

Curriculum Development Handbook

Academic Quality and Partnership Office

August 2023

Contents

[1. Introduction 4](#_Toc144731117)

[1.1 Overview 4](#_Toc144731118)

[1.2 Curriculum development committees 4](#_Toc144731119)

[1.3 Key contacts 5](#_Toc144731120)

[2. Principles of curriculum development at the University of Sussex 6](#_Toc144731121)

[3. New course approval process 11](#_Toc144731122)

[3.1 Portfolio Approval Committee 11](#_Toc144731123)

[3.2 Criteria for the approval of new course titles 11](#_Toc144731124)

[3.3 Sussex Choice: protocol for degree titles 12](#_Toc144731125)

[3.4 Approval stages 13](#_Toc144731126)

[4. Sussex Choice: pathways 17](#_Toc144731127)

[4.1 Introduction 17](#_Toc144731128)

[4.2 Pathway or Minor approval 17](#_Toc144731129)

[4.3 Completing the forms 18](#_Toc144731130)

[4.4 Outcomes and next steps 19](#_Toc144731131)

[5. Validation 20](#_Toc144731132)

[5.1 Introduction 20](#_Toc144731133)

[5.2 The validation process 20](#_Toc144731134)

[5.3 Validation resources 20](#_Toc144731135)

[6. Curriculum development processes 21](#_Toc144731136)

[6.1 Introduction 21](#_Toc144731137)

[6.2 Course-level changes 22](#_Toc144731138)

[6.3 Changes to pathways 24](#_Toc144731139)

[6.4 Course and pathway suspensions and withdrawals 25](#_Toc144731140)

[6.5 New modules, module suspensions and withdrawals 26](#_Toc144731141)

[6.6 Module-level changes 28](#_Toc144731142)

[6.7 Variation of study 29](#_Toc144731143)

[7. Curriculum information management 30](#_Toc144731144)

[7.1 Introduction 30](#_Toc144731145)

[7.2 New courses and pathways 30](#_Toc144731146)

[7.3 New modules 34](#_Toc144731147)

[7.4 Material changes to course structures 34](#_Toc144731148)

[7.5 Definitive module changes 35](#_Toc144731149)

[7.6 Indicative module changes 35](#_Toc144731150)

[7.7 Suspensions and withdrawals of courses or pathways 37](#_Toc144731151)

[7.8 Module suspensions or withdrawals 39](#_Toc144731152)

[Appendix 1: List of curriculum development forms and associated web links 40](#_Toc144731153)

[Appendix 2: Reference documents for curriculum development 41](#_Toc144731154)

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

The term *curriculum development* refers to the processes by which the University’s curriculum is designed, approved and quality assured. This handbook describes these processes in detail and provides guidance on how to:

1. develop proposals for new courses and pathways (sections 3 and 4)
2. propose new modules and changes to existing courses & modules (section 6)
3. propose course and module withdrawals (section 6)

The handbook is of particular relevance to:

* Directors of Teaching and Learning
* Curriculum and Assessment Officers
* Members of validation panels
* Members of Portfolio Approval Committee
* Academic and Professional Services staff who support new course development

This handbook is maintained by the Academic Quality and Partnership Office (AQP) and is sponsored by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students). The guidance provided relates to taught courses. For information on the quality management of research degrees, please refer to the Research Student Administration Office.

## 1.2 Curriculum development committees

Decisions on curriculum development are the responsibility of University committees. The following table summarises the roles of each committee; full terms of reference are available on Sussex Direct:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC) | A committee of UEC with authority to approve new course titles for validation, as well as title changes, mode changes, suspension and withdrawal of existing courses. Decisions are taken based on scrutiny of academic coherence, recruitment strategy, strategic fit and resource considerations. PAC also oversees the Annual Portfolio Review – a high level strategic assessment of each school’s portfolio of courses. |
| University Education Committee (UEC) | A committee of Senate with responsibility for oversight of all validation and curriculum development activity. Responsible for the University’s Learn to Transform Strategy, the assurance of academic standards and quality enhancement. |
| School Education Committee (SEC) | A committee of UEC with responsibility for oversight of curriculum development at School level, including initial scrutiny of proposals prior to submission to PAC and approval of all new modules and changes to courses and modules with reference to the norms and standards set out in the Academic Framework.  |

## 1.3 Key contacts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AQP Curriculum Team | Flo Harman, Curriculum Manager (Media, Arts & Humanities)F.E.Harman@sussex.ac.ukAmanda Bolt, Curriculum Manager (Social Sciences cluster)A.M.Bolt@sussex.ac.ukTracey Beck, Curriculum Manager (Sciences cluster)Tab43@sussex.ac.ukJenny Gwynn (Business School)J.Gwynn@sussex.ac.ukClaire Brennan (on secondment)C.M.Brennan@sussex.ac.ukGeneral Curriculum QueriesAQPcurriculum@sussex.ac.uk |
| AQP Partnerships Team | Kristina Rudge, Partnerships Manager k.rudge@sussex.ac.ukRob Boyd, Partnerships ManagerR.I.Boyd@sussex.ac.uk |
| Head of Academic Quality & Partnerships | Oliver Craigo.craig@sussex.ac.uk |
| Academic Regulations Team | Anna McCall, Academic Regulations ManagerA.E.Mccall@sussex.ac.ukRachael Graves, Academic Misconduct OfficerRg422@sussex.ac.uk |
| Educational Enhancement Team | Katie Piatt, Head of Educational EnhancementK.Piatt@sussex.ac.ukAcademic DevelopersSee [EE webpage](https://staff.sussex.ac.uk/teaching/enhancement/contact#academic-developers) |
| Finance Team | Mark Thoms (Social Sciences & Business School)m.thoms@sussex.ac.uk Steve Crossman (Media, Arts & Humanities)Stephen.crossman@sussex.ac.ukChris Chaplin (Sciences)Chris.chaplin@sussex.ac.uk  |
| Market Research Team | Sandy Bonningtons.bonnington@sussex.ac.uk  |
| Directors of Teaching and Learning | Please consult school webpages or run Cognos report |
| Heads of Department and Heads of School | Please consult school webpages or run Cognos report |
| PAC Secretariat | Amanda Bolt |
| UEC Secretariat | Jenny Gwynn / Claire Brennan  |
| CPAC Secretariat | Kristina Rudge |

# 2. Principles of curriculum development at the University of Sussex

2.1 The main purpose of curriculum development is to secure the continued quality and sustainability of the curriculum. Effective curriculum development supports the strategic objective set out in the Sussex 2025 Strategic Framework to ensure: *“our students will receive a transformative, high-quality education and learning experience that will allow them to realise the futures they want. […] Sussex students will develop the knowledge and skills to be critical thinkers, entrepreneurs, commentators, citizens and activists”.*

The following diagram describes the University’s curriculum development cycle at a glance.

