Centre for Quality Support and Development

University of **Reading**

PROGRAMME LIFECYCLE POLICIES

Policy and guidelines covering the Approval of New Programmes, Amendments to Programmes, and Withdrawal and Suspension of Programmes

Contents

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME LIFECYCLE POLICIES

Introduction

1. This suite of policies and procedures govern the *Approval of New Programmes*, *Programme Amendments* and the *Withdrawal and Suspension of Programmes*. They apply to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, including taught doctoral programmes.

2. The policies and procedures seek to ensure that programmes:

   - are introduced (and remain as part of the portfolio) only where there is a viable market or where there is a compelling strategic rationale
   - are well-designed, in accordance with the Curriculum Framework and the *Guidelines on the design of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes*, to provide a high-quality academic experience, ensure their achievement is reliably assessed, and enable successful outcomes for all students
   - are developed in partnership with students and with engagement from other relevant stakeholders
   - meet national and sector-recognised academic standards.

3. The policies and procedures have been informed by the *Quality Code Advice and Guidance on Course Design and Development (https://www.qaa.ac.uk//en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/course-design-and-development#).*

4. For further guidance, Schools should contact the relevant Senior Quality Support Officer (Programmes) or Teaching and Learning Officer (in the case of HBS programmes)[1]. Contact should be made at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure that the proposals are fully supported and guided through the appropriate route.

5. Where a proposal involves partnership activities with an external institution, Schools should contact the relevant Senior Quality Support Officer (Partnerships) (within CQSD) for guidance on the policy and the Senior Global Partnerships Manager (within the Global Partnerships Office) for support on the development of the partnership proposal..

Approval routes

6. Approval routes and processes for the introduction, amendment and withdrawal of programmes are specified in the following policies:

   i. *Approval of New Programmes*: New programmes which add to, or alter, the University's portfolio of credit-bearing programmes

   ii. *Programme Amendments*

      a. Major amendments to existing programmes impacting the programme specifications and/or the programme's learning outcomes.

      b. Minor amendments which do not impact the programme specifications and/or the programme's learning outcomes.

   iii. Programme withdrawals and suspensions

7. There are two levels of approval and associated processes:

   - University-level approval (granted via the University Programmes Board)
   - School-level approval (granted via the School Management Board on the basis of a proposal from the relevant Board of Study and Student Experience).

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[1] References to Senior Quality Support Officer (Programmes) shall, in the case of HBS programmes, be read as the Teaching and Learning Officer, HBS

In order to ensure that proposals are given appropriate and proportionate consideration, the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean, supported by a Senior Quality Support Officer (Programmes), will determine which type of approval process is required in each instance. Schools should discuss proposals with the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean at their earliest opportunity. Schools must liaise directly with branch campuses on all new programme proposals or amendments which may impact their delivery, and must do so before proceeding to University approval.

8. The following table should be used as a guide to indicate which level of approval is *normally* required for any given type of proposal (and the associated form which should be completed as part of the approval process):

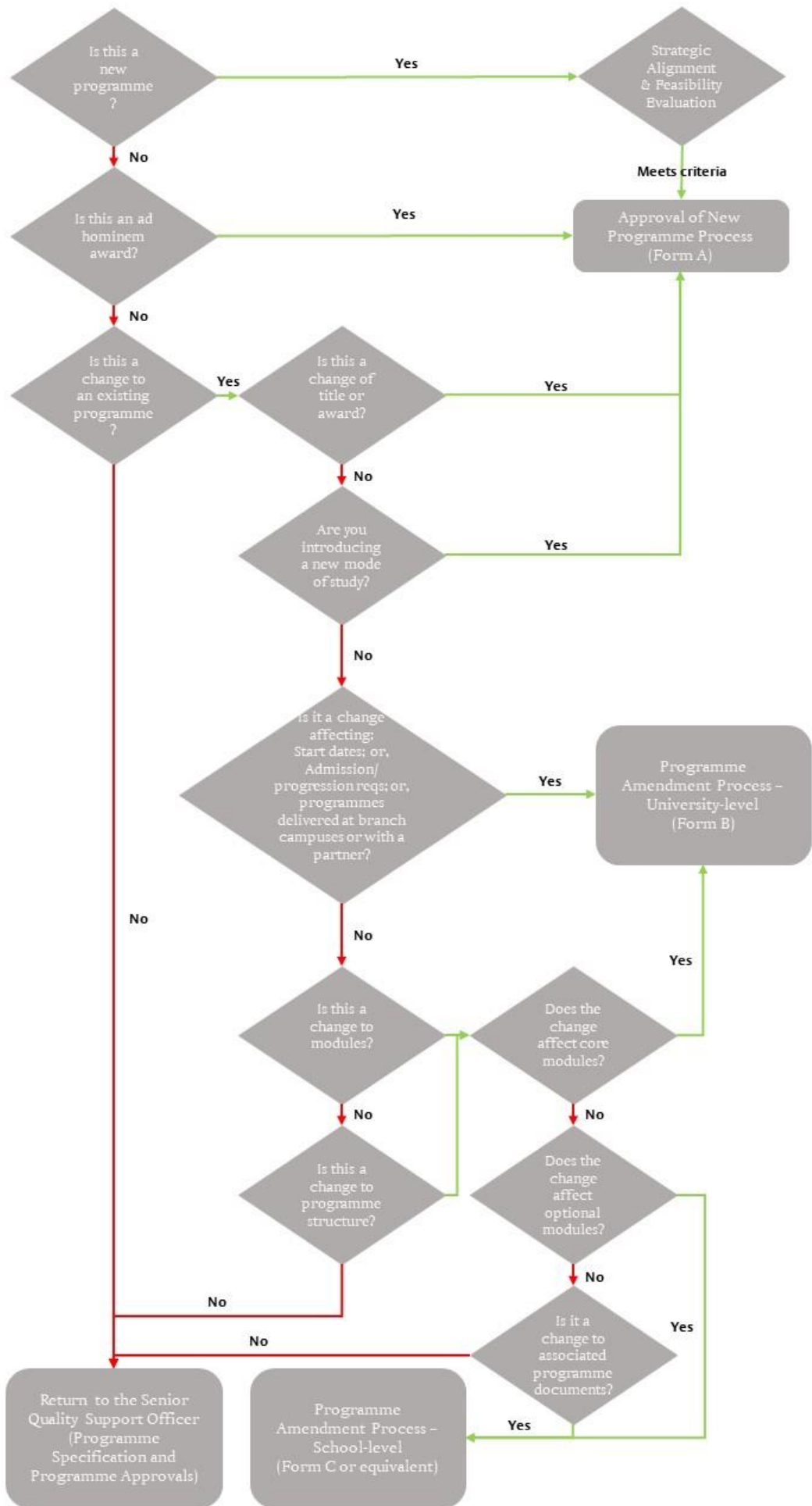*Note: Strategic Alignment and Feasibility Evaluation (SAFE) is detailed in paragraph 20 below (stage 2).*

