



University of  
Chester

Handbook

B

# Quality and Standards Manual

**TO ACCOMPANY THE  
PRINCIPLES AND REGULATIONS:**

**APPROVAL, MODIFICATION and  
WITHDRAWAL of**

**ACADEMIC PROVISION**

**2022 – 2023**

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## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

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This Handbook details the agreed procedures for the approval, modification and withdrawal of taught academic provision.

### 1.1 Design of academic provision

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Information on the design of academic provision, including the **framework documents** which describe the requirements of the range of awards offered by University of Chester, can be found in Handbook A.

Guidance on embedding academic skills can be found at Appendix C6. Pro-forma which may be used by staff during the development of programmes can be found at Appendix F3 and for modules at Appendix F4.

### 1.2 Programme specifications and module descriptors

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All programme specifications and module descriptors must be created using the online editor accessed via Portal: <https://psmd.chester.ac.uk/>

### 1.3 Module codes

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New module codes are issued by Janet Chadwick ([j.chadwick@chester.ac.uk](mailto:j.chadwick@chester.ac.uk)) in Registry Services and should be requested prior to the creation of new modules on the online editor.

### 1.4 Collaborative provision

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Specific requirements which relate to the approval of partner organisations and collaborative provision are detailed in Handbook Cii.

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## 2. PROCEDURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC PROVISION

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### 2.1 Development and Approval of a New Programme of Study

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The University operates a risk-based approach to the development and approval of new programmes of study. The level of scrutiny applied to a proposed programme will be varied according to the overall volume of new provision being developed and its level of complexity. The process for development and approval will be focussed both on securing academic standards and on seeking to enhance the quality of the student experience wherever possible.

These procedures will be applied to all new programmes of study with the exception of categories of provision which may be [approved directly through Faculty Boards of Studies](#).

In the case of all applicable new programmes of study the following stages will apply:

1. Proposal
2. Design and Development
3. Review and Feedback
4. Approval

A flow diagram providing an overview of the programme development and approval process can be found at Appendix B1.

Throughout this process, where reference is made to meetings these may be held either face-to-face or virtually, as appropriate.

Additional procedures relating to the approval of [Higher Degree Apprenticeships](#) are detailed below.

#### 2.1.1 Programme Development Proposal

The pro-forma for a Programme Development Proposal can be found at Appendix D1 and this must be fully completed for all new programmes of study. The proposal is designed to provide information on which Faculty and University Management can judge whether there is a compelling business case for a programme's development and whether it is aligned with strategic priorities. Completion of the proposal will require the author to request:

- A Market Intelligence Report, requested from [Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions](#)
- Costings produced by the [Finance Department](#)

Once the proposal is complete it should be considered and endorsed both by the proposing Faculty's Management Group AND the Management Group of any contributing Faculties.

Following Faculty endorsement, the proposal should be submitted for consideration by the [Portfolio Development and Management Committee \(PDMC\)](#). PDMC will decide:

- a) Whether the Programme Development Proposal should be approved to proceed to the next stage of the approval process;
- b) If so, which approval route the programme should follow.

The Secretary to PDMC will be responsible for communicating to the proposing Faculty and Academic Services (AS) the outcome for the proposal.

Progress must be made on the development of the programme of study within 12 months of PDMC approval of the proposal. Thereafter, an updated proposal must be submitted to PDMC which will consider whether there remains a case for the programme to be developed.

### *2.1.2 Criteria for Approval Routes*

Once the proposal is approved by PDMC, the programme of study will follow one of three routes to approval according to the following criteria:

#### **ROUTE A**

- The programme of study will be composed of primarily (75% or more) existing approved modules; and
- With reference to available CME data, PDMC is satisfied that there is evidence of good student outcomes and levels of satisfaction in the subject area. Otherwise Route B or C will be applied.

#### **ROUTE B**

- The programme of study is in an existing subject area but will be composed of a substantial proportion (more than 25%) of new modules.



## ROUTE C

- The programme of study is in a new subject area; and/or
- The programme of study requires accreditation by a Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Body (PSRB).

### *2.1.3 Approval Route A*

A flow diagram depicting the process for Approval Route A can be found at Appendix B2.

## **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

Following approval of the proposal for the programme of study by PDMC, a Quality Adviser will be allocated by AS. The Quality Adviser will provide support to the programme developer and guide the programme through the process from development to approval. The Quality Adviser will arrange a meeting, or otherwise liaise, with the programme developer(s) to agree the next steps in progressing the programme. The relevant Faculty Administrator and Associate Dean (or other nominated representative of FMG) will also be invited to participate in discussions and will be included in any correspondence.

The following aspects will be covered:

- The key features of the programme of study. The Quality Adviser will provide guidance on relevant policies, and/or aspects which may require further consultation or additional support (e.g. study skills, assessment regulations);
- The documentation which will need to be submitted for review;
- The composition of the Review Group which will consider the draft programme of study, and how this will be assembled;
- The schedule for the development and approval process including deadline for submission of documentation to AS.

Programme developer(s) are encouraged to seek ongoing advice from the Quality Adviser throughout the process of design, development and approval.

## **REVIEW AND FEEDBACK**

The programme developer(s) will submit documentation to AS electronically by the agreed deadline. This will include the following:

- A draft [programme specification](#);
- Draft [module descriptors](#) for any NEW modules;
- A draft programme handbook;
- Comments from an appropriate External Examiner on the new programme of study and any new modules;
- Supporting information about the curriculum, delivery and resourcing of the programme.

Full details of the documentation requirements for the Review and Feedback stage can be found at Appendix C1.

On receipt of the documentation the Quality Adviser will undertake a preliminary review to check the following:

- All required information has been included;
- The programme of study is aligned to the relevant University of Chester framework;
- The programme of study is aligned with University of Chester regulations.