* 1. The following principles underpin curriculum development at the University of Sussex. The principles are informed by the expectations of the [Office for Students (OfS)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/) B Conditions of Registration (2022) and by the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) *UK* [Quality Code for Higher Education (20*23)*. In](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code) particular, the principles outlined below enable the University to meet the following expectations:

“The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience”. (OfS Condition B1, 2022).

“*The provider reviews its Core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement*.” (UK Quality Code, 2023)

“*The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.*” (UK Quality Code, 2023)

Principle 1 Articulation with University strategy, policy and process

Compliance with the University’s Learn to Transform Strategy, Academic Framework, and Examination and Assessment Regulations is an essential part of securing the standards of the academic provision of Schools.

The published processes provide for flexible, ongoing revision of the curriculum, but it is important that all parties utilise the system effectively so that an appropriate level of scrutiny can take place. Fundamentally, the University must be able to demonstrate with confidence that students are receiving the best learning experience possible, and specifically the one that has been published and advertised by the University. This enables the University to meet the Quality Code indicator that:

“*The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.” (UK Quality Code, 2023)*

and that:

“*The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.*” (UK Quality Code, 2023)

Principle 2 Peer review and externality

New courses are validated by academic peers both internal and external to the University. This academic expertise is supported with guidance from appropriate staff in the University’s Professional Services and, where appropriate, from external stakeholders. This meets the following expectation as stated in UK Quality Code:

“*The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.*” (UK Quality Code, 2023)

The University’s use of external reference points and expertise is considered sound practice in both the development of new courses and the review of the existing curriculum. The former is achieved by the validation process. The latter is achieved when curriculum change and development proposals are the product of reflection that is cognisant of external examiner reports and School Periodic Review and Annual Course Review activities.

Principle 3 Alignment with HE Sector expectations and norms

The University’s curriculum development processes are benchmarked to sector reference points and norms including the OfS B Conditions, QAA Quality Code, QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

This approach enables the University to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are robust, valid and reliable and that the award of qualifications and credit is linked to the achievement of learning outcomes.

Principle 4 Student Engagement

Students can make a high-quality and informed contribution to the curriculum development process. Student engagement occurs through the participation of students in the University’s quality enhancement processes, including Annual Course Review, School Periodic Review, and through student feedback processes such as mid-module and end of module evaluations.

The validation of new courses takes place with student membership of the Panel as standard practice. This enables students to be confident that the courses have been approved with due consideration of the student voice.

Staff involved with curriculum development and the design of new courses should also consult with students on courses that they are involved with to gain insight, both into what will improve the student experience and what will be attractive to students.

Collectively, these processes ensure effective student engagement and enable the University to meet the following OfS B Condition:

*“The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure.. effective engagement with student to ensure… a high quality academic experience for those students;”* (OfS Condition B2, 2022)

Principle 5 A collaborative approach

Faculties developing new curricula are able to draw on a range of relevant expertise located in the University’s Professional Services. The AQP team offers guidance and support on process, academic standards and University and sector benchmarks. The Educational Enhancement team provides pedagogic advice and support to schools for best practice in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. Marketing and Finance provide management information to support decision-making about the viability of new course proposals. The Library works with Schools to identify appropriate learning resources. The Careers and Entrepreneurship team work with Schools to embed employability skills and career development opportunities within their curriculum.

Each of these services contributes to the curriculum development process with the aim of producing successful, high-quality proposals for courses that meet the strategic objectives of the University.

Principle 6 Planning and sustainability

The University must be able to plan its curriculum effectively in order to meet the emerging demands of the Higher Education sector, to remain compliant with external benchmarking and regulatory policies, to ensure that institutional strategies, frameworks and policies are implemented, and to make sure that suitable opportunities for attracting new cohorts are taken. Schools are therefore encouraged to consider the development of their academic portfolio in both the short and long-term, ensuring that new courses are formulated and publicised in good time.

The University's curriculum development processes have been designed to achieve this by encouraging forward planning and sustainability. The processes (annual portfolio review, new course proposal and approval, validation and subsequent curriculum development) are formed of various stages that ensure the viability of courses, alignment of the curriculum with institutional strategy, and the securing of academic standards in line with HE Sector standards.

Principle 7 Enhancement of teaching and learning

All of the University’s activities aimed at quality assurance have a concurrent function of quality enhancement. The processes described in this handbook all contain opportunities by which the University’s community of academics can facilitate the identification and implementation of enhanced learning opportunities, as well as the identification and dissemination of best practice across a variety of themes.

Principle 8 Efficiency and effectiveness of processes

The processes described in this handbook have been designed to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. The processes achieve this by:

* Avoiding unnecessary delay by doing things once and doing them well;
* The restriction of documentation to that which is necessary;
* Designing documentation to be user-friendly;
* Staff having a clear understanding of what is expected of them;
* Having clearly defined goals;
* Adherence to publicised deadlines with built in lead times to ensure collaborative procedures can be followed across a variety of teams and their input.

Principle 9 Accuracy of information

The University has an obligation to publish accurate information to students and applicants regarding its courses, in order to maintain compliance with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance to HEIs on consumer protection legislation, and to ensure that the OfS ‘C’ Conditions of registration are satisfied. The following extract is of particular relevance, with the CMA advising HE providers to give prospective students:

*“…clear, intelligible, unambiguous and timely information… so that they know in advance what is being offered and can compare different courses and HE providers.”* (CMA, May 2023)

The best way to ensure that the University is fully compliant is for staff to adhere to the University’s curriculum development processes and timescales, as outlined in the [CMA Handbook](https://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/cmacompliance), and to undertake changes only once the required approval has been secured.

# 3. New course approval process

## 3.1 Portfolio Approval Committee

The new course approval process is overseen by the Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC). PAC is the committee with responsibility for considering the approval of new course titles and for suspending or withdrawing courses based on academic, recruitment or resource considerations. PAC is the only Committee with authority to approve:

* New award titles
* Changes to award titles
* New pathways
* Suspension or withdrawal of courses and pathways

The terms of reference, composition and membership of PAC are published on Sussex Direct.