Type of proposal	Level of approval	Relevant form
i. New programmes which add to, or alter, the University's portfolio of programmes		
A new programme	University	SAFE and Form A
Introduction of a new mode for an existing programme (e.g. full-time to part-time, or campus-based to distance-learning, or vice versa)	University	SAFE and Form A
Introduction of programmes delivered at a branch campus or with a partner (excluding progression arrangements)	University	SAFE and Form A
Apprenticeships[2]	University	SAFE and Form A
A change to the title of an existing programme	University	A
A change to the award of an existing programme (eg from MA to MRes)	University	A
Introduction of an exit award to an existing programme	University	A
ii. a. Major Amendments: amendments impacting the programme specifications and/or the programme's learning outcomes, and some variant versions (as specified) of existing programmes		
Introduction of a new Study Abroad version of an existing programme	University	A
Introduction of a new Placement version of an existing programme	University	A
Ad hominem degrees	University	A
Changes to compulsory modules	University	B
Amendments to the module structure of the programme which impacts on the programme specification	University	B
Changes to progression requirements	University	B
Changes to IELTS requirements	University	B
Removal of a module that is a compulsory module in another School	University	B
Changes affecting programmes delivered at branch campuses or in conjunction with a partner	University	B
Changes to programme intake dates (or the introduction of new intake dates)	University	B
Inclusion of a compulsory module which is delivered by another	University	B

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[2] See Appendix 2 for further details on the processes governing approvals of Degree Apprenticeship programmes and clients/delivery partners

School		
ii. b. Minor Amendments: amendments to optional modules and associated documentation		
Changes to the Further Programme Information (in consultation with CQSD/School Office HBS)	School	C*
Changes to existing module descriptions (except for minor textual amendments)	School	C*
iii. Programme withdrawals and suspensions		
Withdrawal of a programme from a School's portfolio	University	D
One-year suspension (temporary withdrawal) of a programme	University	D

* Schools are advised to send updated module description forms via their Department Director of Teaching and Learning to the Module Description Publishing Team within CQSD.

9. The flow-chart below should help staff to identify the expected approval route for new programmes and amendments to existing programmes subject to the decision of the TLD, and direct them to the associated guidelines:

Flowchart:

- **Is this a new programme?**
  - Yes → **Strategic Alignment & Feasibility Evaluation** — Meets criteria → **Approval of New Programme Process (Form A)**
  - No ↓
- **Is this an ad hominem award?**
  - Yes → **Approval of New Programme Process (Form A)**
  - No ↓
- **Is this a change to an existing programme?**
  - Yes → **Is this a change of title or award?**
    - Yes → **Approval of New Programme Process (Form A)**
    - No ↓
    - **Are you introducing a new mode of study?**
      - Yes → **Approval of New Programme Process (Form A)**
      - No ↓
      - **Is it a change affecting: Start dates; or, Admission/progression reqs; or, programmes delivered at branch campuses or with a partner?**
        - Yes → **Programme Amendment Process – University-level (Form B)**
        - No ↓
        - **Is this a change to modules?**
          - Yes → **Does the change affect core modules?**
            - Yes → **Programme Amendment Process – University-level (Form B)**
            - No → **Does the change affect optional modules?**
              - Yes → **Programme Amendment Process – School-level (Form C or equivalent)**
              - No → **Is it a change to associated programme documents?**
                - Yes → **Programme Amendment Process – School-level (Form C or equivalent)**
                - No → **Return to the Senior Quality Support Officer (Programme Specification and Programme Approvals)**
          - No → **Is this a change to programme structure?**
            - Yes → (to Does the change affect core modules?)
            - No → **Return to the Senior Quality Support Officer (Programme Specification and Programme Approvals)**
  - No → **Return to the Senior Quality Support Officer (Programme Specification and Programme Approvals)**

APPROVAL OF A NEW PROGRAMME

Introduction to approval process for a new programme

10.   The University seeks to maintain a portfolio of programmes which is relevant to the market, provides excellent educational opportunities, and can be managed efficiently.

11.   Schools are required to keep their portfolio of programmes under review, to be alert to opportunities for the development of new programmes, and to withdraw programmes which recruit poorly and/or deliver poor outcomes. In this context, Schools should note shifts in the market and employability opportunities for future graduates, have regard to quality indicators, and listen to feedback from applicants, employers, colleagues and University committees.

12.   To ensure the quality and consistency of its provision, all new programmes (and major changes) need to be approved by the University Programme Board (or, on occasion, the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean, acting on delegated authority).

13.   The *Approval of a New Programme* process aims to:

- ensure that the proposed programme meets the University's requirements for quality and standards (which have reference to the regulatory requirements set by the Office for Students) and any other professional and statutory bodies;
- ensure that the proposed programme is consistent with the University Strategy, the teaching and learning priorities and global engagement priorities which sit under the Strategy, the School's five-year operating plan under the Sustainable Planning System, and priorities identified in its STEAP;
- ensure that the programme contributes to the University's strategy and targets for access and successful outcomes for all students;
- ensure that the programme has embedded appropriate development of employability and careers skills, and work-based learning components, and that the proposal has fully considered the employability of the programme's graduates;
- ensure the financial viability of the proposed programme (or exceptionally, in cases where a programme is not in itself financially viable, that there is a compelling rationale for the programme in relation to the University's strategic objectives), and to consider the wider impact on University resources;
- take account of market considerations including the level of student demand, competitors in the marketplace, demand from employers for graduates;
- consider the 'fit' of the programme within the School's and University's portfolio of programmes[3];
- consider the aims and objectives of the programme and how these are to be achieved;
- give opportunities for the opinions of the student body to be heard (e.g. through membership of various boards which will consider the proposal);
- ask fundamental questions about the academic rationale and structure of the proposed programme

14.   This document is intended to guide proposers of new programmes to the simplest and quickest way of ensuring that the proposal is fully considered and for confirming that it conforms to the University's standards. The amount of detail required and the degree of scrutiny it will receive depends on the complexity and risk profile of the proposal, and will be determined by the TLD and Senior Quality Support Officer (Programmes).

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[3] Including possible impacts on the market for courses in other Schools.

Notes on teaching partnerships and apprenticeships

15. The University wishes to support proposers seeking to develop programmes involving delivery with other institutions within the UK and internationally, which are purposeful, strategic and aligned with the University's strategies. It is the responsibility of the University to ensure the academic standards and quality of learning delivered for all awards granted in its name, including programmes delivered with a partner. Further information on the requirements for the approval of a partnership programme can be found in Appendix 1 and in Section 11 of the Guide to Polices and Processes for Teaching and Learning.

16. The University is committed to developing good working relationships with local and national businesses and organisations in order to provide high quality apprenticeship programmes in a suitable setting. Proposals for new apprenticeship programmes will normally be driven by Schools where the opportunity arises.

17. The introduction of a new Apprenticeship Programme should follow the normal guidelines for Programme Approval, as set out below. Additional steps for the approval of Degree Apprenticeships and working with apprenticeship employers are required and further information can be found in Appendix 2.

Approval stages for new programmes

18. The stages for the University-level development and approval of new programmes are summarised in the table at (19). As noted above, variations to this process will apply for programmes which involve delivery with a partner (see Appendix 1) and for apprenticeships (Appendix 2). In the case of:

    - A change to the title of an existing programme
    - A change to the award of an existing programme (eg from MA to MRes)
    - Introduction of an exit award to an existing programme

    a more limited set of requirements apply; please contact the SQSO for advice.