Where it is identified that required information is missing, this will be requested by the Quality Adviser from the programme developer(s) before the documentation is circulated to the Review Group. Where the Quality Adviser identifies major concerns regarding the alignment of the programme of study with University of Chester requirements, they will work with the programme developer(s) to identify how those concerns could be addressed. This may result in a delay in the documentation being circulated to the Review Group. In such cases a revised deadline will be agreed and the Faculty Administrator and Associate Dean (or other nominated representative of FMG) included in any correspondence.

Once it is confirmed that appropriate documentation has been received, the Quality Adviser will circulate it to the Review Group which will include the following:

- An academic reviewer representing the Faculty Board of Studies;
- A student reviewer;
- AS Quality Adviser

The Review Group will be asked to provide written comments on the programme documentation with reference to the guidance found at Appendix C2, to be returned by an agreed deadline. Reviewers may use the Reviewer Commentary pro-forma found at Appendix E2, but feedback will be accepted in other formats should the reviewer prefer.

Once all comments from the Review Group have been submitted, the Quality Adviser will collate these and produce a draft Programme Review Report (Appendix G1). The Programme Review Report will detail any action points which will be categorised as:

- **Required actions:** those which must be addressed prior to commencing delivery of the programme of study;
- **Recommended actions:** those which the Review Group suggest could enhance the programme of study. These may be aspects which could be actioned immediately, or which are to be addressed once delivery has commenced. Any recommended actions which have not been completed at the point of approval will be tracked through the [Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement \(CME\)](#) action plan for the programme once delivery commences.

The report will be shared with the programme developer(s) who will be invited to confirm the accuracy and clarity of the report and address any action points by returning a completed action plan (Appendix G3) via email to the AS Quality Adviser.

Where there are more significant issues raised, or there are aspects which warrant further discussion or clarification, the Quality Adviser will arrange a meeting with the programme developer(s). The Faculty Administrator and/or, where appropriate, the academic representative of the Faculty Board of Studies may also be invited to attend the meeting.

Following the meeting, the Quality Adviser will send the finalised Programme Review Report to the programme developer(s), and they will be required to respond to the report using the Programme Approval Action Plan pro-forma found at Appendix G3 by an agreed deadline. The Quality Adviser will be available to provide ongoing support to programme developer(s) on how action points might be addressed. Where the Quality Adviser has concerns that an action plan does not adequately address all required action points, they may seek further discussion with the programme developer(s), and where appropriate Faculty representatives, before progressing the programme for Faculty and PDMC approval.

## **APPROVAL**

Once the Quality Adviser is satisfied that the action plan addresses the action points identified during the Review and Feedback stage, they will forward a copy of the Programme Review Report and the action plan to the Faculty Administrator and Associate Dean (or another nominated representative of FMG). The programme specification will also be progressed to the Faculty on the online editor at this point and the Faculty will assume responsibility for agreeing the final version of the programme (subject to PDMC approval)

The Faculty Administrator and Associate Dean (or other nominated representative of FMG) are then responsible for checking, on behalf of the Faculty, that:

- all relevant action points have been completed; and
- the final version of the programme specification is suitable for publication; and
- the module descriptors for any new modules are suitable for publication.

Where the Faculty identifies any outstanding or additional issues, it may refer the programme of study back to the programme developer(s) for further work and an updated action plan.

Once the Faculty is satisfied with the quality of the programme of study, the Dean may take Chair's Action to recommend approval of the programme on behalf of the Faculty Board of Studies to PDMC. In this instance, the recommendation for approval should then be reported at the next meeting of the Board of Studies. Alternatively, the Faculty may choose to present the programme for approval at the next available meeting of the Board of Studies.

The Faculty should complete Section 1 of Appendix G4 – PDMC Programme Approval Proforma and submit this to PDMC on behalf of the Board of Studies in order to recommend approval of new programmes to PDMC. The completed proforma should be emailed to the Secretary to PDMC for it to be considered at the next available meeting, there is no requirement to include the Programme Approval report when submitting the proforma to PDMC.

Section 2 of the proforma should be completed by the secretary of PDMC once the final approval has been granted and returned to the corresponding Faculty with AS copied in (progapps@chester.ac.uk).

Where further action has been required a copy of the updated action plan should be forwarded to AS.

#### *2.1.4 Approval Route B*

A flow diagram depicting the process for Approval Route B can be found at Appendix B3.

## **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

Following approval of the proposal for the programme of study by PDMC, a Quality Adviser will be allocated by AS. The Quality Adviser will provide support to the programme developer and guide the programme through the process from development to approval. The Quality Adviser will arrange a meeting, or otherwise liaise, with the programme developer(s) to agree the next steps in progressing the programme. The relevant Faculty Administrator and Associate Dean (or other nominated representative of FMG) will also be invited to participate in discussions and will be included in any correspondence.

The following aspects will be covered:

- The key features of the programme of study. The Quality Adviser will provide guidance on relevant policies, and/or aspects which may require further consultation or additional support (e.g. study skills, assessment regulations);
- The documentation which will need to be submitted for review;
- The composition of the Review Group which will consider the draft programme of study and how this will be assembled;
- The schedule for the approval process including deadline for submission of documentation to AS.

Programme developer(s) are encouraged to seek ongoing advice from the Quality Adviser throughout the process of design, development and approval.

## REVIEW AND FEEDBACK

The programme developer(s) will submit documentation to AS electronically by the agreed deadline. This will include the following:

- A draft [programme specification](#);
- [Module descriptors](#) for ALL modules included in the programme of study;
- A draft programme handbook;
- Supporting information about the curriculum, delivery and resourcing of the programme.

Full details of the documentation requirements for the Review and Feedback stage can be found at Appendix C1.