## 3.2 Criteria for the approval of new course titles

PAC recognises the effort required to produce high-quality course proposals and has therefore committed itself to operating transparently and to providing colleagues with information about the criteria against which proposals will be reviewed. PAC may also invite senior members of staff to its meetings to join discussions where appropriate.

When reviewing proposals for new courses, PAC considers the following:

Whether the proposed course supports University and School strategic plans for growth;

Whether the proposed course is likely to provide value for money to both the student and to the University;

Whether admissions data and market information indicate that demand for the course is likely to lead to both growth in numbers and an academically viable student experience. PAC will utilise published senate thresholds for student numbers within 3 years (as projected) and/or areas of strategic importance as identified through the APR process or otherwise. PAC will also consider whether the market for the proposed course is entirely new, or whether the development is likely to draw students away from existing University provision;

Whether the logistical implications of the proposed course structure, for example in relation to the timetabling of examinations and teaching, are manageable;

Whether the proposal complies with the Academic Framework;

The level of resourcing required for the course and an assessment of the risk presented by the course’s introduction.

## 3.3 Sussex Choice: protocol for degree titles

Sussex Choice enables students to personalise their undergraduate degree courses by choosing to participate in free-standing electives, pathways, placements and study abroad. AQP publishes separate [frequently-asked-questions](https://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/sussexchoice) on their webpages.

The choices students make through Sussex Choice may be reflected in their final degree title, or on their degree certificate. The [Academic Framework](https://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/documents/form-trailed-module-change-application.docx) sets out in detail which combinations of title are permitted. The following table provides a summary, and also clarifies the conditions under which an award title including a Sussex Choice element would be: a) advertised as an entry route, or b) selected by the student after entry and appearing on the degree certificate by means of a course transfer.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sussex Choice element** | **Impact on degree title** | **Marketing protocol** |
| 60 credit pathway | * No change to the degree title
* Successful completion of a 60 credit pathway will be recognised on the degree certificate at the point of classification
 | * Students select 60 credit pathways after admission to the University, so that they can benefit from advice and guidance in their choices
* All 60 credit pathways are advertised, but particular combinations of 60 credit pathways and single honours courses are not
 |
| 90 credit minor | * Successful completion of a 90 credit minor alongside 270 credits of credits in the substantive subject leads to the award of a major/minor degree
* Where a 90 credit minor is completed as part of a pathway, the major/minor award title will be recognised on the student record at the point of classification
 | * All major/minor degree titles require explicit approval from PAC, including instances where this arises from the extension of a 60 credit pathway
* PAC may also suggest that new major/minor combinations be established, based on its review of portfolio data
* Major/minor degrees are advertised as named entry routes with a UCAS code
* Upon successful completion of a 60 credit pathway, students may transfer to the corresponding major/minor degree, where such an award exists
 |
| Integrated placement or study abroad year | * Leads to published degree title
 | * Degrees comprising an integrated placement or study abroad year are advertised as such, as a named award including reference to the placement or study abroad year
 |
| Voluntary placement or study abroad year | * Successful completion leads to the addition of ‘with a placement year’ or ‘with a study abroad year’ to the degree title
 | * Degree titles including a voluntary placement or study abroad year are not advertised on entry, as they are not guaranteed
* The opportunity to apply for a voluntary placement or study abroad year is clearly promoted to all students
 |

## 3.4 Approval stages

Portfolio Approval Committee operates a two-stage process for new course approval. The stages are designed to support the development of course proposals through business partner engagement and input, and enable academic staff to reflect in depth on what is required to produce a successful course.

The following diagram illustrates the Portfolio Committee Approval process:

3.4.1 The initial idea

Schools should consider the following matters during the initial development of a course.

1. Leadership

The school must appoint a course proposal lead (usually the intended convenor) who should take responsibility for overseeing the course approval and validation process. Where a proposal is for a joint course, there should exceptionally be two named convenors with the convenor of the first named School taking the lead.

1. Support from the School

The Head of School/Dean and Director of Teaching and Learning/Associate Dean for Education should be consulted at an early stage to ensure that the proposal will have the backing of the school. A course proposal cannot progress without the authorisation of these individuals. HoS/DTL sign-off will occur after the proposal has been to SEC, exceptionally by chair’s action.

1. Portfolio

Normally, course proposals from Schools should complement the existing portfolio of courses offered. It may be, for example, that other courses will need to be withdrawn to maximise the sustainability of the proposal or the content of existing courses adjusted to maintain the distinctiveness and diversity of the portfolio. Exceptionally, Schools may wish to propose an addition to the portfolio or to maintain a particular course for overriding strategic reasons.

1. Support from Professional Services

Although the School will retain ownership of the course proposal at every stage and is responsible for meeting required timescales, academic faculty should inform the AQP office of any new course proposals at the earliest opportunity so that the required support from Professional Services may be arranged. Colleagues in the Market Research Team, Finance Team, Library, Careers and Entrepreneurship and Educational Enhancement should be consulted. This will assist the School in producing compelling, coherent proposals.

1. Timescale

Schools need to forward plan effectively in order to ensure that courses can be proposed, developed and brought to market with a long enough lead time to ensure that recruitment is successful, whilst also meeting the various approval stage requirements. The AQP Office will work with colleagues proposing courses to set a timescale for each proposed development, taking into account the committee calendar, the need for contributions from Professional Services, the publication schedule for the prospectus and the admissions and recruitment cycle.

3.4.2 Stage 1 new course proposal

A link to the stage 1 new course proposal form is included in this handbook at Appendix 1. The following checklist is provided to support Schools to complete the form correctly, in order to avoid the form being referred back for further development. Schools must ensure that:

* the form is completed in full, including the authorising signatures;
* the proposal has been considered by the School Education Committee;
* the intended start date allows a realistic prospect of successful recruitment, and aligns with the PAC guidance regarding its Schedule of Business;
* the School’s Marketing Manager and Finance Business Partner have been consulted, and have responded to their respective sections and signed the form.

The committee meets on a monthly basis, in order to enable the efficient consideration of proposals.

The Chair has authority to take Chair’s action to approve proposals where there is an urgent need to keep business moving between meetings.

