Higher Education Academic Regulations: Part B

Section: 4: Course Design and Development

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Ver	Date	Author	Description
1.1	July 2016	Scott Smith	Amendment to titles (roles and curriculum)
1.2	October 2016	Scott Smith	Iterative changes relating to feedback from operation of the procedure
1.2.1	January 2018	Scott Smith	Changes to the membership of Stage 2 and 3 validation panels and the addition of criteria linked to predefined curricula that provides a route directly to Stage 2 for some proposals.
1.2.2	March 2019	Scott Smith	Removal of Quality Code Chapters Addition reference added to Apprenticeships
1.2.3	Nov 2019	Scott Smith	Refinement of the guidance for panels and additional updates
1.2.4	August 2020	Scott Smith	Change in title to reflect Quality Code + iterative updates
1.2.5	January 2021	Johnny Davison	Refinement to the membership of Stage 2 validation panels.
1.2.6	April 2021	Johnny Davison	Refinement to documentary requirement within preliminary phase and submission deadline requirements.
1.2.7	August 2021	Scott Smith	Minor typographical updates Changes to the Amendment Process
1.2.8	July 2022	Scott Smith	Sign off of Conditions and Recommendations moved from the following stage to the actions from which the Conditions and Recommendations were made.
1.3	July 2023	Scott Smith	Annual update and inclusion of elements of Part A.

Ver	Committee	Date Approved
1.0	HEAB	
1.1	ASDC	July 2016
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1.2.8	ASDC	July 2022
1.3	ASDC	July 2023

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B4 PROGRAMME APPROVAL AND VALIDATION

B4: Course Design and Development has been produced following consideration of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

B4.1 INTRODUCTION

Except where defined within this document, the development of Higher Education Programmes and awards at Blackpool and The Fylde College requires progression through three stages of development and approval., Stage 1 - Initial Development, Stage 2 - Developmental Review and Stage 3 – Final Approval.

B4.1.1 AUTHORITY

Stage 3 validation panels are, by delegated authority of Higher Education Academic Board, responsible for the approval of Blackpool and The Fylde College awards. A summary report of programme (re)validations, including approvals, will be provided regularly to Higher Education Academic Board by the Director of Higher Education.

B4.1.2 DOCUMENTATION DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this set of regulations, the principal documents are defined as follows:

Outline Planning Permission

An Outline Planning Permission Document contains a rationale for the development/renewal of curriculum and information such as the proposed aims and objectives, outcomes, structure, admission requirements, staffing, resourcing, and an indication of the content of each proposed module.

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification is a concise description of the intended learning outcomes of a programme and how these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated. It should clearly articulate what the programme is seeking to achieve and how that achievement is supported and assessed.

The Programme Specification is intended for publication and should give students and potential students a sufficiently detailed overview of the programme structure, content, assessment, etc. to enable them to make an informed decision about whether the programme meets their needs and to provide a clear basis for expectations while studying. It is not intended to be a fully detailed academic document. Programme specifications are also available to external audiences and will be published on the Blackpool and The Fylde College website.

Validation Document

A Validation Document contains the additional information needed, in addition to the programme specification, to inform the decisions of the validation process (such as the full rationale for the validation of the programme, evidence of demand, etc.) needed at the first and subsequent validations of a programme.

B4.1.3 REVIEW

The Higher Education Directorate will review the College's relevant templates and guidance for completing the documentation. The guidelines will be reviewed regularly to ensure their currency and that they meet the expectations of all relevant external frameworks.

B4.2 WITHDRAWAL OF VALIDATION / PROGRAMME CLOSURE

The Academic Standards and Development Committee may recommend the withdrawal of programme approval if it has evidence that the programme is no longer meeting minimum acceptable academic standards or where recruitment levels are no longer viable.

Where a programme is closed to further recruitment for any reason, Blackpool and The Fylde College will ensure that standards and the learning experience are maintained for any students remaining on the programme or that students are able to transfer to a suitable alternative programme at Blackpool and The Fylde College or elsewhere. This process will align with Blackpool and The Fylde College's Student Protection Plan and Student Transfer Plan.

All programme closures must be proposed to the Academic Standards and Development Committee on the requisite College template.