On receipt of the documentation the Quality Adviser will undertake a preliminary review to check the following:

- All required information has been included;
- The programme of study is aligned to the relevant University of Chester framework;
- The programme of study is aligned with University of Chester regulations.

Where it is identified that required information is missing, this will be requested by the Quality Adviser from the programme developer(s) before the documentation is circulated to the Review Group. Where the Quality Adviser identifies major concerns regarding the alignment of the programme of study with University of Chester requirements, they will work with the programme developer(s) to identify how those concerns could be addressed. This may result in a delay in the documentation being circulated to the Review Group. In such

cases a revised deadline will be agreed and the Faculty Administrator and Associate Dean (or other nominated representative of FMG) included in any correspondence.

Once it is confirmed that appropriate documentation has been received, the Quality Adviser will circulate it to the Review Group which will include the following:

- An academic reviewer representing the Faculty Board of Studies;
- An academic reviewer from another Faculty;
- An external adviser nominated by the programme developer(s) using the pro-forma at Appendix E1;
- A student reviewer;
- AS Quality Adviser

The Review Group will be asked to provide written comments on the programme documentation with reference to the guidance found at Appendix C2, to be returned by an agreed deadline. Reviewers may use the Reviewer Commentary pro-forma found at Appendix E2, but feedback will be accepted in other formats should the reviewer prefer.

Once all comments from the Review Group have been submitted, the Quality Adviser will collate these and produce a draft Programme Review Report (Appendix G1). The report will be shared with the programme developer(s) and a meeting arranged to discuss the issues identified by the Review Group. The Faculty Administrator and the academic representative of the Faculty Board of Studies will also be invited to attend the meeting.

Following the meeting the Quality Adviser will finalise the Programme Review Report including any action points. These will be categorised as:

- Required actions: those which must be addressed prior to commencing delivery of the programme of study;
- Recommended actions: those which the Review Group suggest could enhance the programme of study. These may be aspects which could be actioned immediately, or which are to be addressed once delivery has commenced. Any recommended actions which have not been completed at the point of approval will be tracked through the [Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement \(CME\)](#) action plan for the programme once delivery commences.

The Quality Adviser will send the finalised Programme Review Report to the programme developer(s), and they will be required to respond to the report using the Programme Approval Action Plan pro-forma found at **Appendix G3** by an agreed deadline. The Quality Adviser will be available to provide ongoing support to programme developer(s) on how action points might be addressed. Where the Quality Adviser has concerns that an action plan does not adequately address all required action points, they may seek further discussion

with the programme developer(s), and where appropriate Faculty representatives, before progressing the programme for Faculty and PDMC approval.

## APPROVAL

Once the Quality Adviser is satisfied that the action plan addresses the action points identified in the Review and Feedback stage, they will forward a copy of the Programme Review Report and the action plan to the Faculty Administrator. The programme specification will also be progressed to the Faculty on the online editor at this point and the Faculty will assume responsibility for agreeing the final version of the programme (subject to PDMC approval).

The Faculty Board of Studies (or a designated sub-group with AS representation) should then receive and consider the following:

- Programme Review Report;
- Action plan addressing the action points detailed in the report;
- Programme specification, updated as required;
- Module descriptors for any NEW modules, updated as required.

The programme developer(s) should be invited to attend the Board of Studies (or sub-group) to present the programme of study and respond to any queries. The Board of Studies (or sub-group) should ensure that:

- all relevant action points have been completed; and
- the final version of the programme specification is suitable for publication; and
- the module descriptors for any new modules are suitable for publication; and
- the programme and modules are otherwise consistent with University and Faculty requirements.

The Board of Studies (or sub-group) may:

- Recommend to PDMC approval of the programme of study; or
- Require further amendments to be made to the programme and the action plan updated, subject to which the programme may be recommended to PDMC for approval by Chair's Action; or
- Require further amendments to be made to the programme and the action plan updated and presented to a future meeting of the Board of Studies for further

consideration.

The outcome of the Board of Studies (or sub-group) discussions including any further required action should be recorded in its minutes. Where a sub-group has been held these minutes should be received at the next meeting of the Board of Studies.

The Faculty should complete Section 1 of Appendix G4 – PDMC Programme Approval Proforma and submit this to PDMC on behalf of the Board of Studies in order to recommend approval of new programmes to PDMC. The completed proforma should be emailed to the Secretary to PDMC for it to be considered at the next available meeting, there is no requirement to include the Programme Approval report when submitting the proforma to PDMC.

Section 2 of the proforma should be completed by the secretary of PDMC once the final approval has been granted and returned to the corresponding Faculty with AS copied in (progapps@chester.ac.uk).

Where further action has been required a copy of the updated action plan should be forwarded to AS.

#### *2.1.5 Approval Route C*

A flow diagram depicting the process for Approval Route C can be found at Appendix B4.

### **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

Following approval of the proposal for the programme of study by PDMC, a Quality Adviser will be allocated by AS. The Quality Adviser will provide support to the programme developer and guide the programme through the process from development to approval. The Quality Adviser will arrange a meeting, or otherwise liaise, with the programme developer(s) to agree the next steps in progressing the programme. The relevant Faculty Administrator and Associate Dean (or other nominated representative of FMG) will also be invited to participate in discussions and will be included in any correspondence.

The following aspects will be covered:

- The key features of the programme of study. The Quality Adviser will provide guidance on relevant policies, and/or aspects which may require further consultation or additional support (e.g. study skills, assessment regulations);
- Whether any derogation from University regulations will be needed to meet professional body requirements;
- Whether the process for approval will require any adaptation to meet professional body requirements;
- The documentation which will need to be submitted for review;
- The composition of the Review Group which will consider the draft programme of



- study and how this will be assembled;
- The schedule for the approval process including deadline for submission of documentation to AS.

Programme developer(s) are encouraged to seek ongoing advice from the Quality Adviser throughout the process of design, development and approval.