19. Approval stages and associated activities:

Stage	Characteristics/activities
1. Idea development	• Discussion of initiative within School and with MCE. • In considering the possible development of a new programme, the School must consider the strategic rationale for the programme and its alignment with institutional priorities. In order to inform this judgement, the School must ask MCE to produce a market analysis of the proposed programme. • If the SDTL and HoS believe that the new programme has a strategic rationale, aligns with institutional priorities, and has a viable market, they should consult the TLD who will offer a view on the idea and advise whether other Schools need to be consulted at this stage.
2. Strategic alignment and feasibility evaluation	• If, in the light of the various considerations and advice, the SDTL and HoS wish to proceed, they should submit a strategic alignment and feasibility case template, together with a market analysis by the School Marketing Business Partner, to the relevant SQSO. • The Chairs of UPB will consult the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Education and Student Experience) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic

		Planning and Resource), as appropriate, in advance of the UPB meeting. (The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International), as a member of UPB, is able to offer his views at the meeting.)
		• In its Strategic Alignment and Feasibility Evaluation (SAFE) of the case, UPB will decide whether the proposal should proceed to full development, and, if so, on the level of scrutiny required for the programme proposal.
		• In SAFE, UPB will make a holistic judgement taking account of relevant evidence. However, unless there are supervening strategic reasons, it is unlikely that proposals for programmes with projected annual entries (on the basis of market analysis) fewer than 10 (which applies equally to UG and PGT) would be permitted to progress to full development.
3.	Development	• If UPB gives initial approval for the development of the programme: 　o The SQSO (Programmes) will work with the School to outline the scrutiny process and approximate timeframes. 　o The School **must** contact the Academic Development and Enhancement team for input into programme development.
4.	**Consultation and Documentation**	i) The proposal team will need to complete documentation as requested by the TLD, including, but not limited to; - Form A with central service reports - Programme specification - Programme Learning Outcomes template - New module description forms - Business case - Any additional documentation as requested by either the TLD or UPB ii) Central service reports will need to be completed by the following stakeholders; • Other contributory Schools • Careers Centre • Admissions • Finance • The University Library • IT • Teaching and Learning Operations • Technology Enhanced Learning team in CQSD • Accommodation Contract Management Office in the case of high recruiting programmes • Relevant Accreditation bodies • Relevant External bodies, including placement partners • Relevant External Examiner iii) In addition, evidence of input from the following is required for international activities: • Global Engagement Strategy Board • Legal Services • Quality Assurance and Policy Team within CQSD • The Global Partnerships Office (ISLI)
5.	**Submission and**	• Once all documentation has been compiled, the BoSSE will

Scrutiny		consider and, if appropriate approve the proposal for scrutiny. The documentation is submitted to the SQSO (Programmes). The TLD acting with the authority of UPB, will appoint a Scrutiny Panel (and commission a site visit to the partner, where applicable). The Scrutiny Panel is responsible for considering the academic case for the proposal. The Scrutiny Panel will have sight of the reports generated from the Business Case consultation (and any relevant site visits/partnership reports) as well as the documentation outlined above
		• The constitution of, and process for, Scrutiny Panels is set out in appendix 3 below.
		• The Scrutiny panel may ask the Programme Lead or the SDTL for clarification on any matters or to provide further information.
		• Once the Scrutiny panel has submitted their responses, a full report will be returned to the School with recommendations and comments on the proposal.
		• The School will be required to respond to all comments and recommendations, revise the programme specification as appropriate, and report to the BoSSE. The School's response will be included in the final documentation to be submitted to the University Programmes Board.
6. **Approval and Post-Approval**		• The SQSO will collate all documentation for submission to the University Programmes Board for final approval.
		• Should the programme be approved by UPB, the SQSO will work with stakeholders across the University regarding the set-up of the programme and the publication of the new programme specification.
		• Where the programme has been approved by UPB, UBTLSE will note its approval of the programme to the Senate.

20. Schools, in consultation with CQSD, should set out an indicative timeframe for each stage of the process, taking into consideration the timing of groups and Committees that will scrutinise the proposal, the resources available across the University and within the School, as well as the time needed to market the programme.

21. Marketing of the programme (online and in printed materials) cannot begin until UPB has formally approved the programme[4].

22. Schools must consult their relevant Marketing Business Partner to ensure that sufficient time is available to market the programme (e.g. that prospectus and/or Open Day deadlines can be met). The hard copy prospectus continues to play an important role in the marketing of new programmes; however, Schools may decide to propose a programme start date which falls outside the prospectus timeline. Schools should understand that this may limit the opportunities to market and promote the programme and therefore creates additional risk.

23. The School will be responsible for implementing and operating the programme according to guidelines prescribed under the *Guide to Policies and Procedures in Teaching and Learning*.

24. A copy of the final documentation and the report of the Scrutiny Panel should be kept by the School for audit and accreditation purposes.

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[4] Formal marketing of the programme will not normally commence until the course records have been created on RISIS.

AMENDMENTS TO PROGRAMMES

Introduction to the Programme Amendments process

25.   In order to ensure that programmes provide an up-to-date, relevant and engaging curriculum and educational experience, Schools will, from time to time, wish to amend their programmes.

26.   There are three levels of amendments:

      a.   those that, in effect, result in a new programme (and are therefore covered by the *Approval of a New Programme* process);

      b.   those that constitute a **major** amendment to a programme, by virtue of their impact on the programme specifications and/or the programme's learning outcomes; and,

      c.   those that constitute a **minor** amendment to a programme, through changes to optional modules and/or the documentation associated with the programme.

27.   Examples of major and minor amendments are outlined in the table at section 9.

28.   Major amendments require approval at a University-level (via UPB) whilst minor amendments require approval at the School-level (via the SDTL)

29.   The TLD will determine the approval route for the proposed amendment, taking account of the advice of the Senior Quality Support Officer (Programmes)[5].

30.   In the case of **major** amendments, the SDTL will approve the submission of documentation, via the TLD and SQSO. The TLD will approve the submission of all relevant documents, including a **Form B** to UPB for approval.

31.   Where Schools wish to make an amendment to a Programme Specification to take effect for an existing cohort of applicants or students, the reasons for this should be made clear as part of the amendment application. Amendments to programmes which apply to an existing cohort will only be approved exceptionally.

Major Amendments Requiring University-level Approval

Stage	Characteristics/activities
Determination of approval route	• School discusses with SQSO (Programmes) on the appropriate approval route for the proposed amendment. • SQSO advises TLD, who decides on the route.
Completion of Form B and provision of further information	• If University-level approval (and provided the amendment is not deemed to require consideration under *Approval of a New Programme*) is required, the Programme Director completes Form B: *Programme Amendment Form*. Programme Directors are guided in the form regarding which sections to complete. Comments from External Examiners and (if any) Partner Institutions as to whether the initiative provides for a coherent and worthwhile programme change must be included. • Where a proposer wishes to create a new module as part of a major amendment, a draft Module Description Form must be

