework 2021-2024.

[3] See the University of Northampton's Change of Approval Handbook and Appendix A: Change of Approval Risk Table.

[4] Details of deadlines can be obtained from the Quality and Compliance Division.

[5] This might involve recommendations made in MMRs, AMERs, ACERs, feedback from students in Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires (SMEQs) and participation in Student Staff Consultative Forum meetings, and feedback from External Examiners.

our (QAEC) for information, approval or recommended approval by the Academic Committee depending on the significance of the change(s) being proposed.

External stakeholders involved in the process for change (other than the UoN) include External Examiners and any relevant PSRBs, as stated previously. Any PSRB approval should be gained prior to Course Committee meetings, and details of the consultation and approval included in the relevant documentation.

3.   Classification of modifications

Modifications will fall into one of the following classifications and the approval procedures for each will vary according to the scale of change and/or perceived risk.

For Type B or Type C changes, consideration should be given to the timing of the proposed implementation, given the requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). There may be a requirement to submit to the UoN documentation which proves that potentially affected students (which includes applicants holding offers of places) have been appropriately communicated to about the proposed changes.

3.1   Type Zero changes

3.1.1   Corrective changes

There may be cause to make corrective changes to Module and/or Programme Specifications either on an individual basis or across the board. These changes can usually be made without formal internal approval by Course Committees or QAEC, or external approval by the UoN.

Such changes might include the following:

- Factual change, such as change of the module leader

- Typographical errors

3.2   Type A changes: minor changes

Minor Changes (Type A) represent the lowest level of risk to the academic standards. These include minor textual changes within modules and programmes, or minor changes to programmes which do not impact upon the overall outcomes.

Subject to the procedures of UoN, a change will normally be defined as minor where the proposed modification is one which will not affect the overall aims, objectives and structure of the course but which may involve modifications to one or more of the matters identified below.

Type A Examples

- Minor changes to the assessment criteria for an item of assessment, but not to the types of items or weightings

- Minor changes to a module description

- Minor changes to a module's indicative content

- Minor textual changes to the Module Title such as a one-word change: e.g. from 'Quality and Enhancement' to 'Quality and Enhancement Studies'

- Minor textual changes to module-level Learning Outcomes which do not affect the overall outcome of the module

- Minor changes to the Justification of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy for a module (but not changes to the mode of delivery)

- Removal or addition of an existing designated module from/to an Award Map

- Minor textual updating of the programme-level aims and/or Learning Outcomes (but not the addition or deletion of the programme-level aims or Learning Outcomes)

- Minor updating of the learning and teaching methods for a programme (but not changes to the mode of delivery)

Multiple Type A changes, simultaneously or cumulatively, may lead to a more substantial type of change. The Academic Registrar is required to consider the cumulative effect of the incremental changes upon the course where a course has already been subject to minor changes (see below). The tracking of minor changes is carried out by the Quality and Compliance Devision.

3.3   Type B changes: significant changes

Type B changes are more significant changes (than Type A) to programmes and/or modules which can potentially impact upon the overall outcomes. Type B changes cannot be introduced mid-academic year. Their introduction will need to be for the following academic year.

Subject to the procedures of UoN, a change will normally be defined as significant when it involves modifications to one or more of the following aspects of a course:

Type B Examples

- Introduction of a completely new module (compulsory or designated) to an Award Map

- Introduction of a completely new stand-alone module

- Introduction of a completely new zero credit-rated module

- Combining two (or more) modules into one new module

- Splitting one module into two (or more) new modules

- Deletion of a module (i.e. the module will no longer be delivered in any forms or on any programmes)

- Changes to the level or credit value of a module (these changes constitute the introduction of a new module)

- Change to/or addition of a mode of delivery for a module. For example,

  o   From standard delivery to distance learning

  o   Change to the number of weeks over which a module is delivered

- Major changes to the Learning Outcomes of a module which affect the overall outcome

- Significant changes to the Learning Outcomes of a programme

- Substantive changes to Module title e.g. from "Quality and Enhancement" to "The Management of Quality Assurance Processes"

- Changes to the assessment strategy for a module e.g. changes to the type of assessment and/or to the weightings

Multiple Type A or B changes may lead to them being considered as a Type C change. The Academic Registrar is required to consider the cumulative effect of the incremental changes upon the course. The tracking of significant changes is carried out by the Quality and Compliance Division.