## REVIEW AND FEEDBACK

The programme developer(s) will submit documentation to AS electronically by the agreed deadline. This will include the following:

- A draft [programme specification](#);
- [Module descriptors](#) for ALL modules included in the programme of study;
- A draft programme handbook;
- Supporting information about the curriculum, delivery and resourcing of the programme.

Full details of the documentation requirements for the Review stage can be found at Appendix C1.

On receipt of the documentation the Quality Adviser will undertake a preliminary review to check the following:

- All required information has been included;
- The programme of study is aligned to the relevant University of Chester framework (subject to any application for derogation);
- The programme of study is aligned with University of Chester regulations.

Where it is identified that required information is missing, this will be requested by the Quality Adviser from the programme developer(s) before the documentation is circulated to the Review Group. Where the Quality Adviser identifies major concerns regarding the alignment of the programme of study with University of Chester requirements, they will work with the programme developer(s) to identify how those concerns could be addressed. This may result in a delay in the documentation being circulated to the Review Group. In such cases a revised deadline will be agreed and the Faculty Administrator and Associate Dean (or other nominated representative of FMG) included in any correspondence.

Once it is confirmed that appropriate documentation has been received, the Quality Adviser will circulate it to the Review Group which will include the following:

- An academic reviewer representing the Faculty Board of Studies;
- An academic reviewer from another Faculty;
- An external adviser nominated by the programme developer(s) using the pro-forma at Appendix E1;
- A student reviewer;
- AS Quality Adviser;
- Representatives of professional services relevant to the programme proposal (e.g. LIS, , Apprenticeships Office)

The Review Group will be asked to provide written comments on the programme documentation with reference to the guidance found at Appendix C2, to be returned by an agreed deadline. Reviewers may use the Reviewer Commentary pro-forma found at Appendix E2, but feedback will be accepted in other formats should the reviewer prefer.

Once all comments from the Review Group have been submitted, the Quality Adviser will collate these and produce a draft Programme Review Report (Appendix G1). The report will be shared with the programme developer(s) and a meeting arranged to discuss the issues identified by the Review Group. The Faculty Administrator and the academic representative of the Faculty Board of Studies will also be invited to attend the meeting.

Following the meeting the Quality Adviser will finalise the Programme Review Report including any action points. These will be categorised as:

- Required actions: those which must be addressed prior to commencing delivery of the programme of study;
- Recommended actions: those which the Review Group suggest could enhance the programme of study. These may be aspects which could be actioned immediately, or which are to be addressed once delivery has commenced. Any recommended actions which have not been completed at the point of approval will be tracked through the [Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement \(CME\)](#) action plan for the programme once delivery commences.

The Quality Adviser will send the finalised Review Report to the programme developer(s), and they will be required to respond to the report using the action plan pro-forma found at Appendix G3. The action plan will be considered by the Programme Approval Panel, details of which are provided below.

## APPROVAL

Once the Review and Feedback stage is complete the Quality Adviser will progress the programme specification to the Faculty on the online editor and the Faculty will assume responsibility for agreeing the final version of the programme (subject to PDMC approval).

The Faculty should then convene a Programme Approval Panel to consider the response of the programme proposer(s) to the issues identified by the Review Group. The Panel should comprise:

- The Dean/Associate Dean (or nominee) as Chair;
- An academic reviewer from within the Faculty;
- An academic reviewer external to the Faculty;
- An external adviser;
- AS Quality Adviser;
- The Faculty Administrator as Secretary

The Programme Approval Panel membership may include participants from the Review Group. The Student Reviewer who participated in the review group is not required for the Programme Approval Panel convened by the faculty.

The Programme Approval Panel should receive and consider the following:

- Programme Review Report;
- Action plan addressing the action points detailed in the report;
- Programme specification, updated as required;
- Module descriptors for ALL modules, updated as required;
- Programme Handbook, updated as required;
- Supporting information, updated as required;
- Any additional information requested by the Review Group.

The programme developer(s) should be invited to present the programme of study to the Programme Approval Panel and respond to any queries. In private, the Programme Approval Panel should then confirm whether:

- all relevant action points identified at the Review and Feedback stage have been completed; and
- the final version of the programme specification is suitable for publication; and
- the module descriptors for any new modules are suitable for publication; and
- the programme and modules are otherwise consistent with University, Faculty, and where appropriate external, requirements;
- any further action points the programme should address.

The Programme Approval Panel may:

- Recommend that the programme of study is approved without further amendment and that Chair's Action is taken on behalf of Board of Studies to recommend approval to PDMC; or
- Require further amendments to be made to the programme and the action plan updated, subject to which the programme may be recommended to PDMC for approval by Chair's Action on behalf of Board of Studies; or
- Require further amendments to be made to the programme and the action plan updated and presented to a future meeting of the Faculty Board of Studies for further consideration.

The key points of discussion and any required and/or recommended action points to be addressed by the programme developer(s) should be recorded in a Programme Approval Report (Appendix G2) which should be forwarded to the programme developer(s) following the Programme Approval Panel Meeting. The outcomes of the Programme Approval Panel should be reported to the next meeting of the Board of Studies.

The Faculty should complete Section 1 of Appendix G4 – PDMC Programme Approval Proforma and submit this to PDMC on behalf of the Board of Studies in order to recommend approval of new programmes to PDMC. The completed proforma should be emailed to the Secretary to PDMC for it to be considered at the next available meeting, there is no requirement to include the Programme Approval report when submitting the proforma to PDMC.

Section 2 of the proforma should be completed by the secretary of PDMC once the final approval has been granted and returned to the corresponding Faculty with AS copied in (progapps@chester.ac.uk).

Where further action has been required a copy of the updated action plan should be forwarded to AS.