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[5] References to Senior Quality Support Officer (Programmes) shall, in the case of HBS programmes, be read as the Teaching and Learning Officer, HBS

	prepared.
	• Programme Directors submit the form to the BOSSE for their recommendation (which may act through Chair's action) and then to the relevant SQSO
	• For major amendments the SDTL and the Senior Quality Support Officer (Programmes) should consult with the appropriate Marketing Business Partner, as required. Any change affecting programmes delivered at UoRM will need to be checked against the Malaysian Qualification Agency's (MQA) Programme Change Analyser[6], and made in consultation with staff at UoRM.
Consideration by TLDs	• The proposal will be considered by the TLD, in consultation with the School Director of Teaching and Learning. Such consideration must be informed by the views of relevant External Examiners and Partner Institutions (if any). The TLD will offer their view of the proposal.
Approval	• Formal responsibility for considering and approving Major amendments sits with UPB.
	• Consideration will have regard to the nature of the changes proposed, the date when the changes will be effective, and the cohort(s) to which the changes will apply.
	• Decisions on complex cases (e.g. if another School is involved, and changes impacting on activities at branch campuses, including UoRM) will always be made at UPB.
	• In many cases, however, the TLD may approve the proposal, on the delegated authority of UPB. Proposals where the Programme Specification has not been issued with a contractual status may be approved by TLDs, under delegated authority of the Board, if the TLD is satisfied that Marketing and Admissions have been consulted to check the possible impact of the changes (e.g. where no offers have been made for the programme for that specific cohort).
Post-approval	• Decisions made under delegated authority will be reported at the meeting of UPB.
	• Following the meeting of UPB, the Secretary of UPB shall inform stakeholders across the University of the outcomes of any proposals
	• UPB will report to UBTLSE the outcome of any proposals for changes to programmes approved at University-level.
	• UBTLSE will report to the Senate the outcome of any proposals for changes to programmes approved at University-level.
	• The School will be responsible for implementing and operating the programme according to guidelines prescribed under the *Guide to Policies and Procedures in Teaching and Learning*.

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[6] Contact the Secretary of UPB at rosemary.brown@reading.ac.uk and a.j.a.carlton@reading.ac.uk

32.

Minor Amendments Requiring School-level Approval

Stage	Characteristics/activities
Determination of approval route	• School consults SQSO (Programmes) on the appropriate approval route for the proposed amendment. • SQSO advises TLD, who decides on the route.
Preparation and submission of proposal	• Where it has been determined that the programme initiative requires School-level approval only, the Programme Director may choose to complete Form C: *School-level only Approval Form*. Programme Directors are guided in the Form regarding which sections to complete. The School may decide to record changes via an alternative means, but must ensure that all relevant data is recorded. • Where a proposer wishes to create a new credit-bearing module as part of a minor amendment, a draft Module Description Form must be prepared. • Where the proposal affects other Schools, the agreement and signature of relevant School Director(s) of Teaching and Learning should be obtained (if the proposal is for the withdrawal of a compulsory module affecting another School then University-level approval must be sought via the major amendments process). • The proposal and (if relevant) the MDF is submitted to the Board of Studies and Student Experience (BOSSE) (for the relevant subject area/level of award) for approval.
Approval	• The proposal will be considered by the appropriate BOSSE, which will submit a recommendation to the SDTL. • The SDTL, on behalf of the SMB, will consider and, if appropriate, approve the proposal. • The SDTL should record the nature of the changes approved, the date when the changes will be effective and the cohort(s) to which the changes will apply. These records may be requested by UPB.

WITHDRAWAL AND SUSPENSION OF PROGRAMMES

Scope of guidelines

33.   These guidelines indicate the procedures to be followed and the level of approval required where Schools wish to withdraw permanently, or suspend temporarily, programmes from their portfolio.

34.   Schools should review their portfolio regularly and consider withdrawing programmes where there is good reason. This may be in a response to reduced demand for a programme, changing resource availability, or changing School or University priorities.

35.   The date of withdrawal of any programme from the University's portfolio of programmes will be determined by the University Programmes Board in consultation with the School.

36.   Programmes which are suspended are, unless otherwise determined, deemed to be closed for entry for a 12 month period commencing from a date to be determined by the University Programmes Board in consultation with the School. Suspensions of over 12 months will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

37.   Progression arrangements where partnership students join an existing UoR programme with advanced standing should also follow this process, even where the UoR programme will continue to be offered.

Process

Stage	Characteristics/activities
Initiation of proposed withdrawal	- A proposal to withdraw or suspend a programme will normally originate from the Programme Director, BOSSE, School Director for Teaching and Learning (SDTL) or Head of School. - Recommendations that a School should consider withdrawing or suspending programmes may also be made by UPB as part of its regular monitoring of the University's programme portfolio. Recommendations might also arise in the course of STEAP and the Sustainable Planning process. - Proposals to withdraw or suspend programmes should initially be discussed with the Programme Director, SDTL and the Teaching and Learning Dean (TLD) noting that any teaching out of programmes which are to be withdrawn must ensure the maintenance of academic standards of the programme/s and the quality of the student experience.
Consultation	- The SDTL should advise the proposer to consult with appropriate key stakeholders in order to form a consistent and compelling rationale for the proposal. This might include: - current external examiners or accreditation bodies; - other contributing (or affected) Schools and Departments; - Marketing, Communication and Engagement; - Admissions; - the Global Partnerships Office and the Senior Quality Support Officer (Partnerships).

	• Evidence of consultation with RUSU or students will be required in some cases, especially in the event of large-scale closures.

Preparation and submission of proposal	• The proposer should seek the approval of the relevant SDTL, on behalf of the BoSSE, to proceed with the proposal.
	
	 • The completed form and supporting documentation should provide:
	   o A rationale for the withdrawal or suspension of the programme;
	   o a detailed account of the expected provision for students currently enrolled on the programme (for those programmes where delivery extends over more than 12 months, or which have suspended students on the programme);
	   o evidence of recent recruitment performance and market demand; and, evidence of how existing applicants and/or offer holders will be supported (if the programme is being withdrawn or suspended mid-recruitment cycle).
	
	 • Please see the section on Timings, below, for further guidance on withdrawals of programmes.
	
	 • The completed form, together with any supporting documentation, should be submitted to the SQSO (Programmes) responsible for the School.
	
	 • The TLD will provide a comment on the form and will submit the Form D, together with supporting documentation, to UPB for consideration and approval.

Approval	• UPB is responsible for approving withdrawal of programmes.
Post-approval	• Stakeholders will be informed of the decision of UPB, normally within two weeks of the decision being made. • UPB will report to UBTLSE decisions on the withdrawal of programmes • UBTLSE will report to the Senate decisions on the withdrawal of programmes • The School will be responsible for implementing any teach-out or other arrangements.

Timings

38. Requests to withdraw or suspend a programme must consider the impact on the recruitment cycle. It should be noted that where the delivery of a programme has been suspended the marketing and applications for the next intake will automatically continue in the normal way, unless UPB determine otherwise. Marketing may be suspended and there is an expectation that the programme team will provide a follow-up case for a further

suspension (in exceptional cases) or formal withdrawal of the programme.

39. The formal approval of the withdrawal or suspension of undergraduate programmes should normally be granted before the deadline for the prospectus and no later than the Open Days for the affected incoming cohort.

40. This would normally imply a minimum of 18 months prior to the programme start date for undergraduate programmes. The formal approval of the withdrawal or suspension of postgraduate programme should normally be granted no less than 12 months ahead of the proposed withdrawal date. It should be noted that there may be good reason to withdraw a programme within a shorter timeframe, especially where recruitment is poor, few or no offers have been made, or there is alternative programme to which applicants could be directed.