The Secretary of PAC will inform the Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning/Associate Dean for Education and the proposed course convenor of the outcome within **ten working days** of the Committee meeting.

Following the communication of the outcome, all stakeholders should be aware that there will be no addition of the course to the Curriculum Management System (the database) at this stage. This aspect of information management begins after the successful completion of Stage 2.

3.4.3 Stage 2 new course proposal

If the stage 1 new course proposal is approved by PAC, then the course may proceed to further development, culminating in the completion of the Stage 2 new course approval form for submission to PAC. Whereas Stage 1 proposals enable the Committee to make an initial assessment on the viability of a proposed course, Stage 2 proposals enable a deeper consideration of market research and financial information, provided by the Market Research and Finance teams.

Courses that receive Stage 2 approval may proceed to validation and be advertised in the University prospectus with a ‘subject to validation’ caveat.

The following notes are provided for guidance on completing the form.

School-level approval

The Stage 2 Form will require the signatures of both the Head of School and Director of Teaching and Learning/Associate Dean for Education from all contributing schools.

Contributions from Professional Services

The AQP Curriculum Manager will ensure that the School’s proposal is complete before receipt by the Committee. This will be achieved if the proposing School has entered the course-related information required and obtained supporting reports from the Market Research and Finance Teams.

Requesting exemption from current academic policy

There is an expectation that course proposals will comply with the University’s agreed academic policies and conform to the Academic Framework. Approval of new courses will be conditional on this. If the School has strong reasons for requesting exemption, these should be discussed with the AQP Office, who will be able to provide advice on how the proposal may be taken forward.

Deadlines

Course proposals will be considered by the next available meeting of PAC. The Secretary of PAC will inform the Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning/Associate Dean for Education and the course proposer of the outcome **within ten working days** of the Committee meeting. This process ensures the accuracy of the outcomes and actions following the Committee’s deliberations. The possible outcomes are:

Approval of a proposal subject to validation;

Referral of the proposal back to the School for further development.

Deferral to the next committee meeting for further discussion.

Rejection of the proposal.

Following confirmation that the course has been approved, the following actions will be completed:

A new course will be entered on the database with ‘outline’ approval status, ready for the entry of further information at the appropriate time

The course will be advertised in the online version of the prospectus with a ‘subject to validation’ caveat. If the approval process has been completed following the recommended timescale, the course can also be advertised in the print version of the prospectus (the submission date for this is usually December for undergraduate courses and April for postgraduate courses).

The AQP Office will commence arrangements for the new course to undergo validation.

Brighton and Sussex Medical School proposals

Proposals for a new course from the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) follow a different process to that detailed above. New award titles proposed by BSMS are, in the first instance, considered by the Joint Approval and Review Board (JARB), a joint body of the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex. If JARB are satisfied that the course would be a suitable addition to the School’s portfolio, the School may propose the course to PAC for approval. The proposal will also require approval from the University of Brighton’s Portfolio Planning Group (PPG). Procedures governing submission of new course proposals to PPG are available from the University of Brighton’s Academic Services division.

BSMS staff involved with a new course proposal should follow the process outlined in 3.4.1-3.4.3, with the following variations accounting for the School’s unique status at the University.

The proposal should be submitted using a bespoke form, the link to which is included in Appendix 1. Consideration of the proposal by PAC will take the form of one stage.

There is no requirement to address the question of progression routes from the International Study Centre as students on these courses do not currently progress to BSMS.

Courses that receive approval from both PAC and PPG may proceed to a conjoint validation event and may be advertised in the universities’ prospectuses with a ‘subject to validation’ caveat.

# 4. Sussex Choice: pathways

## 4.1 Introduction

The Academic Framework enables Schools to propose pathways or minors, comprised of a coherent package of modules. Under Sussex Choice, students studying single honours degrees participating in the electives scheme can then take pathways alongside their main academic discipline.

The following table shows the pathway variants that are possible:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 60 credit pathway | * Comprising 30 credits of elective modules at both stages 1 and 2 (15 credits in teaching block 1 and 15 credits in teaching block 2). Some 60 credit pathways in languages may be taken in stage 2 and final stage.
* Successful completion recognised on the degree certificate, but no change to the formal award title
* Always chosen after admission to the University
* Cannot be subject to additional formal entry requirements, so clear guidance is provided for students when selecting pathways
 |
| 90 credit minor | * Comprising 30 credits of elective modules at stages 1, 2 and 3 (15 credits in teaching block 1 and 15 credits in teaching block 2)
* leads to a major/minor degree on graduation, where the major/minor combination has been approved by the Portfolio Approval Committee
* Normally selected at applicant stage as a named award, but may also be facilitated after completion of a 60 credit pathway using the variation of study process
 |
| Type 1 pathway | * Open to all students
 |
| Type 2 pathway | * Restricted to certain cohorts. For example, to prevent Geography students from taking a pathway in Geography.
* Alternatively used to ensure that pathway entrants have attained a required level of academic competence.
 |

## 4.2 Pathway or Minor approval

The Portfolio Approval Committee has authority to approve new pathways and new major/minor degrees arising from the combination of 90 credit minors with single honours courses. A new pathway/minor approval form is included at Appendix 1. Schools proposing pathways/minors are advised to consider the following matters:

Leadership

The School must appoint a pathway/minor proposal lead (normally the intended pathway/minor convenor) who should take responsibility for navigating the pathway/minor approval process. Having a clear point of contact for a pathway/minor proposal makes for a more efficient experience as all parties will have a common point of contact.

School approval

The Head of School and Director of Teaching and Learning/Associate Dean for Education should be consulted at an early stage to ensure that any proposal will have the backing of the School. A pathway/minor proposal cannot progress without the authorisation of these individuals, whose signatures will be needed for the Proposal Form. Any new proposal for a pathway/minor must be approved by the School’s Education Committee.

Support from Professional Services

Although the School will retain ownership of the pathway/minor proposal at every stage and are responsible for meeting required timescales, academic faculty should inform the AQP office of any new pathway/minor proposals so that the necessary support from Professional Services may be arranged.

The AQP Curriculum Manager will coordinate the engagement between relevant faculty and representatives from the Professional Service where necessary. This will not be as extensive as that required for a new course proposal as the pathway/minor proposals in themselves do not require financial cases or market research in support. The concept of pathways/minors has been centrally agreed by the University and therefore obtaining this supporting evidence is not necessary. Therefore, support will mainly take the form of advice on the coherence of the pathway/minor and its likely appeal to students.