#### *2.1.6 Confirmation of approval and publication*

Once approval has been confirmed by the University PDMC, the Faculty Administrator will be responsible for publishing the final versions of the programme specification and any new or revised module descriptors. Confirmation of approval should also be communicated by the Faculty to AS, Registry, Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions, the International Office, and LIS. Students may not be registered to a new programme of study until it has received full approval from the PDMC.

#### *2.1.7 Monitoring of new programmes of study*

Any recommended action points which remain outstanding at the point of approval, or which relate to aspects which should be developed or monitored once the new programme study commences delivery, will be included in the first iteration of the Continuous Monitoring of

Enhancement (CME) report. Progress against those action points will then be tracked through the CME system.

## 2.2 Approval of Higher Degree Apprenticeships

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Advice should be sought in the first instance from the [Apprenticeships Office](#) about all potential opportunities to develop a new apprenticeship programme. Where an opportunity to develop a new Higher Degree Apprenticeship is identified an Initial Outline Plan (Appendix D2) must first be submitted to PDMC for approval in principle. Once PDMC have accepted the Initial Outline Plan, a full Programme Development Proposal (Appendix D1) must be completed if required for a new programme of study and submitted to PDMC for further consideration.

Where the proposal involves the development of a new programme of study, PDMC will determine the appropriate programme approval route according to the [criteria](#) detailed above.

Where the proposal involves adapting an existing programme of study for delivery as a Higher Degree Apprenticeship, a meeting will be convened by AS to consider relevant documentation. The meeting will include:

- Chair (drawn from another faculty with experience of apprenticeships)
- Faculty Management Group representative (other than the Dean)
- Directorate of Access, Skills and Apprenticeships representative
- Quality Adviser (member of Collaborative Provision team in AS)
- Minuting Secretary (drawn from the Faculty proposing the apprenticeship)

The Apprenticeship-Ready Approval Panel will meet with members of the Faculty who are proposing the apprenticeship, along with relevant external stakeholders where appropriate and available.

Recommendations made by the group will then be considered by Faculty Board of Studies which will in turn make a recommendation on its approval to PDMC.

In both cases additional documentation requirements will apply. Further information on arrangements relating to Higher Degree Apprenticeships can be found in **Appendix C3**.

## 2.3 Approval of New Provision by Faculty Boards of Studies

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### 2.3.1 Approval of Master by Research programmes

Where a department wishes to introduce a new Master by Research (MRes) programme it should first make reference to the MRes framework found in Handbook A. The department should then complete a Programme Development Proposal (Appendix D1) and submit this for consideration and endorsement by the relevant Faculty Management Group, and then to the PDMC for approval in principle.

Following PDMC approval the programme developer(s) should present the following documentation to the relevant Faculty Board of Studies:

- Draft [programme specification](#);
- New Module Proposal pro-forma for any new modules (Appendix D5);
- Draft [Module Descriptors](#) for any new modules.

The programme documentation must be shared in advance of the Board of Studies with the Senior PGR Tutor for the Faculty, who will be required to consider the programme's alignment with University requirements and consistency with other MRes programmes. The Senior PGR Tutor may provide their commentary on the proposed programme either through attendance of the Board of Studies or through the submission of written comments.

The Faculty Board of Studies will make a recommendation on approval of the programme to PDMC via its minutes.

### 2.3.2 Approval of new modules

New modules, which will either be offered on a stand-alone basis or included in an existing programme of study, should be presented to Faculty Board of Studies for approval. The following documentation should be provided:

- New Module Proposal (Appendix D5);
- Draft [Module Descriptor](#).
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Where the new module is being created for inclusion in an existing programme of study, reference should also be made to the procedures for [programme modification](#).

Once the module is approved, the Faculty Administrator must ensure all appropriate details are communicated to Registry Services, AS and LIS and publish the final version of the Module Descriptor.

### 2.3.3 *Approval of an exit award from an existing programme as a new target award*

The following procedures will apply where a Department wishes to offer as a new target award, an award which is currently available as an exit point from an existing programme of study. This may be particularly applicable in the case of Master's programmes which include a Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma as intermediate exit awards, and where students are to be admitted to these awards on entry.

The proposing department should submit the following documentation to the Faculty Board of Studies:

- An application for approval of the new target award (Appendix D3);
- A separate [programme specification](#) for the new target award.

Following consideration, Faculty Board of Studies will make a recommendation to PDMC on the approval of the new target award via its minutes.

### 2.3.4 *Approval of new extended degree programmes*

All proposals for the introduction of a new extended degree programme involving an **existing bachelor degree** programme should first be discussed with the Head of the Centre for Foundation Studies, and will require their endorsement.

Application for approval of an extended degree programme should be made using the proforma found at Appendix D4. This should first be submitted to PDMC to seek approval in principle.

The process for approval thereafter will depend upon whether the extended degree programme will include a new or existing foundation year. The development of Level 3 modules will be coordinated by the Centre for Foundation Studies and the Learning & Teaching Institute (LTI) Board of Studies will be responsible for their approval. Faculty Boards of Studies will be responsible for Levels 4-6 of an extended degree programme and for making a recommendation on the approval of the overall programme of study. A flow diagram depicting the routes for approval can be found at Appendix B5.

A separate [programme specification](#) must be created for each extended degree programme to be offered which includes the additional information relevant to Level 3.

Following consideration, the relevant Faculty Board of Studies will make a recommendation to PDMC on the approval of the new extended degree programme via its minutes.

Where a new extended degree programme is to be introduced as part of the development of a **new bachelor degree** programme the [procedures for approval of a new programme of study](#) will apply. Further information on this can be found at Appendix B5.



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### 3. PROCEDURES FOR THE MODIFICATION OF ACADEMIC PROVISION

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#### 3.1 General principles

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##### *3.1.1 Timescales for the approval of modifications to academic provision*

Where a programme team wishes to modify an existing approved programme or module, this must be approved prior to the academic session in which the changes will be implemented.