41. Normally, UPB will only approve a suspension for a single period of 12 months. Thereafter the University would expect the programme either to be withdrawn or reinstated. UPB will require compelling evidence of the rationale for a suspension as opposed to withdrawal, which may, for instance, be:
    - Temporary unavailability of resources (especially academic staff)
    - Temporary reduction in application numbers

42. The suspension of programmes is usually as a response to less predictable circumstances, and it may be expedient to suspend at relatively shorter notice. UPB will then be seeking further assurances concerning any current students on the programme, and for arrangements for any current applicants or offer holders. Such assurances may include deferred or changed course offers, or the offer of assistance to find places on similar programmes at other institutions.

APPENDIX 1: PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

1.   The University recognises that delivering a programme with a partner carries risks and the guidance below is informed by the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education and, in particular, the Expectations and associated guidance relevant to partnerships:

      a.   Expectations for Standards. Core Practice: *Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.*

      b.   Expectations for Quality. Core Practice: *Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.*

2.   All proposals for taught programmes to be delivered with a partner institution (such as jointly awarded Degrees and articulation and progression arrangements), either in the UK or internationally, must pass through the University Approval of a New Programme process. In addition to the standard process, partnership programmes will also undergo additional investigations due to the higher level of associated risk. Schools should consult with the Global Partnerships Office for support on the development of the partnership proposal and the Senior Quality Support Officer (Partnerships) for guidance on this policy.

3.   The process in respect of Postgraduate Research Programmes is described in Postgraduate Research Programmes: Collaborative arrangements framework, which is published under section 9 of the *Guide to Policies and Procedures for Teaching and Learning*.

Additional steps for partnership programme approval:

Memorandum of Understanding

4.   Before significant collaboration with a partner is undertaken for the development of a new programme, an MoU should normally be put in place. The Global Partnerships Office can advise on whether an MoU already exists with the partner and will advise and support Schools in the development of their idea and through the MoU approval process.

5.   The development of an MoU should normally take place before the programme feasibility investigations.

6.   The Global Engagement Strategy Board is responsible for considering each proposed MoU request and will only approve an MoU if there are arguments for how the new partnership will support the University of Reading's Strategy.

7.   The Global Engagement Strategy Board will inform the Proposer of the outcome of their request and if supportive, will approve the the MoU. The MoU will be written and signed in consultation with the Global Partnerships Office and Legal Services.

Developing the idea and decision on feasibility

8.   In developing the idea of a partnership programme and, where required, the strategic alignment and feasibility evaluation case (see section 19(1 and 2) above), the proposers

should consult with TLD, HoS, SDTL, the Global Partnerships Office, and the SQSO (Partnerships); this will typically happen via a 'kick off' meeting between key stakeholders and will be organised by the GPO. The case should include a realistic indicative timeframe in which the proposal will be developed and submitted for approval, give an account of the scale and complexity of the proposed activity, the type of partner, and the experience of the partner in the academic area and in partnerships, and include an appraisal of the market by GRA and the indicative costs involved in the partnership. It might also offer a view on whether a site visit is advisable. UPB will consider the case (other than progression agreements) under its Strategic Alignment and Feasibility Evaluation (SAFE) procedure (Policy 19(2), above) and decide whether the proposal should be developed further for submission as a full proposal.

Business Proposal

9.   Schools proposing a programme with a partner will be required to complete the appropriate sections of the Business Proposal, as advised by the Global Partnerships Office. Completion of this section should include:

   a.   Consultation with CQSD, Legal Services and Finance, amongst others, to assess Partner status by drawing on annual reports, annual accounts, details of Professional Indemnity insurance cover and reports by external bodies.

   b.   A clear indication of the quality assurance and programme management arrangements for the programme, including the operation of the Board of Studies and Student Experience and Examinations Board and arrangements for monitoring the programme and Periodic Review/revalidation. Particular detailed commentary should be included where any quality management functions have been delegated to the partner.

10.   Proposals for progression and articulation agreements should be passed to UPB using a *Curriculum Mapping Form*. These should be completed by the Proposer who should use the Form to provide an account of the proposed programme(s) and partnership. A Business Proposal will normally be required.

Partnership Investigations

11.   Partnership Investigations are required for all programmes which involve delivery with a partner. CQSD will lead partnership due diligence investigations and will work with the Global Partnerships Office and the proposers to inform key details of the programme documentation and business proposal. Partnership investigations will result in a Due Diligence Report completed by CQSD and the TLD, which makes up the programme approval documentation. Partnership investigations should always take place prior to a Scrutiny Panel, where required.

12.   The University will wish to satisfy itself that it has adequately assessed the financial, legal, academic and reputational risks as part of its Partnership Investigations. It will need to satisfy itself that the conditions are such that the programme is likely to succeed.

13.   The TLD for the School will decide whether a site visit is required as part of the due diligence investigations or whether a desk-based exercise is sufficient. This decision will be based on the scale and complexity of the proposed activity, , the type of partner and the experience of the partner in the academic area and in partnerships, and the level of risk of the proposed programme and partner in the light of all relevant circumstances.

   a.   Where a site visit is required, the visit team (which will normally comprise a

TLD and a representative from CQSD) will work with the School in order to make arrangements for the visit and discuss a timeframe for this element of the approval process.

    b.   Where a site visit is not required, a desk-based review will be conducted by CQSD in collaboration with the TLD. In this situation, the same type of investigations should be conducted, using video conferencing to conduct discussions with key stakeholders at the partner.

14. The objectives of the site visit or video conference are to:

    a.   Gain a greater understanding of the partner and proposed programme through an evaluation of human and material resources;

    b.   Strengthen the bi-lateral relationship to ensure the success of the partnership; and

    c.   Establish the strengths and areas for development of the partnership.

The findings will be incorporated into the Partnership Due Diligence Report.

15. Please see Annex 7 (Guidance for the Partnership Visit) for more information.

16. The University will review and, if appropriate, formally approve the curricula vitae of all relevant partner institution staff in advance of their commencing teaching on University programmes. This is a continuing obligation throughout the life of the programme.

17. Whilst the procedures described in this document relate to the requirements of the University of Reading, it is anticipated that the proposed partner will also wish to undertake reciprocal investigations. Any request by the partner regarding the University's status or policies should be directed to CQSD.

Approval and post-approval

18. The full proposal for the partnership programme, together with the Partnership Due Diligence Report, will be submitted to UPB, in accordance with paragraph 19(5 and 6) above.

19. Post-approval, the Global Partnerships Office will liaise with the School and the partner to prepare a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) which will act as the contract for the partnership programme. The MoA will set out the rights and obligations on both parties and will normally have an expiration date of six years from the date of signature. The Senior Quality Support Officer (Partnerships) will advise on drafts of the MoA and should check the MoA prior to final signatures.

20. Where partners request that the MoA be in a second language in addition to the English language version, the document will be formally translated, or a translation verified, by an external body. The School will be responsible for the cost of any translations.

21. The MoA will be signed by an appointed member of the University Executive Board for the University and by an appropriate and authorised representative for the partner. This contract will be legally binding and original copies will be held by CQSD. Recruitment and advertising will not take place until the MoA has been signed.

22. Any further documentation required by the partner, for the purposes of accreditation in the partner's country, for example, will be completed at this stage.

