



QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

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Section 6: Programme Review

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6. PROGRAMME REVIEW*

***All Programme Review events will take place by the end of November each year.**

6.1 Process

This process will either take place as part of Enhancement-Led Internal Subject Review (ELISR) or as a stand-alone process, however Schools must scrutinise their programmes at least once every five years. The review process at programme level may be carried out by grouping programmes in appropriate clusters or suites. Clustering must be approved by the Department of Academic Quality before the Programme Review Process begins. The responsibility for the programme review process lies with the Programme Board.

Consideration of the outcomes of the annual programme monitoring process forms the basis of programme review. Where possible, the review process will be aligned with the requirements of professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies, with the aim of satisfying the requirements of the University and these bodies in a single scrutiny process. The Department of Academic Quality and Development will be responsible for the organisation and facilitation of the review process.

To ensure the University complies with and adheres to consumer law (CRA/CMA) there is a need to ensure that programme and module amendments are conducted in a timely manner, with due consideration to the impact on current and potential students. **The Programme Specification on the website must be the definitive and most up to date Programme Specification**, and the content of the programme, the modules offered and the approach to learning and teaching, must adhere to and comply, in practice, with all detail included in the **published Programme Specification**. **Altering a programme and not providing an amended and accurate Programme Specification means that the University is not fully compliant with consumer law (CRA/CMA) and the School/Programme will be in breach of university policy.**

6.2 Viability of Programmes within review cycle

As part of the normal portfolio review process Schools, on an annual basis, review the on-going viability and academic congruence of all programmes. The assessment of viability must include a review of current strategic KPIs (Strategy 2020). The criteria for the viability of programmes will be determined annually by the SMG in consultation with the University Executive as part of the portfolio review and annual planning process ⁽¹⁾.

Where the programme continues to be viable and is due for formal review, the review documentation will follow the guidance contained within the QEAH including the rationale for re-approval in the form of evidence of congruence with the GCU programme and awards portfolio (Strategy 2020), continuing demand for the programme, financial viability, student satisfaction and satisfactory retention, progression and first destination statistics.

6.3 Portfolio change outwith review cycle (programme withdrawal)

A School may, at any time (out with the approval/re-approval cycle), propose that an approved programme of study be withdrawn. Consultation regarding programme closure should be initiated with all key stakeholders at the earliest point.

The recommendation to close a programme may emanate from the Programme Board and/or the Senior Management Group. After consultation with stakeholders and due consideration by the programme board, a report will be submitted to School Board for consideration and approval of the proposal before onward submission to APPC.

The report should include full minutes (as described below) of the rationale for the decision.

Where the proposal emanates from the Senior Management Group, such minutes shall include:

- Senior Management Group minute with rationale for the decision to withdraw the programme.
- Programme Board minute which will record programme board discussion in support or not in support of the decision to withdraw the programme as proposed by the Senior Management Group. The minutes should contain the following:
 - Support for the proposal together with associated rationale
 - Outright rejection of the proposal
 - Rejection of the proposal with associated rationale
 - Evidence that any Schools, other than the host School, which contribute to or are served by modules on the programme have been consulted at an early stage and that any comments have been fed into the consultation process.
- A School Board minute containing evidence of communication with Programme Board and the rationale for the withdrawal of a programme.
- A description of how provision for continuing students will be managed
- Confirmation that the change has been communicated to students 'at the earliest opportunity' and how students will be supported to complete any outstanding modules and their programme of study. Students must be re-assured that any decision to withdraw the programme will not impact on their studies.

Where the proposal emanates from the Programme Board such minutes shall include:

- Programme Board minute which will
 - record the programme board's **decision to seek approval to withdraw a programme**
 - outline the rationale for the proposed withdrawal of the programme
 - provide evidence that any Schools, other than the host School, which are either served by contribute to modules on the programme have been consulted at an early stage and comments fed into programme board consideration of the proposal.
- Senior Management Group minute evidencing consideration of the proposal to withdraw the programme.
- A School Board minute containing evidence of communication with Programme Board and the rationale for the withdrawal of a programme.
- A description of how provision for continuing students will be managed
- Confirmation that the change has been communicated to students' at the earliest opportunity' and how students will be supported to complete any outstanding modules and their programme of study. Students must be re-assured than any decision to withdraw the programme will not impact on their studies.