##### *3.1.2 Public information and compliance with consumer law*

All approved modifications to existing programmes of study and modules must be reflected in the published programme specification and module descriptors using the online editor at <https://psmd.chester.ac.uk/> Changes must also be reflected in publicly available information; specifically, but not exclusively, the corporate website and other publicity and marketing information.

Where modifications will affect existing student cohorts every effort should be made to communicate the changes to all students and seek feedback on the proposed modification prior to implementation. Substantial changes may require explicit consent from existing students and/or communication with applicants. Further guidance regarding the implications for public information and compliance with consumer law can be found in Appendix C5.

#### 3.2 Modification of an approved programme of study

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##### *3.2.1 Modifications with significant resource implications*

Where the modification of a programme of study has significant new resource requirements, as determined by the Faculty Management Group, a Programme Development Proposal (Appendix D1) accompanied by costings must be completed and submitted to PDMC for authorisation.

Following authorisation by PDMC to proceed, the procedures detailed below will be applied according to the nature of the proposal.

##### *3.2.2 Approval of programme modifications by Boards of Studies*

The majority of changes to existing approved programmes will be considered and approved by Faculty Boards of Studies. This may include:

- amending modules already included in the programme of study from compulsory to optional, or vice-versa;
- adding or removing existing approved modules, affecting up to 50% of the programme;

- replacing existing modules with new modules, affecting up to 25% of the programme;
- changing the mode of study from full-time to part-time, or vice-versa;
- amending the normal period of study in which the programme is designed to be completed.

When making amendments to a programme of study the Programme Leader should submit the following information to the Board of Studies:

- A fully completed Programme Modification Proposal (Appendix H1);
- An updated [programme specification](#).

Where the modification involves the inclusion of new modules the following should also be provided:

- Completed New Module Proposal pro-forma for each new module (Appendix D5);
- Draft [module descriptors](#) for each new module.

Where the programme modification will either only involve the introduction of one new module, or a new module will be included in multiple programmes, the information may be presented on the New Module Proposal form (Appendix D5) without the need for a Programme Modification Proposal (Appendix H1).

Where the introduction of a new module will result in the withdrawal of an existing module, a Module Withdrawal Proposal (Appendix I2) should also be presented at this time.

Programme Leaders are encouraged to share and discuss all proposed programme modifications with External Examiners. However, evidence of consultation will only be required where the proposed modification involves the presentation of new modules for approval.

In considering the proposed modification, the Board of Studies should verify that there is continued alignment between the programme title and its curriculum, and the programme and module learning outcomes. Any new modules should be reviewed to ensure clarity of information and alignment with University regulations.

If the proposed modification is prompted by the requirements of a public, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) and this will necessitate derogation from the University regulations, approval must be sought from the Quality and Standards Subcommittee, using Appendix F5.

Following approval by Board of Studies the updated programme specification, and any new

module descriptors should be finalised and published by the Faculty Administrator and confirmation of the programme changes sent to Registry Services, Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions and the International Office.

### *3.2.3 Major modifications which may require a full programme approval process*

Where a programme team wishes to make significant changes to an existing programme of study this may require the application of a full [programme approval process](#).

The following are examples of scenarios where a full programme approval process may be required, with the probable route stated in brackets:

- adding or removing existing approved modules, affecting over 50% of the programme ([Route A](#));
- replacing existing modules with new modules, affecting over 25% of the programme ([Route B](#));
- substantial amendment of the curriculum, learning outcomes and/or assessment methods on existing approved modules, affecting over 50% of the programme (Route A or B, determined by specific proposal);
- Conversion of a programme of study from a wholly or mainly face-to-face mode of delivery to a wholly or mainly online delivery model, or vice-versa (Route determined by specific proposal – see [3.2.4](#) for conversion to wholly online).

This list is not exhaustive, and advice should be sought from the Approvals & Review team in AS for internal programmes, or the Collaborative Provision team for partnership programmes, regarding the appropriate approach to be taken to the specific proposals for modification.

### *3.2.4 Approval of an existing programme of study for delivery wholly online*

In principle agreement of PDMC should be sought where it is intended that an existing programme of study which is delivered primarily via face-to-face/blended learning will be offered exclusively online.

The following information should be included:

- Target award(s) and Programme title;
- Responsible Faculty and Department;
- Proposed commencement date of online delivery;
- Rationale for offering the programme exclusively online;
- Evidence of market demand for online offer (with reference to information from MRA where available);
- Confirmation of whether existing face-to-face/blended delivery will continue or will be replaced entirely by online delivery;
- Broad overview of the intended approach to delivery;

- Resourcing requirements for online delivery including costings for any additional staff or learning resources.

Following agreement in principle by PDMC, the programme leader should compile further information about the delivery plan, as follows:

- Detailed information on the approach that will be taken to learning, teaching and assessment across the programme and, where appropriate, on individual modules. This should include:
  - details of the way in which the virtual learning environment and other digital tools will be used to ensure a high-quality academic experience and maintain student engagement;
  - operational examples of the learning design that will be used in the delivery of the programme (e.g. links to Moodle sites) along with an explanation of how these may be further enhanced appropriately in line with current good practice; and/or
  - where materials are yet to be developed, a learning design plan and/or evidence of engagement with the Learning and Digital Technology Unit should be supplied;
  - copies of the programme specification and module descriptors may be included for reference but will not be sufficient on their own.
- Detailed information on the approach to be taken to maintaining contact with students and ensuring they can access adequate support. This should take into account time differences where it is anticipated international students will engage with the programme.
- Evidence of engagement with Learning and Information Services regarding the availability and access to suitable digital library learning resources (Appendix F2 may be used for this purpose)
- Evidence of active pedagogic approaches, authentic assessment, group work facilitation and encouragement of a social learning community in the development of learning design and materials. This may include any evaluation of existing online elements delivered within 'The Chester Blend' and how this has been used to enhance online delivery further (Appendix F1 may be used for this purpose).