23. Schools are responsible for discussing with CQSD requirements for any training for partnership staff.

24. The School will be responsible for day-to-day operation of the programme in accordance with the MoA and develop an Operational Handbook for both University and partner staff. The Global Partnerships Office can provide support in developing the handbook, which should be completed as soon as possible after the programme is approved.

25. The School will be responsible for implementing and operating the programme according to guidelines prescribed under the Guide to Policies and Procedures in Teaching and Learning.

26.   The School will be responsible for operating the programme in accordance with policy and procedure relating to the monitoring and review of academic partnership programmes which can be found in the <u>Procedure for Partner Programme Review</u>.

27.   In addition, the School will ensure all marketing materials in relation to the partnership and programme are correct and kept up-to-date, with the support of Marketing, Communication and Engagement.

APPENDIX 2: DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

1. These guidelines have been informed by the *QAA Characteristics Statement for Higher Education in Apprenticeships*.

2. Approval of Apprenticeship Programmes and amendments to those programmes will be subject to additional approval steps.

Scenario	Additional Steps
New Programme for an Apprenticeship Standard against which the University has not previously delivered	Usual programme approval process as outlined in sections 18-24 above. Where this proposal is for a different level or from a part of the University which is not already delivering Apprenticeship Programmes, additional approval via the University Executive Board (i.e. provision at Level 4 or 5 from Henley Business School or any Level from elsewhere in the University). Schools need to demonstrate that new programmes adhere to the framework and Apprenticeship Standard set out by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).
Adaptation of an existing programme to align with an Apprenticeship Standard and opening of the programme to levy funded students/apprentices	Usual programme approval process as outlined in sections 18-24 above. Proposer should consult CQSD re: requirement for academic scrutiny, which may be limited to mapping to the appropriate standard, if there is no significant change to the approved university programme.
Non-credit bearing apprenticeship programmes, with no University Award	Usual programme approval process as outlined in sections 18-24 above (the caveats stated in the above 2 scenarios equally apply to this scenario)
Customisation of material from a previously approved apprenticeship programme, which will include new modules or changing learning outcomes of existing modules	Usual programme amendment process as outlined in sections 33-37 above. Referral to the University Programmes Board (via the TLD) should be made by the School Director for Teaching and Learning with the Programme Director, where appropriate.
All above Scenarios	In addition to the normal reports from support functions (as specified in the Form A), an additional report should be received from CQSD to report on assurances that external regulatory conditions (IfATE, ESFA,

	Ofsted) have been sufficiently considered and addressed.

Approval of employers for delivery of apprenticeship programmes

3.   The guidelines below relate to the approval and monitoring of Employers for approved apprenticeship programmes.

4.   The University will wish to satisfy itself that it has adequately assessed the financial, legal, academic and reputational risks of working with the Employer. Investigations will be largely composed of desk-based due diligence; however, where facilities and equipment are being used at the Employer Organisation, those reviewing should satisfy themselves in relation to the quality and any safety aspects of the facilities being used.

5.   The Proposers will be asked to complete the *Apprenticeship Client Contract Requirement Form (Annex 9)*, with assistance from the University Finance Team, CQSD and Legal Services which will cover the following aspects:

   a.   Client / Employer Details

   b.   Reputational and financial due diligence

   c.   Any significant variations on the standard delivery as noted in the Programme Specifications and the original Programme Business Case

   d.   Measures in place to support the students and the delivery of the Programme

   e.   Contract information

6.   Where the introduction of delivery on different sites or parts of the organisation leads to substantive changes in relation to (c), (d) and (e) above or where specific customisation is requested by an employer, the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean will need to consider whether that element of the provision is required to go through the programme approval process.

7.   Responsibility for internal approval of the proposed employer lies with the School Director of Teaching and Learning and the Head of School. The SDTL should satisfy themselves that the programme for any given employer will meet the University's requirements for academic quality and student experience. Completed Employer forms will be returned to Legal Services who will undertake Contract drafting and negotiations.

8.   The Contract between the University and the Employer will be approved and signed by a member of UEB, normally the PVC (Academic Planning and Resource). In addition, students, the Employer Organisation and the University will be required to sign a Learner Commitment Statement.

APPENDIX 3: ACADEMIC SCRUTINY PANELS

1. The Scrutiny Panel is responsible for considering the academic elements of the programme proposal and is convened by the Teaching and Learning Dean.

2. The typical membership of a Panel is:

    a. Three members of academic staff, to include:

        - One member from a cognate programme[7]; and,
        - two further members from other Schools (one of whom will be the Chair);

    b. One external subject specialist from outside the University of Reading (two if one external member does not cover the full subject area of the proposal or if the proposal relates to a new joint honours programme. In the latter case, there should be an external subject specialist for each discipline), to whom a fee, subsistence allowance and travel expenses will be paid;

    c. One student member from outside the proposing School who shall be a School or Course Representative or Student Officer of the Students' Union; and,

    d. A Panel Secretary, who will normally be provided by the Centre for Quality Support and Development (or School Office, in the case of HBS).

    Whilst this will be the standard composition of a Scrutiny Panel, the SBTL may suggest variations, which would require the approval of the TLD, dependent on the nature and breadth of the content of the programme. Where the programme will include a partnership, blended learning or distance-learning, a further external specialist in the appropriate field could be appointed to the Panel.
    All members of a Scrutiny Panel should have relevant experience and, where necessary, have undergone training to fulfil their role. All panel members should be approved by an appropriate TLD.

3. Course and Senior Representatives will apply to be student panellists via an application process co-ordinated by the Students' Union annually in the Autumn Term. Student members will be expected to fulfil the duties outlined in the *Job Description and Selection Criteria for Student Member of a New Programme Scrutiny Panel* and will need to complete the *Nomination Form for a Student Member of a New Programme Scrutiny Panel*.
    Those students who apply will be invited to attend a Scrutiny Panel training session run by the Students' Union during the Autumn Term. The RUSU Representation team will maintain a record of all eligible Student Reps, following their attendance at training, and will provide a list to the relevant School on request. A student panellist for each scrutiny panel will be appointed by the relevant TLD in consultation with the School Board for Teaching and Learning and RUSU, in accordance with the published selection criteria.

4. The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel will liaise with the student member prior to the meeting of the Panel to provide guidance on the documentation to be provided and the areas to be considered by the student. The Secretary will provide the student member with any further guidance in advance of the meeting. Further guidance for Chairs and Secretaries is included in the *Student Membership of Scrutiny Panels: Good Practice and Guidance for Chairs and Secretaries* document.

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[7] The Teaching and Learning Dean is responsible for deciding what constitutes a 'cognate programme' in any instance. All panel members will be from outside the School developing the proposal.

5. The student panellist can allocate the hours undertaken as part of a scrutiny panel to the 35 hours of core activity as part of the RED Award. The student panellist will be required to obtain the signature of the Chair of the Panel/Education Officer (RUSU) on their RED activity checklist.

6. The Scrutiny Panel's terms of reference are:
   a. to consider the aims and objectives of the programme and how these are to be achieved;
   b. to ensure that the programme is coherent and well-constructed;
   c. to check that the programme articulates with the aims of the University's Curriculum Framework (in the case of undergraduate programmes);
   d. to ensure that the programme meets the University's requirements for quality and standards, and complies with its policies;
   e. to ask fundamental questions about the academic rationale and structure of the programme; and,
   f. to assist eventual Boards of Studies and Student Experience and Module Providers to prepare for periodic review, subsequent external assessment, and where appropriate, professional accreditation.