6.4 Communicating Programme Changes

The decision of APPC regarding any proposal to withdraw programme(s) will be communicated to the host School. To ensure prospective students are fully informed, immediately following APPC resolving to recommend to Senate that a programme be withdrawn, Enquires and Admissions shall be advised and a statement shall be added to the University website to reflect that the programme is under review and may be withdrawn together. Clear contact details for enquiries will be included in the statement together with an offer of alternative programmes of study, if applicable.

Where either APPC or School Board minutes contain decisions and/or recommendations relating to the withdrawal of a programme this will be explicitly highlighted to Senate in the agenda. Following Senate Enquiries and Admissions will amend the website and prospectus and communicate with applicants.

Academic Quality and Development and the host School will ensure all relevant documentation pertaining to or referencing the programme being withdrawn is amended.

6.5 Programme Review Submission Documentation

Programme review submission documentation should be submitted to the Department of Academic Quality and Development and should comprise the sections and sub-sections outlined in Appendix 6(a).

In consultation with the University's PBS Compliance Office, the Programme Board must ensure and confirm, by way of a written statement, the programme's adherence with current UKVI regulations for Tier 4 students in force at the time of approval, including any restrictions that Tier 4 students studying on the programme will face.

6.6 Programme Review Panels

Composition and membership of Programme Review Panels and arrangements for appointing and supporting review Panels are normally the same as those for the new programme approval process (see Section 4.1 & appendix 3(b)).

6.7 Programme Review Panel Reports

Programme Review Panel reports will follow the same format and be considered in an identical manner to the reports from the programme approval process, as described in Section 4.1.10).

6.8 Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies

Where possible, Programme Review will be undertaken in partnership with professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). If a PSRB visit takes place independently, the Department of Academic Quality and Development must receive:

- notification in advance of the proposed visit and the schedule for the visit
- the confirmed report of the event.

6.9 Change of Programme Title or Award

In exceptional circumstances, a School may, outwith the processes described above, resolve to change a programme title or award. In all such cases, early notification of the proposed change should be forwarded to the Department of Academic Quality and Development. Thereafter full minutes, as described below, of the rationale for the decision should be submitted to the Department of Academic Quality and Development and will be forwarded to the Academic Policy Committee for consideration. Such minutes shall include:

- a Programme Board minute containing the rationale for the change, including evidence of consultation with students
- a School Board minute approving the decision of the Programme Board.

6.10 Minor Changes to a Programme

Exceptionally within the normal five year period of approval of a programme it may become necessary to make **minor** changes to a programme. In such cases the Programme Board should provide the Department of Academic Quality and Development with an outline of the proposed changes. The Department will then confirm the level and scope of the approval process.

The proposal should have been discussed with the programme's External Examiner(s) prior to be presented. The outline of the proposal should include:

- The rationale for the change
- Confirmation of programme board approval (normally an extract from programme board minutes)
- External scrutiny (which may have been undertaken by an external subject specialist not currently part of the external examining team)
- Confirmation of consultation with programme boards which either contribute to or access any impacted modules.

The proposal will be submitted to the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee for formal approval. **N.B Schools/programmes should not implement any such changes until the formal approval process has been completed.**

Following approval, the Programme Specification must be updated and any necessary changes to the external examining team processed.

6.11 Extension to Period of Approval (Deferment of Review)

As indicated above, Schools must scrutinise their programmes at least once every **five** years and the mechanism for this is the programme review process. The Department of Academic Quality and Development hold the University timetable for this process and liaises with the ADLTQ at the beginning of each academic year to schedule events.

In certain circumstances, a School may seek an extension to the period of approval and thus defer the scheduled review of a programme. While not an exhaustive list, such circumstances may be as a result of: the bedding-in of strategic restructuring and changes in the School/subject area having an impact on the programme to be re-approved; portfolio review activity; the impact and timing of changes external to the University from professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies, for example, cognisance and integration of new standards and the preference for this to be simultaneously considered within the review process; or other external and/or internal policy changes.

Proposed extensions to the period of approval of a programme must be approved by the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee and should include:

- a Programme Board minute containing the rationale for the change together with any relevant supporting information
- a School Board minute approving the decision of the Programme Board.

The extension will normally be granted for one academic session only.