Timescale

The AQP team will support Schools proposing pathways/minor to set appropriate timescales to enable a proposed pathway/minor to be approved, promoted and timetabled.

## 4.3 Completing the forms

The forms to be used to propose new 60 credit pathways and 90 credit minors can be broken down into two sections: the pathway/minor itself and the modules that comprise it. The free text sections should convey the academic coherence and rationale, how the pathway will aid employability, and any resourcing issues of note. The module sections require overview details for existing modules and should be completed in full. New modules can be proposed via this route.

The form to be used for a new major/minor entry route requests details of the course which will form the major element, the minor that will form the minor element, together with a rationale for why a specified entry title can be justified for the proposed combination. If the 90 credit minor is being proposed at the same time as the major/minor degree, a copy of the minor proposal should be appended to the major/minor pro forma.

## 4.4 Outcomes and next steps

The Secretary of PAC will inform the Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning/Associate Dean for Education and proposer of the pathway/minor as soon as the Chair of PAC has approved the outcomes of the meeting. Relevant Professional Services staff will also be notified of the outcome. Schools should expect this notification **within** **ten working days**. This process ensures the accuracy of the outcomes and actions following the Committee’s deliberations. The possible outcomes are:

1. Approval of the pathway/minor for introduction and advertisement;
2. Referral of the proposal back to School for further development;
3. Rejection of the proposal.

Following confirmation that the pathway/minor has been approved, several pieces of work will be undertaken by Professional Services staff:

* A new 60 credit pathway will be entered onto the database by AQP. Following this, modules will be attached provided that they have been added to the database by the School.
* For new major/minor degrees, the AQP Office will add the new course to the database with a status of ‘Confirmed’.
* The pathway will be advertised in the online version of the prospectus, as well as the next edition of the print prospectus.

# 5. Validation

## 5.1 Introduction

The validation process is the final step in the University's curriculum development process before a new course can begin. New course proposals that have received Stage 2 approval may proceed to validation.

Validation enables the University to scrutinise the proposed course in greater detail, focusing on:

* The academic coherence of the course;
* The alignment of the course with national frameworks that govern standards in the Higher Education sector;
* The teaching, learning and assessment strategy on the course;
* The quality of the student experience;
* Opportunities for quality enhancement

The validation process involves contributions from external and internal academic peers, student representatives and professional services.

## 5.2 The validation process

Validation culminates with an event at which the course is scrutinised by a panel with the requisite expertise to consider all relevant areas. There are several steps to the validation process, as shown in the diagram below:

The validation process can be broken down into the following steps:

## 5.3 Validation resources

Further details of the validation process, validation timelines and guidance for schools in preparing the documentation is provided on the AQP website here: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/validation>

# 6. Curriculum development processes

## 6.1 Introduction

The University’s course and module development processes enable changes to be made to validated provision in light of continuous reflection and enhancement of the curriculum.

School Education Committees (SEC) are the bodies with responsibility for the approval of curriculum changes.

This section of the Handbook provides details on the curriculum change and development processes available to staff, the timescale governing when changes can be made, and the authorisation that must be obtained before changes may be implemented. The guidance in this section is presented as a series of tables, which show the process required for each type of change, at a glance.

The curriculum development cycle commences with the first meetings of Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC) and SEC in the Autumn Semester and concludes with the Summer meeting of UEC.

Curriculum change proposals made outside of the curriculum development cycle that impact upon the scheduling of teaching and assessment will not normally be considered.

Curriculum change proposals must be considered in line with the University’s [CMA Handbook](https://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/cmacompliance), which provides guidance to schools on maintaining compliance with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance to HEIs on consumer protection legislation. In summary, the CMA guidance requires HEIs to provide certain ‘material’ course information to applicants and students, so that they may make an informed choice about their course of study. Any changes to ‘material’ course information must be made in line with University processes and timescales in order to maintain compliance with CMA requirements. Please refer to the [CMA Handbook](https://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/cmacompliance) for further guidance about what constitutes a material change to course information.

Please note that the forms referred to in sections 6.2 to 6.7 can be obtained via the web links provided in Appendix 1 of this handbook.

##

## 6.2 Course-level changes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of change** | **Approval authority** | **Notes** | **Forms and documents** |
| Material changes to a course | PAC | If a School wishes to change a course so substantially that all stages of the course are affected, then the School should submit the revised course to Portfolio Approval Committee as if it were a new course, starting from Stage 1 of the process. This applies even where the title of the award is itself unchanged. Schools intending to do this should ensure that such a change follows the timescale for new courses. Such changes will be treated as new courses and will normally only be introduced for new cohorts.Schools wishing to propose material course revisions should refer to Section 3 of this document for details of the process to be followed. | PAC Stage 1 proposal formPAC Stage 2 proposal formCourse Change FormModule Change FormExisting module specificationsCourse handbook |
| Change to a course title | PAC | A request to change the title of a course is considered to be a material course change for CMA purposes. A title change impacts on the degree title that students receive and has implications for many of the business processes of the University. Schools are required to specify proposed timescales for course title changes and should note that changes are unlikely to be approved for implementation in the middle of a recruitment cycle, where there would be a disruptive impact on existing applicants. Schools should contact the Admissions Office to discuss the likely operational impact of any proposed title change.Approval should be obtained from the Autumn Semester meeting of SEC. Final approval will then be given by PAC for implementation at the next appropriate opportunity. | PAC Title Change form |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of change** | **Approval authority** | **Notes** | **Forms and documents** |
| Changes to mode of study (full-time, part-time and distance learning) | PAC | A request to change the modes of study by which a course is offered to students is considered to be a material course change for CMA purposes. Removing modes of study may impact upon resourcing in the School and across the University, as well as the student experience, and thus requires approval from the Portfolio Approval Committee. Initial approval should be obtained from the Autumn Semester meeting of SEC. Where there is a proposal to offer a course by distance learning, then a validation event may be required.  | Change to a course or pathway |
| Changes to course structure or course-level learning outcomes | SEC | A revision to the structure of a course may constitute a material course change for CMA purposes. This includes:* Revising the credit weighting of a module;
* Adding or removing an optional strand;
* The removal or addition of core, optional or elective modules.