7. As appropriate, the Scrutiny Panel will consider:
   a. the structure and content of the proposed programme(s);
   b. arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment;
   c. academic workloads of staff and students;
   d. the evidence and documents from key stakeholders as submitted under paragraph (49) above[8];
   e. any additional requirements to facilitate access to the programme by a varied student body (including, for example, differences in educational, cultural and social backgrounds and experiences, as well as the presence of any physical or sensory impairment and their mental well-being);
   f. procedures for quality management and enhancement, where non-standard;
   g. the likelihood of the graduates from the programme being successful in finding employment; and,
   h. feedback from students consulted as part of the programme design phase.

8. The Scrutiny Panel should be supplied with all documentation relating to the proposal (including Form A, Programme Specification, Module Descriptions and the Business Case[9] and a Partnership report where relevant (see appendix 1)) and any supplementary materials[10], at least one week before a physical meeting or one week before the deadline for responses if the meeting takes place virtually. Normally the business of the Panel is conducted via email, but may be completed in a single physical meeting with the requirement for follow-up electronic discussions.

9. Scrutiny will involve three elements:
   a. considering the documentation and identifying general points and specific issues needing further discussion with the Programme Development Team or Project Lead. A set of 'questions' is supplied in the Suggested Questions to Guide Scrutiny Panels Members document;
   b. discussion with the Programme Development Team or Project Lead of any reservations or concerns of the Panel. The aim throughout the procedure is to

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[8] Colleagues from these Central Services may be invited to attend the meetings, or provide further information, if necessary

[9] Which may be redacted to remove commercially sensitive information before being supplied to external panellists

[10] Including information on the Curriculum Framework and the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy

facilitate the development of the programme and it may be necessary for the Panel to propose alternative approaches or solutions, which may not have occurred to the proposer, in order to resolve any difficulties and agree how to handle concerns; and,

 c. discussion and identification of the items for inclusion in the final report along with recommendations to be made to the School Board for Teaching and Learning.

10. The Scrutiny Panel will produce a report of the Panel's findings following the <u>standard template</u>. The report will be evaluative in tone and should extend beyond the answering of the questions laid out in the *Suggested Questions to Guide Scrutiny Panel Members*. The Panel is not expected to comment on the detail of the Business Case (unless it relates to the delivery of the programme) but is encouraged to report any concerns, especially with regards the need for further 'due diligence' of the proposal.

11. The report should include:

 a. A recommendation either that the programme be approved, or agreement that it not be approved; and,

 b. A brief summary of the issues dealt with by the Scrutiny Panel and, where approval is recommended for the proposal, confirmation of satisfactory revisions.

12. The report should be sent to the relevant TLD, SDTL and the proposer.

13. The Proposer should write a response to the Scrutiny Panel report, providing comment on each of the Panel's recommendations. The Proposer should also amend any programme documentation in line with the recommendations of the panel.

14. Once the proposer has responded to the Panel's recommendations and made the required amendments, the relevant paperwork will be submitted to the Chair. If appropriate, the Chair of the Panel will confirm that the recommendations have been met and recommend approval of the programme to UPB.

15. All final documentation including the Scrutiny Panel Report and response should be reviewed by the SDTL before it is submitted with the proposal for approval. The proposal and Scrutiny Panel Report must be submitted to the University Programmes Board within one year of delivery of the Report. If the Board is asked to consider the report after this point, but within two years, then it should be supplemented with further documentation indicating that the Scrutiny Panel members (especially external panellists) are happy that the contents of the report are still relevant. Any further changes to the proposal which occur post-scrutiny should be accompanied by comments from either the Scrutiny Panel members or the External Examiners.
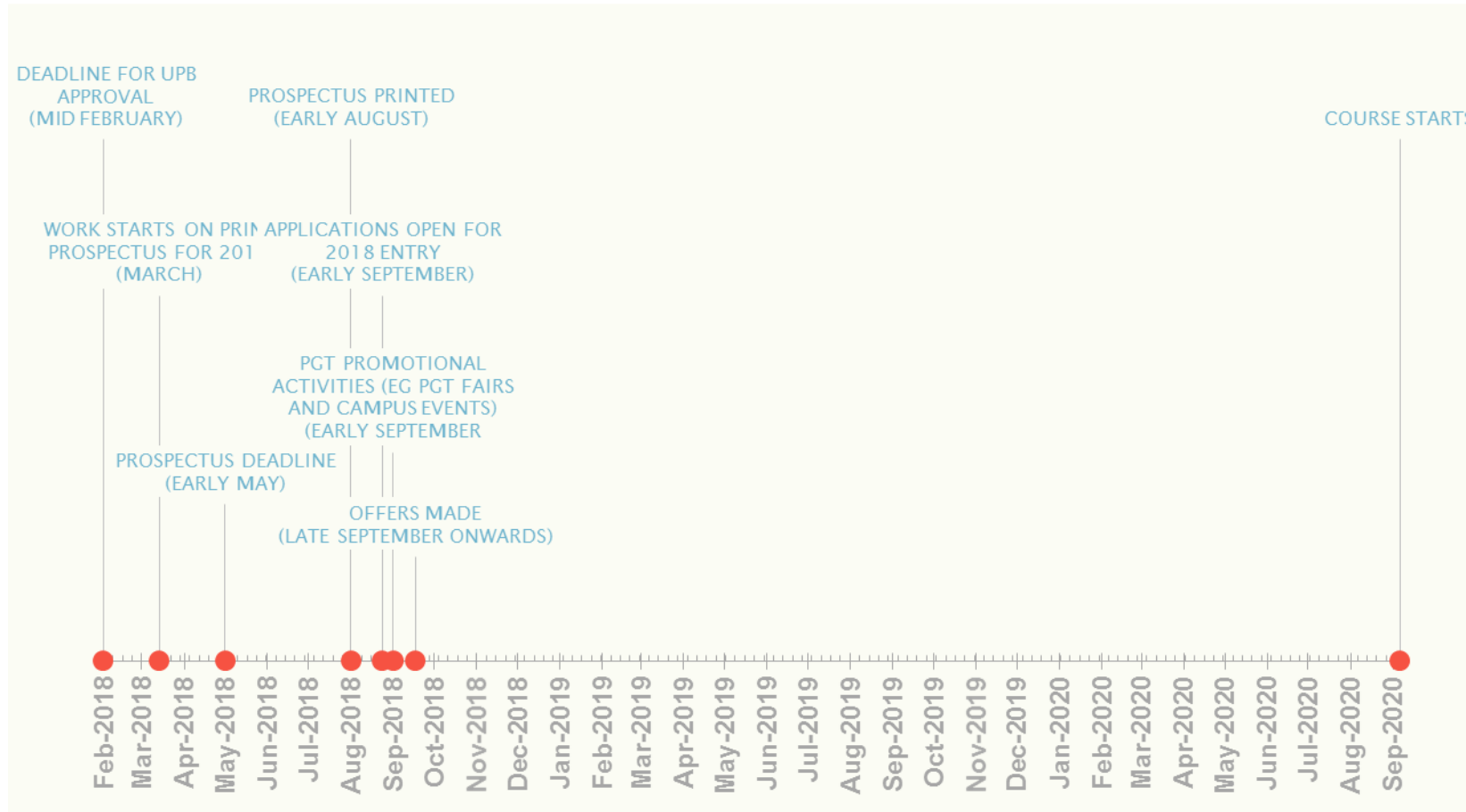
APPENDIX 4: TIMELINES