PROGRAMME REVIEW SUBMISSION DOCUMENTATION AND THE UPDATING OF PROGRAMME DOCUMENTATION

1. Programme Review Submission Documentation

Programme review submission documentation should be submitted to the Department of Academic Quality and Development fully bound, with front covers for all sections of the documentation provided, page numbering and, where appropriate, cross-referencing. The front cover(s) should be in the style shown in Appendix 4(g). The timescale for the review process and the submission of documentation is similar to that indicated for the programme approval process in Appendix 4(b).

Documentation should comprise the sections and sub-sections noted below. This list is not exhaustive and Programme Teams should include any other relevant information, for example details required by professional, statutory, and/or regulatory bodies.

Cover	<i>Refer to template in Appendix 4(g)</i>
	Table of Contents
1.	<p>GENERAL PROGRAMME INFORMATION <i>Key programme information</i></p> <p><i>In consultation with the University's PBS Compliance Office, the PT must ensure and confirm by way of a written statement, the programme's ongoing compliance with current UKVI regulations for Tier 4 students in force at the time of review, including any restrictions that Tier 4 students studying on the programme will face. The confirmation should be presented as a footnote within this section.</i></p>
2.	<p>PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENTS <i>In the narrative include cross-references to other sections of the documentation as appropriate.</i></p>
2.1	<p>Programme Monitoring Process <i>Include summary of key performance indicators, listed below.</i></p>
2.2	<p>Programme Viability¹ <i>Include ongoing rationale, philosophy and programme demand.</i></p>
2.3	<p>Admissions <i>Include quantitative data and narrative.</i></p>

¹ The Programme Leader should ensure that the Academic Programme Costing Model has been completed: <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/financeoffice/financeteams/managementaccounting/businesspartnersupport/costingofacademiccourses>

2.4	Progression and Awards <i>Include quantitative data and narrative.</i>
2.5	First Destinations <i>Include quantitative data and narrative.</i>
2.6	External Examiner feedback
2.7	Benchmarking <i>Benchmarking of the programme against similar offerings elsewhere in UK higher education.</i>
2.8	Student Feedback
2.9	Success of enhancement plans since approval/previous review of programme <i>Cross-refer to other sections of the documentation as appropriate.</i>
2.10	SfL and curriculum development since approval/last review of programme <i>Cross-refer to other sections of the documentation as appropriate.</i>
2.11	Other programme initiatives and developments since approval/last review of programme <i>Cross-refer to other sections of the documentation as appropriate.</i>
2.12	Rationale for any proposed changes to the programme <i>The process of programme review is the opportunity to examine the continuing currency of the programme and the quality of the learning experience offered to students. It is an opportunity to evaluate and reflect upon the programme in depth, and to undertake any modifications for enhancement.</i>
3.	RESOURCES
	<i>Overview of resources (physical and human) to support programme delivery, including student support facilities. Programme Boards are reminded that they should ensure that all resource requirements resulting from changes emanating from the review are discussed with appropriate staff and confirmed at an early stage in the review process.</i>
4.	RESEARCH AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT
4.1	Research <i>Include a brief account of how research and advanced scholarly activity underpins the programme.</i>
4.2	Staff Development <i>This section should draw reference to School and University policy (the AcceleRATE Framework² and associated CPD (Learning and teaching) Policy); and outline opportunities for staff development in learning and teaching, research and CPD including further study; participation in staff development activities, internally and externally; peer support for teaching; fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, and/or PSRBs; and any other relevant activities.</i>

² <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/lead/leadthemes/acceleratecpd/>