B4.3 REVALIDATIONS

B4.3.1 QUINQENNIAL PROGRAMME RE-VALIDATIONS

Quinquennial Programme re-validations are carried out:

- To consider the validity, currency and effectiveness of the programme
- To ascertain whether any action identified from external examiners' reports has been considered fully and appropriately implemented
- To consider proposals for changes in the validated programme
- To identify any areas of good practice for wider dissemination within Blackpool and The Fylde College
- To identify any issues requiring wider consideration

All Blackpool and The Fylde College validated programmes will be subject to revalidation during the academic year prior to the expiry of their validation. Revalidation may be

required at other times if the content of a programme is to undergo such fundamental change that a Major Amendment process would be inappropriate.

B4.3.2 VALIDATION TERM EXTENSION

There may be occasions where a programme's period of validation may need to be extended passed its previously approved duration, usually five years. These reasons may include, but are not limited to, the publication of a revised apprenticeship standard or Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) specification, an update to an external bodies programme content, for example, Pearson and SQA specifications or an update to a professional body's qualification content.

Extensions to the period of a programme's validation are considered and approved at the Academic Standards and Development Committee (ASDC) and should be presented on the requisite College template.

When appraising the validity of such a request the committee will consider:

The rationale for the request
The duration of the request (normally a maximum of one year)
Any impact on the student experience
Any impact on the students' overall outcome, including alignment to industry requirements ensuring that their qualification still holds the same value over the extended time
Whether any amendments are required to ensure that the programme remains contemporary
The impact of on any Interruptions of Study

B4.4 CONTRIBUTING STAKEHOLDERS

The development of all Blackpool and The Fylde College programmes involves contributions from several contributing stakeholders.

B4.4.1 EXTERNAL ACADEMIC INVOLVEMENT

The approval of any programme by Blackpool and The Fylde College is dependent upon contributions of individuals not directly involved with the programme; this contribution helps both set and maintain academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The College also considers that the programme approval process must include the involvement of individuals external to the College to offer independence and objectivity to the decisions taken.

EXTERNAL ADVISORS

An External Advisor's role is primarily to provide the programme team with advice in the (re)validation of a programme. Advice would generally be provided around the areas of (although is not limited to) a programme's alignment to subject and educational sector expectations such as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, alignment to the higher education quality thresholds and frameworks such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and the QAA Higher Education in Apprenticeships Characteristics Statement.

Where a programme is awarded by Blackpool and The Fylde College an External Advisor(s) will sit as a member of the panel at Stages 2 and 3. Where the programme is validated by an awarding body other than Blackpool and The Fylde College, the External Advisor(s) will, normally, sit as a member of the panel at Stage 2 only as the final Stage 3 meeting is convened by the awarding body.

It should be noted that Stages 1 and 2 are developmental whereas at Stage 3 the panel, including the External Advisor(s), is in place to determine the validity of the proposal and therefore will approve or reject, as appropriate, whilst also determining recommendations and/or conditions for the (re)validation.

External Advisors will be appointed using the same criteria as for External Examiners, set out in B5 - External Examiner Procedure of the Higher Education Academic Regulations.

PROFESSIONAL/INDUSTRY BODY ACCREDITATION

Where appropriate, a professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) representative may be invited to input at Stage 2 of the (re)validation process to ensure the alignment of the programme with its requirements.

B4.4.2 STUDENT AND APPRENTICE PARTICIPATION

Students and apprentices, both past and current, in numerous ways, influence the development of programmes at Blackpool and The Fylde College. Students contribute at all levels of the College's deliberative committee structure, in addition students and apprentices participate in the quality cycle both at a programme and curriculum area level. These fora provide students and apprentices with a mechanism that allows them to contribute to the enhancement of programmes through their (re)validation cycle. This process begins with informal meetings at the earliest developmental stages of programme development and continues through to the formal stages where factors such as programme structure, marketing and relevance to career aspirations are discussed.

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Annual Programme Review (APR) process provides Programme Leaders with the opportunity to reflect on the quality of a programme. One quality measure is the students' and apprentices experience; all students can complete Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) at the end of a module, whilst apprentice's views are sought through the tripartite review process, each of these provide informative data in both qualitative and quantitative formats that inform the improvements of programmes. This process allows for iterative developments over the programme's five-year cycle to be considered during any revalidation event.

B4.4.3 EMPLOYERS

The role of employers in the (re)validation of programmes is to inform on matters relating to industry such as, technical requirements, graduate skills gaps, local, national and where appropriate international demand. Employers will be involved at the initial stages of development i.e., there is a need to have employer involvement when producing the Outline Planning Permission document. Employers may also be involved in Stage 3 Panels, where they provide support for the programme team and substantiate the significance and relevance to the requirements of industry.