3.4   Type C: major changes

Type C changes are major changes (more significant than Type B changes) to existing programmes or modules which impact upon the overall outcomes and/or involve elements of new provision such as a new named pathway involving mainly new modules. Type C changes cannot be introduced mid-academic year. Their introduction will need to be for the following academic year.

Type C Examples

- Multiple Type A or B changes requested either at the same occasion or at various occasions between UoN Periodic Reviews.

- Introduction of a new pathway to an existing programme using either new or existing modules.

- Deletion of existing named pathways from existing programmes.

Any proposed changes which exceed Type C (in terms of extent and risk) will normally be treated as a separate approval event and the process outlined in our Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures will apply.

4.   The Approval Process

4.1   Type Zero changes

If any updates requested as Type Zero Changes are not confined to corrective changes, the Quality and Compliance Division will refer back to the Module Leader and Course Leader with advice about which type the proposed modifications are.

4.1.1   Corrective changes

These changes fall below the minor change threshold for Type A changes and so consultation with students in Course Committees is not required. Similarly, no formal approval process is required, although the following procedures must be followed to ensure proper version control of Module Specifications.

1. Module Leader to request Module Specification from Quality and Compliance Division. Course Leader in the case where the change is at programme level.

2. Module Leader to use track changes to signal changes to be made and send to Course Leader with an accompanying email explaining that the changes are corrective changes.

3. Course Leader approves or rejects.

4. Course Leader forwards approved Module Specification with track changes and accompanying email to Quality and Compliance Division or returns documentation to Module Leader (as appropriate).

5. If the change is at programme level then Course Leader forwards this to the Head of School.

6. Head of School approves or rejects.

7. Head of School or a designated member of team forwards the change to Quality and Compliance Division.

8. Quality and Compliance Division will then update the Modifications Log and, annually, submit a copy of the same and an amended Module Specification to the UoN by way of notification with an email explaining the nature of changes made.

9. Once the new amended Module Specifications are released by UoN, the Quality and Compliance Division will forward copies to the Module Leader, Course Leader and Assessment team.

10. Quality and Compliance Division will report (by means of a log of changes) the above to QAEC at the next appropriate meeting.

4.2   Type A changes: minor changes

QAEC has authority to approve a minor change to an approved course and to determine the date of its introduction upon recommendation by the relevant Course Committee.   QAEC's decision will be reported to the Academic Committee for information.   A log of any such changes will be submitted to the External Examiner for information.

Type A changes will require approval from the Managing Director and Academic Principal in cases in which any additional resources are necessary to implement the proposed changes.

Type A changes will not normally be introduced after the start of the year, stage or module concerned.

Proposals for Type A changes should be recorded using the Bloomsbury Institute Curriculum Modification Form. See **Appendix 1.**

The following procedures are to be followed:

1. Module level changes are generally initiated by the Module Leader.

2. Programme level changes are generally initiated by the Course Leader.

3. Module Leader to request Module Specification and Bloomsbury Institute Curriculum Modification Form from Quality and Compliance Division. This will be the Course Leader for Progamme level changes.

4. Module Leader to use track changes to signal changes to be made, and send along with completed Curriculum Modification Form to the Course Leader. The Course Leader will consider the impact of a proposed change to one module on other modules forming part of the course. If the module is taught as a part of other courses, then the Course Leader will consult with the other relevant Course Leaders.

5. Course Leader approves/rejects and (regardless of decision) discusses at Course Committee meeting.

6. If at a Programme level, then this is forwarded to the Head of School or designated member of staff by the Course Leader.

7. Course Leader forwards the Module Specification with track changes and Bloomsbury Institute Curriculum Modification Form to Quality and Compliance Division /returns documentation submitted to Module Leader (as appropriate).

8. Quality and Compliance Division submits Module Specification with track changes, Bloomsbury Institute Curriculum Modification Form to the QAEC for approval.

9. If approved, the Quality and Compliance Division saves Bloomsbury Institute Curriculum Modification Form, and a copy of the Module Specification both with track changes and post track changes, and updates Modification Log with headline information recorded for tracking purposes. This log is shared with relevant committees for information.

The Quality and Compliance Division forwards the relevant documentation to the UoN for approval, outlining what the changes are, when they need to be implemented and which cohorts of students they will affect. UoN's Curriculum Records Team Leader (or relevant nominee) has the authority to sign-off the change. Once changes have been signed off, the UoN Curriculum Records Team will amend the Programme Specification, Award Map and Module Specification accordingly. The Curriculum Records Team will then notify our Quality and Compliance Division of the changes made.