Further guidance on aspects which should be considered when developing an online/distance learning programme can be found in Appendix C4.

This information should be supplied to the Approval and Review team in AS which will coordinate a desk-based review. As part of the review, feedback will be sought on the planned approach to online delivery from a representative of the Learning and Digital Technology Unit, an Academic Reviewer from the Learning and Teaching Institute (or other academic member of staff with experience of online delivery) and a Student Reviewer nominated by the Programme Leader. The aim of the review will be to confirm the suitability

of planned delivery and student support arrangements, and further enhancements may be advised.

A report will be compiled by the AS Quality Adviser, detailing the findings of the review including any required or recommended actions. The Programme Leader will be asked to produce an action plan addressing the outcomes of the review.

Following the desk-based review, the programme will be progressed to the relevant Faculty Board of Studies for approval. The Faculty Board of Studies should confirm that all required actions have been completed and that there is a suitable response to any recommended actions. Those that are ongoing may be monitored via the CME action planning process. Board of Studies should also confirm that any necessary changes have been made to the programme specification and module descriptors, in particular those sections relating to learning and teaching. Once satisfied Board of Studies should make a recommendation on approval of the programme for online delivery to PDMC.

### *3.2.5 Changing the programme title and/or award*

Authorisation to change the title or award (e.g. BA to BSc) of an existing approved programme of study must first be sought from PDMC. The following information should be provided:

- Current programme title/ award;
- Proposed new programme title and/or award;
- Faculty/ Department responsible for the programme;
- Rationale for changing the programme title and/or award;
- An overview of any additional modifications to be made to the programme as consequence of the change of title/ award (this may be provided on an appended Programme Modification Proposal (Appendix H1), if appropriate);
- Date from which the new programme title/award will come into effect;
- Confirmation of whether the change of title and/or award will apply to existing students or new cohorts.

Following PDMC approval, further procedures may apply according to the nature of the proposal.

Where the title and/or award change will be accompanied by further modifications, the route for approval will be determined by the extent of the changes as detailed in sections [3.2.2](#) and [3.2.3](#) above. Advice should be sought from the Approvals and Review team in AS regarding the appropriate approach to be taken to the specific proposals.

Where the change of title/award is the only modification, Faculty Board of Studies should confirm that all necessary action has been taken to implement the change. This will include:

- Creating a new [programme specification](#) for the academic year in which the change of title/award will be implemented;
- Updating any other programme information such as programme handbooks, online resources, and marketing materials;
- Communicating the change to AS, Registry Services, Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions, and the International Office.

In addition, where the title/award change is intended to apply to **existing student cohorts**, written consent from all students affected by the change must be received before the title change can be confirmed. Current students will be entitled to retain the title/award for which they were originally admitted where they do not formally consent to the change.

Changes which will apply only to **new cohorts** should be communicated to Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions as soon as they are approved in order to ensure that appropriate amendments are made to marketing communications and, where necessary, applicants can be contacted.

### *3.2.6 Modifications to Extended Degree Programmes*

Modifications which relate to **Level 3** of the extended degree programme will be managed by the Centre for Foundation Studies and approved through their Board of Studies. The Centre for Foundation Studies will liaise with the relevant Faculty or Faculties to ensure that programme specifications are updated, and the approved modification is also noted at their Board(s) of Studies.

Modifications which relate to **Levels 4-6** will be managed by the relevant programme team and presented to the relevant Faculty Board of Studies for approval. An extract of the Faculty Board of Studies minutes should be sent by the Faculty Administrator to the Centre for Foundation Studies Board of Studies for note.

## 3.3 Authorisation to deliver an approved programme on a new site

Before an existing approved programme of study may be offered at a site where it is not currently delivered, application must be made to PDMC.

### *3.3.1 Delivery at a University site*

Where a Faculty wishes to offer an existing approved programme of study at another University site a proposal must be made to PDMC which should include the following information:

- Programme title;
- Faculty/ Delivery Department;
- Existing sites of delivery;
- Proposed new site of delivery;
- Proposed date of first intake to the new site of delivery;
- Rationale for offering the programme at the new delivery site;
- Confirmation of whether the new delivery site will be additional to, or instead of, the existing delivery site(s);
- Resourcing arrangements for the new delivery site, including costings for any new staff, equipment or facilities which will be required.

Following a recommendation by PDMC for approval the Faculty should ensure that all necessary programme, module and marketing information is updated. The Faculty must also confirm delivery of the programme at a new site with AS, Registry Services, Learning and Information Services, Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions and the International Centre.

Where the programme is subject to the requirements of a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB), the University will comply with any further requirements for site approval.

### *3.3.2 Delivery at a non-University site*

Procedures for the approval of programmes of study at a non-University site are detailed in Handbook Cii. This includes delivery by a partner organisation and delivery by University staff at alternative sites including those of clients.

## 3.4 Modification of approved modules

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### *3.4.1 Administrative updates*

Programme Teams and Module Leaders are required to regularly review and update module descriptors in order to ensure accuracy and currency of published information. Aspects such as the following may be updated on a [Module Descriptor](#) as needed at any time without the need for further approval:

- Updating key references;
- Changing the Module Leader;
- Changing the Module Assessment Board responsible;
- Minor amendments to module content which do not substantially change the focus of the module (e.g. updates to reflect changes to relevant legislation);
- Corrections or clarifications which do not change the meaning of the information.

### 3.4.2 *Modifications to modules requiring Board of Studies approval*

More significant modifications to modules should be presented by the Module Leader to the Faculty Board of Studies for approval in the academic year before they are to be implemented.