5.	STRATEGY FOR LEARNING³
5.1	<p>Introduction</p> <p><i>Include an introduction to the University's Strategy for Learning (SfL) 2015-2020; and demonstrate curriculum alignment with each of the eight design principles. The SfL Curriculum Design Template, designed to support staff in implementing the design principles in their subject specific contexts is to be completed and should identify where the design principles have been embedded in programme design, but also reflect areas for enhancing practice in the future, and timelines for achieving this. The template should be included as an appendix to the submission document.</i></p>
5.2	<p>Learning and Teaching Approaches</p> <p><i>Include details of the learning and teaching approaches to be adopted by the programme and examples of these. These will encompass traditional approaches, digital learning, blended learning, flexible delivery, and work-based learning.</i></p>
5.3	<p>Enhancement Themes</p> <p><i>Include details of the programme's intended approach to enhancing the student learning experience through the specific areas targeted for development via the QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes⁴.</i></p>
5.4	<p>Programme Accessibility and Inclusiveness⁵</p> <p><i>Provide a summary overview of the inclusiveness and accessibility of learning, teaching and assessment in the programme and modules. The Inclusive and Accessible Learning and Teaching Checklist which represents a minimum standard that the University would consider for making programmes more accessible and inclusive should be cross referenced.</i></p>
5.5	<p>Internationalisation⁶</p> <p><i>Guidance on possible approaches is given in Appendix 4(h).</i></p> <p><i>This section, in an introduction, should draw reference to the SfL curriculum design principles, in particular, Global Learning.</i></p> <p><i>Specific consideration should be given to initiatives and in particular to embedding mobility into curriculum design. The programme should provide commentary that clearly identifies the process and procedure to be in place for inward and outward mobility in line with University policy. In particular, this should also include the arrangements for the consistent transfer of credit and marks for the purpose of progression and final award decisions between the University and host institutions.</i></p>
5.6	<p>Management of Work Based/Practice Learning⁷</p>

³ <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/gaq/strategyforlearning2015-2020/>

⁴ <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/enhancement-themes>

⁵ <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/lead/leadthemes/flexibleaccessibleandinclusivecurriculum/>
<http://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/disability/index.html>

⁶ <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/lead/leadthemes/internationalisation/>

⁷ <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/lead/leadthemes/flexibleaccessibleandinclusivecurriculum/>

	<i>If applicable, reference should also be made to Appendix 10(b).</i>
5.7	Engagement with External Stakeholders ⁸ <i>For example, input from industry/employers, service users and professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.</i>
5.8	Supporting and Developing Students <i>Provide details of the programme's and School's alignment to the Student Experience Framework and the other student-facing policies in respect to student entitlement and engagement designed to underpin the University's strategic goals for access, progression, retention, employability, and enhancement of the student experience.</i>
	5.8.1 Student Induction and Transition
	5.8.2 Academic Support
	5.8.3 Student Performance Feedback
	5.8.4 Student Engagement
	5.8.5 Career Development and Employability
5.9	Assessment Strategy and Loading <i>Provide an overview of the assessment strategy for the programme and modules and include standard assessment matrices.</i>
5.10	Programme-specific Assessment Regulations <i>If applicable, include confirmation of any deviations and/or exceptions and that these have been approved by the Exceptions Committee (provide Case Number).</i>
5.11	Procedures for Project and Dissertation Supervision <i>Include details of the specific arrangements for projects and/or dissertations and, where relevant, any requirements for the selection of project topics, provisions for supervision, and requirements for submission of projects which are not detailed in the programme assessment regulations.</i>
APPENDICES	
1.	PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION (AND CURRICULUM MAP)
2.	MODULE DESCRIPTORS
	<i>To be submitted in ISIS format only. These should be preceded by a list identifying all modules requiring approval (i.e. existing modules which have been substantially altered and new modules), and indication of modules approved and currently running. Refer also to Appendix 7(d) of the QEAH.</i>
3.	ACADEMIC STAFF CURRICULUM VITAE
	<i>CVs for ALL staff involved in the delivery of the programme. See Appendix 4(e) of the QEAH.</i>
4.	STRATEGY FOR LEARNING CURRICULUM DESIGN TEMPLATE

⁸ <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/lead/leadthemes/employability/>

2. Definitive Programme Documentation

The Definitive Programme Documentation (DPD) is produced by the Programme Team following the review event and submitted, in electronic format, to the Department of Academic Quality and Development with their formal response. The DPD will consist of the original Programme Review Submission Document, *updated to incorporate any revision(s), as a result of requirements and recommendations*, if any, placed upon the Programme Team.

3. Updating Programme Documentation

No changes may be made to the programme-specific regulations on the progression or assessment of students without formal consultation with the students on the programme who may be directly affected by the proposed change, and formal approval from the Exceptions Subcommittee (see Section 4.1.4). Any such changes which affect the programme-specific regulations for the assessment of students for an award must also receive the written consent of the approved External Examiner(s). The Programme Board should initially consult with the Department of Academic Quality and Development with an outline of the proposed changes.