1.   Below are a series of charts setting out indicating timeframes for programme development and approval.

Undergraduate Programme Approval timeline[11]

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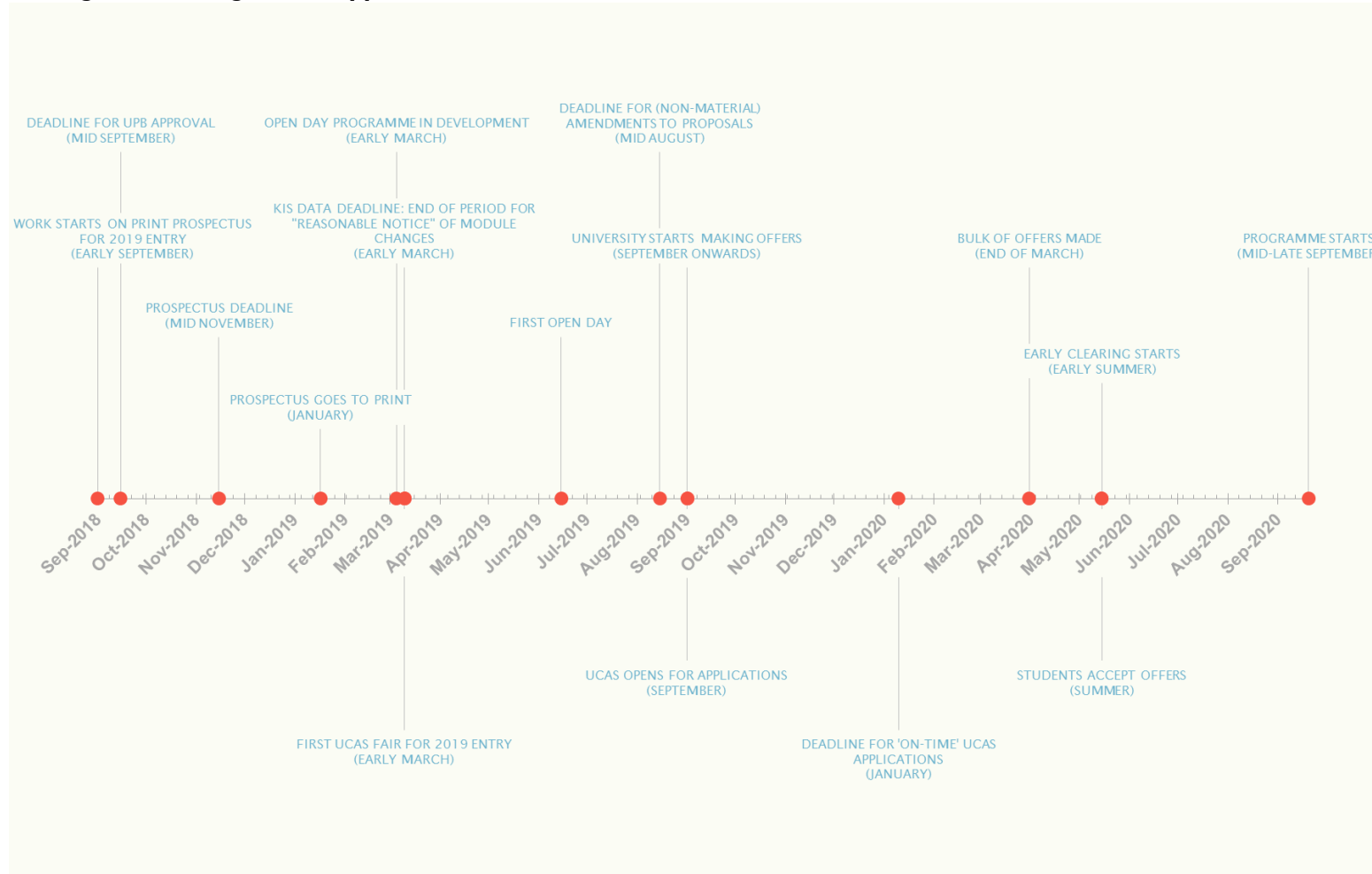
[11] Please note that the University Programmes Board meets on a monthly basis.

Postgraduate Programme Approval timeline

DEADLINE FOR UPB
APPROVAL
(MID FEBRUARY)

PROSPECTUS PRINTED
(EARLY AUGUST)

COURSE STARTS

WORK STARTS ON PRIN APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR
PROSPECTUS FOR 201   2018 ENTRY
(MARCH)   (EARLY SEPTEMBER)

PGT PROMOTIONAL
ACTIVITIES (EG PGT FAIRS
AND CAMPUS EVENTS)
(EARLY SEPTEMBER

PROSPECTUS DEADLINE
(EARLY MAY)

OFFERS MADE
(LATE SEPTEMBER ONWARDS)

Feb-2018 Mar-2018 Apr-2018 May-2018 Jun-2018 Jul-2018 Aug-2018 Sep-2018 Oct-2018 Nov-2018 Dec-2018 Jan-2019 Feb-2019 Mar-2019 Apr-2019 May-2019 Jun-2019 Jul-2019 Aug-2019 Sep-2019 Oct-2019 Nov-2019 Dec-2019 Jan-2020 Feb-2020 Mar-2020 Apr-2020 May-2020 Jun-2020 Jul-2020 Aug-2020 Sep-2020

APPENDIX 5: SCHEDULE OF DELEGATIONS

1. The responsibility for decisions with regards the approval, amendments and withdrawal of programmes ultimately lie with the University Programmes Board.

2. The Board has delegated authority to some parties to make decisions and take actions on its behalf. The Board has also designated that some activities are to be undertaken by certain parties in order to ensure the smooth and effective application of the Programme Lifecycle Policies (ie by not overburdening the University Programmes Board with business).

3. Below is a table outlining some of the delegated responsibilities associated with the Programme Lifecycle Policies:

ACTION	TO WHOM	TYPE	SECTION
Identifying approval route	TLD & SQSO	Designated decision	8,18 and 19(2), 29, 31 and 32
Identifying approval route for international and partnership activities	TLD & SQSO	Designated decision	8, 18 and 19(2), 29, 31 and 32, and Appendix 1, 13
Approval of ad hominem degrees	TLD	Chair's Action/ Delegated authority	8
Authorising 'light-touch' approval	TLD	Designated decision	14
Identify which stakeholders need to be consulted	TLD & SQSO	Designated decision	19(4) and 31
Appoint a Scrutiny Panel (& site visit)	TLD	Delegated authority	19(5), Appendix 1(13)
Approval of major amendments, except changes impacting other Schools or Branch Campuses, and changes to entry requirements.	TLD	Delegated authority	32

*SQSO= Senior Quality Support Officer (Programme Specifications and Programme Approvals)

4.   The above listing is not exhaustive, but is indicative of the kinds of decisions which can be made outside of the University Programmes Board.