Modifications to modules which require approval may include:

- Changes to module content which represents a shift in the focus of the module;
- Changes to the aims and/or learning outcomes;
- Changes to the methods and/or weighting of (re)assessment;
- Changes to the primary mode of delivery (e.g. classroom-based to online; lab-based to classroom-based);
- Significant changes to contact hours which will affect the student experience;
- Changes which will increase the resources required for the module above normal recurrent spending.

For modifications of this nature the following documentation should be submitted to the Board of Studies:

- Module Modification Proposal (Appendix H2):
- Revised [Module Descriptor](#).

If the proposed modification is prompted by the requirements of a public, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) and this will necessitate derogation from the University regulations for the programme(s) in which it is offered, approval must be sought from PDMC, using Appendix F5.

### 3.4.3 *Modifications which require the creation of a new module*

Once an approved module has been delivered, changes to the module code, module title, credit value or level of study will all necessitate the creation of a new module. This is because any changes made will affect the information included on the transcripts of students who have previously studied the module.

For changes to the credit value and/or level of study, a major change to the module title, and/or where there will be additional modifications to the substance of the module, the process for the approval of a new module as detailed in [2.4.2](#), should be applied.

Where there will be a minor change to the title of the module only, with no other amendments to its substance, this may be agreed through the presentation of the following information to Board of Studies:



- [Module Descriptor](#) for the new module;
- Confirmation of the date from which the re-titled module will come into effect;
- Confirmation that relevant programme specifications will be updated to include the re-titled module.

Following Board of Studies approval, the Faculty must communicate the changes to Registry Services.

Where a module is being re-coded as a consequence of managerial changes (e.g. a programme has moved departments) and there will be no other substantive changes to the module, this may be handled as an administrative process without the need for approval through Board of Studies. A new [Module Descriptor](#) will be required and any necessary changes to [Programme Specifications](#) also applied. In this situation the Faculty must ensure that the changes are communicated to AS, Registry Services and LIS.

#### *3.4.4 Publication of revised module descriptors*

Following amendment, the updated and, if necessary, approved [Module Descriptor](#) must be published on the University intranet by the Faculty Administrator.

## 3.5 Oversight of Programme and Module Modifications

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In order to ensure that there is proper oversight of cumulative amendments made to programmes and modules, Faculty Board of Studies should receive a summary of all modifications it has approved during the course of the academic year at its final meeting of the year. This should be considered with a view to monitoring any programmes or subject areas where there have been substantial changes made over a short period of time.

This information may also contribute to the data-set required for [Academic Periodic Review](#) of departments every five years.

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## 4. PROCEDURES FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ACADEMIC PROVISION

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### 4.1 Withdrawal of a programme of study

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The proposal to withdraw a programme of study may be made by the Senior Management Team, PDMC, the Faculty, the Subject Department or the Programme Team.

The grounds on which a proposal may be made to withdraw a programme of study may include but are not limited to:

- Failure to meet minimum acceptable academic standards;
- Failure to recruit or register sufficient students to ensure viability;
- Failure to recruit to a programme of study for three consecutive years;
- Incompatibility with the University's corporate strategy and plans;
- Failure of the curriculum to retain currency or relevancy.

Application for the withdrawal of a programme of study should be made to PDMC by completion of the Programme Withdrawal Proposal, (Appendix I1).

Programmes of study may be withdrawn without the withdrawal of their constituent modules. The proposal for the withdrawal of a programme of study will specify which, if any, modules comprising the programme of study are also to be withdrawn. In this instance the completion of a Module Withdrawal Proposal for the relevant modules will not be required.

If PDMC recommends approval of the withdrawal, then the Programme Withdrawal Proposal should be reported to the Quality and Standards Subcommittee for quality and teach-out considerations, and received and noted by the Faculty Board of Studies which will have responsibility for monitoring any teach-out period.

In terminating recruitment to a programme of study PDMC and the Faculty Board of Studies shall be given an indication of when the final award may be conferred for that programme. Provision shall be made for all students already registered for the programme of study to complete their studies. Where appropriate, students may be offered the opportunity to transfer to a suitable alternative programme of study.

### 4.2 Suspension of recruitment to a programme of study

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A Faculty may wish to suspend recruitment and admission to a programme of study. In this instance the Faculty must notify PDMC of the reasons for its decision and any plans for recommencement of recruitment at a future date. The Faculty must also notify Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions at the earliest opportunity.

In considering an application for withdrawal of a programme of study PDMC may decide to suspend recruitment and admission in the first instance.

Any decision to halt suspension of recruitment and admission must be made before the award and title is formally withdrawn.

Where the University wishes to reactivate recruitment to a suspended programme of study PDMC must recommend approval of the decision.

Where there is no further recruitment to a suspended programme of study for three years, the Faculty should either submit a proposal to PDMC for withdrawal of the programme or present a rationale for retaining the programme of study for a further period. PDMC may require a programme which has not been delivered for a period three years or more to be subject to a re-approval process in order to ensure currency.

### 4.3 Withdrawal of modules

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Where a department wishes to withdraw a module from further delivery it should submit a Module Withdrawal Proposal (Appendix I2) to Faculty Board of Studies.

Where the withdrawal is due to a new module being offered in its place, the withdrawal should be considered in parallel with the [approval](#) of the proposed replacement. The withdrawn module should be archived, and any replacement module descriptor published.

Modules comprising a programme of study may be withdrawn, whilst retaining the award and title pending approval of a new programme of study leading to the award.

The withdrawal of modules should be reported by the Faculty Board of Studies via its minutes to the PDMC.

### 4.4 Public information and communication of withdrawal

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All information on the withdrawal of modules and programmes of study should be communicated by the Faculty Administrator to Registry Services, AS, LIS, Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions and the International Centre and in order that all relevant public information and internal databases may be updated.