The Quality and Compliance Division will notify the Module Leader and Course Leader when approval has been given and release the newly approved Module Specification to the Module Leader for the Module Leader to upload to Canvas and communicate to students through completion of the relevant section of their Module Study Guide and input to the Course Handbook. The Quality and Compliance Division will also report the change(s) to the Assessment team, Head of Communications, QAEC and Academic Committee for information.

4.3   Type B changes: significant changes

All changes classified as Type B changes require that our internal procedure is followed, this means the formal approval by Academic Committee following a recommendation for approval by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, which receives the recommendation of approval by the relevant Course Committee before they can be introduced. The Academic Principal and Managing Director will be expected to provide QAEC with formal approval of any additional resources which are necessary to implement any proposed modifications.

The internal procedure will include appropriate consultation with students already enrolled on the course. See Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures[6].

Type B changes should be introduced from the start of the academic year following approval and may not be introduced partway through an academic year or stage. Please see Appendix 2 for internal and external deadlines.

Proposals for the introduction of Type B changes should be recorded using the Bloomsbury Institute Curriculum Modification Form provided at Appendix 1 and must include a rationale for these changes.

The following procedures are to be followed:

In addition to the process for Type A changes above, the following documentation and evidence will be required:

1. Programme Specification(s) with track changes

2. Module Specification(s) with track changes

3. Revised Award Map(s) with track changes

4. Delivery Map(s)

5. Any evidence of and outcomes from consultation exercises with students (including applicants holding places for Bloomsbury Institute), employers and other relevant stakeholders.

6. Any evidence of consultation with PSRB.

7. Any evidence of consultation with the External Examiner.

8. Evidence of how affected students and applicants holding places for Bloomsbury Institute have been informed about the proposed changes (if the deadlines stated above have been adhered to) or evidence of approval of the proposed changes by the affected students and applicants holding places for Bloomsbury Institute (where the above deadlines have not been adhered to).

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[6] www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

9. UoN Change of Approval Proposal Form (CoAP1) with the approval of the Head of School and External Examiner. The External Examiner will be encouraged to comment fully on the proposed changes, particularly in relation to meeting the requirements of QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, any PSRBs involved as well as the overall coherence of the programme.

10. UoN CoAP4 (Student Communication Form).

The UoN will either approve the Type B change unconditionally or request further enhancements/amendments to be made, or request that the Type B change be classified as Type C change and process accordingly.

4.4   Type C changes: major changes

Where proposed changes affect more than 40% of the overall credit value of the programme they will be treated as separate events (i.e. processed via the standard validation process). A log is maintained by Quality and Compliance Division to track changes as substantial changes to a smaller number of credits can also lead to the need to use the Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Procedures if deemed necessary by the Academic Registrar.

We are not going to allow Type C changes at this stage.

5.   Changes to Module Specifications Timings

Proposals for modifications must be made well in advance of the academic year in which they are intended to be implemented, with due regard for the information requirements (as specified by the CMA) of applicants holding offers of places and/or current students who will be affected by the changes. Changes to modules must be approved before publication of details of the same.

Given the possibility of UoN classifying a change at a higher level of significance or risk than us, it is crucial that any proposals are submitted as early as possible.

A summary of deadlines (including both those of Bloomsbury Institute and the University of Northampton) for submission of proposals can be found in Appendix 2.

6.   Related regulations, policies and procedures

- Course Approval, Withdrawal and Suspension Policy

- Corporate and Academic Governance Framework

7.   Review of Curriculum Modification Procedures

This Curriculum Modification Procedures document will be reviewed annually by our Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. Any amendments require the approval of our Academic Committee.

Appendix 1: Curriculum Modification Form

This form should be used for Types A, B and C changes. The form does not need to be completed for Type Zero changes.