A revision of the course-level learning outcomes may also considered be a material course change. These changes are likely to substantially impact on the experience of students taking the course and may alter the pre-contract information provided to offer-holders. The changes must be carefully managed so as to maintain standards and ensure compliance with CMA requirements. Approval should be obtained from the Autumn Semester meetings of SEC. | Change to a course or pathway |

## 6.3 Changes to pathways

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of change** | **Approval authority** | **Notes** | **Forms and documents** |
| Changes to pathway structure or learning outcomes | SEC | A revision to the structure of a pathway may constitute a material course change for CMA purposes. This includes:* Revising which modules comprise the pathway;
* Revision to the pathway’s learning outcomes.

These changes are likely to substantially impact on the experience of students taking the course and may alter the pre-contract information provided to offer-holders. The changes must be carefully managed so as to maintain standards and ensure compliance with CMA requirements. Approval should be obtained from the Autumn Semester meetings of SEC.  | Change to a course or pathway |

## 6.4 Course and pathway suspensions and withdrawals

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of change** | **Approval authority** | **Notes** | **Forms and documents** |
| Withdrawal of a course or pathway | PAC | A request to withdraw a course or pathway should, in the first instance, be made to the first possible meeting of SEC. Schools may consult the Admissions Office to discuss the likely impact of any proposal to withdraw or suspend a course.Once approval from SEC has been gained, the School should submit the proposal form to PAC. PAC will determine whether the withdrawal is in the University’s interests. This will enable the removal of a course or pathway in line with the admissions cycle. It is important that Schools appreciate that withdrawal of an undergraduate course in the middle of an applications cycle is not permissible. Therefore, Schools should propose withdrawals for the first appropriate year unaffected by the current applications cycle. | Proposal to withdraw/suspend a course/pathway |
| Suspension of a course or pathway | PAC | Suspension in this instance means the temporary withdrawal of a course or pathway from being offered to new students for admission. Suspension is for a time-limited period of up to two years, and the inclusive dates of the suspension must be recorded on CMS. If, following the initial two years of suspension, the School makes a further request to suspend the course or pathway then this will be treated as a withdrawal. A request to suspend a course or pathway should, in the first instance be made to the first possible meeting of SEC. Once approval has been gained, the School should submit the proposal form to the next appropriate meeting of PAC, which will determine whether the suspension is in the University’s interests. This will enable the removal of a course or pathway in good time for the following academic year. | Proposal to withdraw/suspend a course/pathway |

## 6.5 New modules, module suspensions and withdrawals

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of change** | **Approval authority** | **Notes** | **Forms and documents** |
| New modules | SEC | Approval of a new undergraduate or postgraduate module, in addition to those considered as part of a validation event, may constitute a material change for CMA purposes. This is because new modules substantively change the courses for which they are core or optional, with important implications for the experience of students taking them.Approval should be obtained from the Autumn Semester meetings of SEC.  | Module form |
| Withdrawal of a module | SEC | Withdrawal of a module may constitute a material change for CMA purposes, given the potential impact on a particular course or even a number of courses. This is because the module may be core, or is an option so that withdrawal results in a more limited choice for students. Staff should be mindful of the effect that the withdrawal will have, consulting relevant course convenors as appropriate. Evidence of this consultation will be expected as part of the submitted proposal.Approval should be obtained from the Autumn Semester meetings of SEC. This process should be followed regardless of whether the module is core, optional or an elective. | Module form |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of change** | **Approval authority** | **Notes** | **Forms and documents** |
| Suspension of a module | SEC | Suspension in this instance means the temporary withdrawal of a module from being offered to students. Despite the temporary nature of the suspension, it may constitute a material change for CMA purposes, given the reduction in student choice and subsequent implication for the student experience.Suspension is for a time-limited period of up to two years, and the inclusive dates of the suspension must be recorded on central data systems. If, following the initial two years of suspension, the School makes a further request to suspend the module, this will be treated as a withdrawal.A request to suspend a module should, in the first instance be made to the Autumn meetings of SEC. This process should be followed regardless of whether the module is core, optional or an elective. | Module form |
| Replacement of a module on a course | SEC | This curriculum development change can be achieved through a combination of submitting concurrent new module and withdrawal proposal forms. The respective processes should be followed in each case, with both forms noting the interdependence of the proposed change.Replacement of a module on a course may constitute a ‘material’ change to a course for CMA purposes. Therefore, all requests to replace a module must be made to the Autumn meetings of SEC.  | Module formCourse change form |

## 6.6 Module-level changes

Whilst CMA guidance considers [material information](#_6.1_Introduction) at a course level, at Sussex, we present some material elements of course information at a module level. These are referred to as ‘definitive’ elements of modules, which are those that are approved at the time of validation. Definitive module changes are normally submitted to the Autumn meetings of SEC, in order that the changes remain compliant with CMA guidelines.

Some elements of modules are only illustrative of the way in which a module will be offered at the time of validation are, therefore, non-material for CMA purposes. These are referred to as ‘indicative’ elements of modules. Indicative changes may be submitted to the Spring and Summer Boards of Study (BoS).

The following table sets out the types of definitive and indicative module information and the approving authority for changes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of change** | **Definitive or Indicative** | **Approval authority** | **Notes** | **Forms and documents** |
| * Module title
* Module description
* Teaching semester
* Credit value
* Credit level
* Learning outcomes
* Assessment modes
* Assessment weightings
* Breakdown of teaching and learning hours
* Teaching methods
 | Definitive | SEC | Definitive changes may constitute a ‘material’ change for CMA purposes, owing to the significant impact upon the experience of students taking the module, and the potential impact on overall material course information. Definitive module changes must normally be made to the Autumn meetings of SEC. | Module form |
| * Assessment schedule
* Assessment length
* Assessment duration
 | Indicative | BoS | These changes are classed as ‘indicative’ owing to their moderate impact upon the experience of students taking the affected modules. Even after proposals for indicative changes have been approved, the learning outcomes of the module will remain constant, ensuring that students successfully completing the module will still be able to reach the same end point. | Module form  |

## 6.7 Variation of study

Variation of study takes place where students vary their modules from those published as part of the validated course. Variation of study of up to 30 credits is permitted at level 7 only, to facilitate interdisciplinarity, but only where timetabling permits.

Approval for this type of change must be obtained from the module convenor, course convenor, and Director of Teaching and Learning. Applications for a variation of study may be rejected based on academic judgement regarding the proposed variation and/or the academic performance of the student. The Director of Teaching and Learning must ensure that the learning outcomes of any core modules missed can be met and that the level and credit volume of study is academically appropriate.