B4.4.4 APPRENTICESHIP TEAM

Where a validation relates to an apprenticeship whether an integrated or non-integrated degree or higher, a member of the College's apprenticeship team is involved at each stage of the validation process. Their main function is to assure alignment with ESFA funding rules although they will also contribute more generally commenting on the content and delivery of the programme.

B4.5 VALIDATION STAGES

B4.5.1 PREPARATION

Before starting the formal stages of the process, the author, usually the programme leader, must initiate informal discussions with their Curriculum Manager, Head of Curriculum and the Higher Education Directorate to determine if the conditions for developing the new programme are favourable.

Where the development of a programme relates to the validation of a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship, the programme team should, whilst writing the OPP, liaise with the Apprenticeship Team to ensure alignment with their processes; this starts with the production of a Concept Document.

B4.5.2 PRELIMINARY PHASE

Curriculum planning and development is reviewed annually within each Curriculum Area. Curriculum and relevant Service Areas produce a Self-Evaluation Document that provides Blackpool and The Fylde College with a comprehensive and focused analysis that identifies areas of potential growth and reduction and facilitates curriculum development and enhancement. It provides valid and reliable evidence to inform Blackpool and The Fylde College's validation cycle and business planning schedule which in turn supports the strategic management of higher education.

The Business Planning Schedule represents the preparatory stage of the programme approval process and is the definitive list of programmes being revalidated or validated in the year specified it also includes any programmes Blackpool and The Fylde College wishes to close. The Schedule is considered and approved by the Academic Standards and Development Committee.

- The Academic Standards and Development Committee will receive an update on the progress made in curriculum development at each meeting
- It is not expected that new programmes will be added to the Business Planning Schedule prior to the grant of outline planning permission

In considering listings for new programme proposals, the Academic Standards and Development Committee will ensure that proposals align with Blackpool and The Fylde College's Higher Education strategic aims and ambitions.

For both validations and revalidations, the Programme Leader must submit to the Academic Standards and Development Committee (ASDC) an Outline Planning Permission Document (OPP).

The purpose of the OPP is to consider:

- Any professional qualifications linked to the programme.

- Proposed location(s) and modes of delivery.
- Academic regulations.
- Proposed award(s) and title(s).
- Recruitment targets.
- Entry requirements and progression.
- The rationale for offering the programme.
  Including the following topics:
  - brief overview of the programme.
  - benefits for the College.
  - anticipated market (with reference to students and employers).
  - alignment with the College strategy.
  - summary of the market research carried out.
  - external consultation (e.g., employers, Sector Skills Councils, professional bodies etc.).
- The programme aims.
- The programme learning outcomes.
- Where appropriate, alignment with apprenticeship standards.
- Programme design and structure including module titles, credit weighting and the proposed module lead.
- Learning, teaching, and assessment.

ASDC will examine the documentation produced by the programme team to ensure that the proposed programme meets the prerequisite requirements and aligns to Blackpool and The Fylde College's Higher Education Strategy, Higher Education Academic Regulations and, where appropriate, the Blackpool and The Fylde College Apprenticeship Strategy

In considering the OPP, ASDC will identify the most appropriate (re)validation pathway for the programme, taking into consideration the work required in defining the curriculum structure and modular specifications. Most programmes will be approved by ASDC for progression through each of the three stages of the (re)validation process detailed in subsequent sections.

Where the curriculum structure and / or modular specifications are clearly defined by a professional or awarding body or for the purposes of developing a Higher Education Credit Certificates, ASDC may choose to accelerate the (re)validation by entering the programme directly at Stage 2 of the process, thus allowing one formative meeting followed by a final summative approval meeting.

B4.5.3 STAGE 1: INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the panel is to:

- Ensure that the expectations of the sector are fully met through engagement of external academic advisors and employers
- Confirm that quality assurance mechanisms have been considered and meet the requirements of all relevant external regulatory and professional bodies

Indicatively this stage requires completion of the:

- (Re)Validation Document
- Programme Specification
- First draft Module Specifications
- Apprenticeship documentation (where appropriate)

This list is not exhaustive; other documentation pertinent to a particular type of programme may also be required, for example, an apprenticeship standard mapping document. Any team developing a programme should consult with the Higher Education Directorate on the document requirements at each stage.