Part 1: Module/Course details

<mark>[To be completed for all Types of change]</mark>

1.1	Module name	
1.2	Module name	
1.3	Course name	
1.4	Name of person completing the form	

Part 2: Modification Proposal and Rationale

<mark>[To be completed for all Types of change]</mark>

2.1	Outline of the proposed change			
2.2	Rationale for the proposed change			
2.3	Suggested Type of Change	A	B	C
2.4	Proposed date for the introduction of the change			

Part 3: Internal Consultation
<mark>[To be completed for all Types of change]</mark>

3.1	Student Focus Group	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

3.2	Course Committee	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

3.3	QAEC	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

Part 4: External Consultation

4.1	PSRB	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

4.2	External Examiner	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

4.3	Employers	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

4.4	Course Applicants	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

4.5	Awarding Body	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

Part 5: Approval

5.1	Course Committee	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

5.2	QAEC	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

5.3	Academic Committee	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

5.4	Managing Director [If resource implications]	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

5.5	Awarding Body	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**	**Date:**
	Comments				

Part 6: Resources

6.1	Provide details of the capacity of the subject area(s) to support the revised course. These should include an assessment of the 'critical mass' (staffing resources, experience, expertise etc) and relevant research and scholarly activity within the discipline area.

6.2	Provide a brief evaluation of the Bloomsbury Institute's <u>current</u> capacity (in terms of non-staff resources - e.g. accommodation, library, IT etc.) to deliver the revised course. This should include an indication of any issues that should be addressed by the Academic Committee and/or the Awarding Body.

Part 7: Impact of the proposed change

7.1		Will the proposed changes alter the approved academic award or credit structure of the course?
	Yes	
	No	
	Comments	

7.2		Will the proposed changes alter the approved academic award or credit structure of the course?
	Yes	
	No	
	Comments	

7.3	Provide details of the planned change(s) to the award title and/or credit structure. Ensure that you compare the current credit structure with the proposed credit structure and how the proposed structure continues to meet the requirements of the Awarding Body in order to make an award upon each exit stage of the course.

7.4	Specify whether the proposals require Professional Body Recognition and, if so, the name of the relevant Professional Body.

7.5		Are there any professional or statutory body requirements to which the proposal will be subject?
	Yes	
	No	
	If yes	Are there any anticipated changes to these requirements and how will they be addressed by the proposed modification?

7.6		Are there any features of the proposal that may have implications for student access and/or consequences for students with additional needs?

	Yes	
	No	
	If yes	What are these implications, and how will they be addressed?

7.7		Will there be any impact on a student's learning experience? e.g. timetables
	Yes	
	No	
	Comments	

7.8		Will there be any impact on student's assessment e.g. rights of progression, assessment method of resits.
	Yes	
	No	
	Comments	

7.9	Which cohort(s) are affected and how?

Part 8: Only to be completed for Type B and C changes

8.1	Give brief details of the composition (including names) of the development team, including an indication of the experience that members will bring to the development of the proposal.

8.2	Demonstrate the consistency of the proposed changes with Bloomsbury Institute's vision, mission and values and Strategic Framework

8.3	Market research
	a) Will the proposed changes result in 'competition' with markets currently served by other provision within Bloomsbury Institute or by the awarding body?
	b) What is the proposer's assessment of the current market for the course?
	c) Are there any anticipated developments within the market that could affect the competitive position and financial viability of the course?
	d) How do the proposed modifications address these developments?

8.4	Will the proposed changes entail new 'flexible learning' arrangements? In responding to this question, you should recognise that the term 'flexibility' encompasses: (i) the recognition of prior learning (RPL); (ii) curriculum design (student negotiated programmes of study); (iii) modes of delivery (distance, blended and eLearning); and (iv) accelerated programmes.
	Yes	
	No	

	If yes	Provide details of the new flexible learning arrangements.
		To what extent does the delivery team possess the capacity and experience to develop and deliver these arrangements?

8.5	Is there similar or related provision within Bloomsbury Institute?	
	Yes	
	No	
	If yes	Specify both the courses and their relationship with the proposal. (This might include the replacement of extant provision by the proposal, module sharing, progression and articulation relationships etc.). How (if at all) will the proposed changes affect the related provision?

8.6	Drawing upon annual monitoring, External Examiner Reports, student evaluations and other evidence, briefly identify any issues (positive or negative) that have emerged in the subject area(s) that is (are) developing the proposal and which might have a bearing on the proposed changes. Indicate any remedial action that has been taken.

Appendix 2: 2022-23 Curriculum Modification Form Dates

The dates outlined in table below apply for implementation in AY 2022-23.

	Internal Deadline	External Deadline
Corrective Changes – Type Zero		
Minor Changes – Type A		
Significant Changes – Type B		
Significant Changes – Type C	N/A	N/A