Variation of study is not permitted at levels 3 - 6, since students are provided with extensive choice through Sussex Choice. There are three, exceptions in which undergraduate students can apply to vary their study:

1. To accommodate a study abroad semester
2. To enable a student who has successfully completed a 60 credit pathway at stages 1 and 2, to transfer to the corresponding major/minor degree title, where one exists.
3. To enable students to replace a failed 15 credit module with the mark of a module taken from the International Summer School portfolio, at the appropriate level.

# 7. Curriculum information management

## 7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to clarify where responsibility for the management of course data resides and to detail the protocol that underpins this. Staff should adhere to the protocol below to ensure that course data is recorded accurately and is compliant with the University’s quality assurance processes. This protocol allows the University to have confidence that the educational provision offered by Schools is of an appropriate quality, is aligned to its strategy and policies, and can be delivered as effectively as possible with respect to available resources.

The quality of curriculum data is also critical to ensuring the University’s compliance with consumer law. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) have issued clear guidance that HE instituions should provide*“…clear, accurate, comprehensive, unambiguous and timely information to prospective and current students.” (CMA, May 2023).* It is therefore clear that all staff involved in curriculum development have a duty to ensure that the University meets this obligation. The following protocol will provide guidance on how to achieve this.

Overall responsibility for the management of curriculum data resides with the Academic Quality and Partnership (AQP) Office. If academic or Professional Services staff have any questions regarding this protocol, these may be referred to the AQP Curriculum Team. Responsibility for the accurate completion of proposal forms resides with the School.

## New courses and pathways

7.2.1 Portfolio Approval Committee

The first instance of course data being recorded in the Course Management System (CMS) occurs following approval of a new course (Stage 2 approval) or pathway title at Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC). Following approval, the **PAC Secretary** informs the School(s) of the approval[[1]](#footnote-1) and at the same time informs relevant contacts in Professional Services that a new course or pathway title has been agreed. These Profesional Services contacts are:

* The **Prospectus Editor**, who will need to know that new content will be required for the online and print prospectuses. New course pages in the prospectus will need to incorporate a ‘subject to validation’ caveat at this stage, so as not to give the appearance to applicants that the course has been approved to admit students. However, recruitment activities are permitted at this stage. New pathways will also need to be added to relevant publications in both online and print formats.
* **The AQP Curriculum Team**, who will need to create a new course or pathway record in CMS. New course records will be given a status of ‘OUTLINE’. The Team will then also ensure that a Validation Secretary is appointed to take forward the University’s quality assurance process.
* The **Admissions Team**, who will need to set up a UCAS code (UG only) and will need to be in a position to advise applicants regarding the course.
* The **Finance Team**, who will need to factor the new course or pathway into their business systems.

No module records should be created at this stage in respect of new courses as only the title and general course concept will have been approved. Therefore, the Curriculum and Assessment Officer (CAO) in the School should not take any action at this time with respect to course data.

With regard to new pathways, the **CAO** will create the relevant new module records in CMS. The **AQP Curriculum Team** will then attach these modules to the pathway record in CMS.

* + 1. Validation

The **Validation Secretary**, following validation of a new course, will inform the School of this fact. The Secretary will also inform the AQP Curriculum Team and the Student MI and Data Team that a course has been validated, with the entire process having reached completion.

The **AQP Curriculum Team** will then carry out the folllowing actions:

* The course record on CMS is updated so that the course’s status changes to ‘CONFIRMED’
* Following this, the Team will contact the relevant CAO to inform them that they can begin to populate the course record with module and syllabus data.
* The Team will contact the Prospectus Editor to confirm that the ‘subject to validation’ caveat can be removed.
* The Team will contact the Student MI and Data Team, who will arrange for the course to be added to the Student Loans Company database to allow applicants to access loans.

The **CAO** will then create new module records and attach these to the course record, ensuring that these are in place prior to the beginning of the timetabling process for the following academic year. The **CAO** will also create the attendant syllabus rules for the course.

The addition of module and syllabus information concludes the data management process for the addition of new courses and pathways. **Figures 1 and 2** illustrate this process with further contextual information

**Figure 1: Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC) – business flow for new courses and pathways**

**Figure 2: Course validation – business flow**

## 7.3 New modules

New modules are added to CMS as an outcome of one of three processes: approval by a School Education Committee (SEC); approval of a new pathway by PAC; validation of a new course.

* + 1. *Approval by SEC*

Following approval from SEC, the **CAO** will add new modules, attaching them to a course or courses in CMS as appropriate. If the module forms part of a pathway, the **CAO** should contact the **AQP Curriculum Team** to ensure that these modules are attached to the pathway record in CMS.

* + 1. *Approval of a new pathway by PAC*

Please refer to the protocol governing the new pathway approval process, as detailed previously.

* + 1. *Validation*

Please refer to the protocol governing the validation process, as detailed previously.

## 7.4 Material changes to course structures

Material changes to course structures can occur as a result of one of three processes: approval by SEC; School Periodic Review; validation.

* + 1. *Approval by SEC*

Following approval by SEC of a material change, the **CAO** will then enact the change in CMS as appropriate. **Figure 3** illustrates this process with further contextual information.

* + 1. *School Periodic Review*

During the School Periodic Review process, the Panel will review the current educational provision of the School. It is possible that, following this consideration, the Panel will recommend changes to the curriculum in order to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and/or the wider student experience.

Following approval of any changes by the Panel, which is chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students), the **Review Panel Secretary** will contact the relevant DTL and CAO with details of the changes.

The **CAO** will then proceed to enact the change in CMS as appropriate.

* + 1. *Validation*

Please refer to the protocol governing the validation process, as detailed previously.

## 7.5 Definitive module changes

Definitive (material) changes to modules can occur as a result of one of three processes: approval by SEC; School Periodic Review; validation.

* + 1. *Approval by SEC*

Following approval by SEC of a material change, the **CAO** will then enact the change in CMS as appropriate. **Figure 3** illustrates this process with further contextual information.

* + 1. *School Periodic Review*

During the School Periodic Review process, the Panel will review the current educational provision of the School. It is possible that, following this consideration, the Panel will recommend changes to the curriculum in order to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and/or the wider student experience.

Following approval of any changes by the Panel, which is chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students), the **Review Panel Secretary** will contact the relevant DTL and CAO with details of the changes.

The **CAO** will then proceed to enact the change in CMS as appropriate.

* + 1. *Validation*

Please refer to the protocol governing the validation process, as detailed previously.

## 7.6 Indicative module changes

Indicative (non-material) changes to modules can occur as a result of one of three processes: Approval by Boards of Study (BoS); School Periodic Review; validation.

* + 1. *Approval by BoS*

Following approval of indicative changes by BoS, the **CAO** should implement these changes immediately. **Figure 3** illustrates this process with further contextual information.

* + 1. *School Periodic Review and Validation*

It is conceivable that indicative changes to modules could be required following either a School Periodic Review or a validation event. The **CAO** should follow the same procedure as for the implementation of a definitive module change.

**Figure 3: Curriculum development – business flow**

## 7.7 Suspensions and withdrawals of courses or pathways

The suspension or withdrawal of a course or pathway is undertaken following approval by PAC, either following a proposal from the School or as a determination of deliberations held at a PAC meeting.

Following approval of the suspension of a course or pathway by PAC, the **PAC Secretary** informs the School of the outcome and at the same time informs relevant contacts in Professional Services that a course or pathway has been suspended or withdrawn. These Profesional Services contacts are:

* The **Prospectus Editor** will need to know that the course or pathway should be removed from online and, if possible, print resources, so that students do not erroneously apply for a course that is unavailable.
* The **AQP Curriculum Team** will need to amend the course or pathway record in CMS so that it is given a status of ‘SUSPENDED’ or ‘WITHDRAWN’. For suspensions, the Team will then also ensure that at the point the course is due to be reinstated, that the status of the course for the forthcoming academic year is ‘CONFIRMED’.
* The **Admissions Team**, who will need to be in a position to advise applicants correctly as to the current and future availability of the course or pathway.
* The **Finance Team**, who will need to factor the suspension into their business systems.

It is current policy that, following suspension of a course or pathway for a maximum of two academic years, a proposal for a further suspension will trigger an automatic withdrawal. **The AQP Curriculum Team** will consult with the School and, if necessary inform the PAC Secretary that withdrawal of a course is required.

It is also conceivable that a suspension or withdrawal of a course or pathway could be required following a School Periodic Review. The **Review Panel Secretary** should ensure that confirmation of this is sent to the School, the PAC Secretary, and the AQP Curriculum Team who can then implement this change using the process detailed above.

**Figure 4** illustrates this process with further contextual information

**Figure 4: Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC) – business flow for course and pathway withdrawals or suspensions**

## 7.8 Module suspensions or withdrawals

The suspension or withdrawal of a module is undertaken following approval by SEC.

Following approval of the suspension or withdrawal of a module by SEC, the **CAO** will then proceed to enact the change in CMS as appropriate.

It is also conceivable that a module suspension or withdrawal could be required following a School Periodic Review. The **Review Panel Secretary** should ensure that confirmation of this is sent to the School, including the CAO, who can then implement this change using the process detailed above.

## Appendix 1: List of curriculum development forms and associated web links

The following documents relating to new course and course suspension/withdrawal proposals can be found at this website: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/newcourseapproval>

*New course and course suspension/withdrawal proposal forms*

Stage 1 Course Proposal for PAC

Stage 2 Course Proposal for PAC

New Course Proposal BSMS

New Pathway Proposal – 60 credits

New Minor Proposal – 90 credits

Proposal to suspend/withdraw a course/pathway

Proposal to amend a Course or Pathway title

Proposal to add or change a Mode of Study

The following documents relating to course validations can be found at this website: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/validation>

*Validations*

New Course Specification

Course Resources Form

Module Form

The following documents relating to curriculum development can be found at this website: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/curriculumdevelopment>

Module Form

Course change form

Proposal for a Major Change to a Course or Pathway

Documents relating to variations of study can be found at this website <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/curriculum/variation-of-study>

## Appendix 2: Reference documents for curriculum development

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Published by** | **Relevance** |
| Curriculum Development Handbook | AQP, University of Sussex | This handbook provides detail on how new course and pathway approval, validation of new courses, and curriculum development operate at the University. |
| Academic Framework | AQP, University of Sussex | Staff can refer to the Framework to understand the approved structures for courses at the University.  |
| Examinations and Assessment Handbook | Student Administration, University of Sussex | This handbook provides details on how assessment should operate at the University. Proposed development should conform to the principles and regulations contained within this document. |
| Modes of assessment | AQP, University of Sussex | Provides a list of the approved modes of assessment that can be offered to students as part of a course. |
| The above documents can be located at the following webpage: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/documents> |
| Learn to Transform Strategy | Senate | Explains the University’s intentions with regard to the provision of courses, pathways and modules to students. Proposed developments should adhere to the Strategy. |
| Database and CMA Handbook | AQP, University of Sussex | Provides guidance around how to remain compliant with CMA guidance to HEIs and instructions for making curriculum changes on the database. |
| Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) | QAA | Courses at the University must adhere to this framework. This will be ensured in practice by developing courses in line with the University’s Academic Framework. This document is aligned with the FHEQ, ensuring that the University’s awards commensurate with UK standards. |
| Master’s Degree Characteristics | QAA | Provides specific guidance relevant to the design of taught postgraduate provision. |
| Subject Benchmark Statements | QAA | Provides detailed statements on the expected outcomes for degree qualifications in particular subjects. Courses should be able to demonstrate an appropriate relationship to the relevant benchmark, where this is available. |
| UK Quality Code for Higher Education | QAA | Contains guidance on the expectation of the quality of the education provided by HE institutions, in order that they and the general public can be assured of the quality of their academic provision. This is a higher level document but contains useful principles that should inform all curriculum development.  |
| Registration with the OfS – A Guide | OfS | Contains guidance on how institutions are expected to maintain and improve the quality and standards of higher education as part of their conditions of registration. |
| The regulatory framework for higher education in England | OfS | A guide to the four primary regulatory objectives that all students, from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education:* Are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, higher education.
* Receive a high quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure.
* Are able to progress into employment or further study, and their qualifications hold their value over time.
* Receive value for money.
 |

1. In all circumstances, outcomes of PAC should be communicated to the Head of School (HoS) and Director of Teaching and Learning (DTL), copying in the Curriculum and Assessment Officer (CAO) where this is appropriate. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)