Documents should, normally, be submitted 5 working days prior to the Stage One (re)validation meeting. If approved the (re)validation with commence onto Stage Two.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Members
- Academic Registrar or nominee (Chair)
- Apprenticeship manager
- Digital and LRC Manager

In Attendance
- Programme Team

B4.5.4 STAGE 2: DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW

The purpose of the panel is:

- To secure the academic standards of those awards and qualifications awarded by the College and apprenticeships delivered by the College
- To assure the quality of the proposed learning opportunities available to students

Stage 2 requires the completion of a (re) validation document, programme specification, the Module Specifications and the Apprenticeship documentation (where appropriate). As with the documentation requirements of Stage 1 meetings, further pertinent documents may also be required at this stage. Programme teams should always confirm any additional document requirements with the Higher Education Directorate prior to preparation for this meeting.

Documents should, normally, be submitted 10 working days prior to the Stage 2 (re)validation meeting. If approved the (re)validation will proceed to Stage 3.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Members

- Director of Higher Education or nominee (Chair)
- Independent Head of Curriculum Area or Curriculum Manager
- Apprenticeship manager
- Digital and LRC Manager
- Academic Registrar
- External Advisor*

In Attendance

- Programme Team
- Assistant Registrar
- Student representatives (Lancaster University revalidation only)
- Professional or industry body representative(s) (as appropriate)

At Stage 2 a desk-based review of a programmes' resources is undertaken by the Learning Resources Centre Coordinator. This review includes, but is not limited to, core and secondary texts and academic journals. Where applicable any suggested revisions to texts should be performed prior to a Stage 3 meeting.

*An External Advisor may not be required when considering higher national (or equivalent) provision for revalidation, however, will be included for the Stage 3 panel.

B4.5.5 STAGE 3: FINAL APPROVAL

The responsibility of the Stage 3 panel is to, firstly, scrutinise the work of the Stage 2 panel and in addition, to investigate and provide a written report to confirm that:

- The obligations of the Stage 2 panel were satisfactorily discharged
  And
- Any amendments, additions or deletions required following the stage 2 panel have been carried out

All documents should, normally, be submitted 15 working days prior to the Stage 3 (re)validation meeting. Where a professional or awarding body defines the curriculum, the Panel may choose to accept documentation 10 working days prior to the Stage 3 (re)validation meeting.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Where the event is for the award of a Blackpool and The Fylde College programme, the Stage 3 event is an internal event unlike the external event provided for validating partners, and as such the membership of the panel changes to meet the requirements of the awarding body. For Blackpool and The Fylde College Stage 3 events, the membership is defined as:

Members

- Vice Principal Higher Education and Student Enhancement or nominee (Chair)
- Director of Higher Education
- Head of Apprenticeships
- Academic Registrar
- External Advisor

In Attendance

- Programme Team
- Employer representative(s) (as appropriate)
- The Head of the relevant Curriculum Area
- Student representatives (revalidations only)

B4.5.6 CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

Panels shall investigate and provide a written report to confirm that:

- The proposal complies with Blackpool and The Fylde College Academic Regulations
- The proposal reflects Blackpool and The Fylde College strategies and policies
- The aims of the award are appropriate and realistic
- The programme learning outcomes are appropriate to the aims of the award and that the award is in keeping with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, QAA guidance for the award and subject area as well as any other relevant external reference points
- The module structure, curriculum content and module learning outcomes will ensure that students or apprentices completing the programme will have met the programme learning outcomes
- The learning, teaching and assessment strategies proposed are appropriately inclusive and rigorous, and allows students or apprentices to demonstrate the achievement indicated in the learning outcomes
- The learning, teaching and assessment methods are appropriate to the award and target student and apprentice group(s)
- The assessment criteria allow different levels of achievement to be clearly distinguished
- Colleagues contributing to the delivery of the award are sufficient in number and suitably qualified
- Any specific resources required to support the programme have been identified and will be provided
- The requirements of disability legislation and institutional disability policy have been considered and complied with
- Due consideration has been given to the equality impact assessment and how the reasonable needs of students and apprentices can be accommodated

- In cases of revalidation, that the previous period of validation has been evaluated in a forensic manner, and that the proposal responds to identified issues

B4.5.7 PANEL DECISIONS

The decision of all panels will be arrived at by consensus amongst the membership and will be confirmed by each to the minuting secretary of the relevant panel following the completion of any conditions and / or recommendations. Where consensus cannot be found, the Chair will make the final decision on behalf of the panel. After approval, the Higher Education Directorate will distribute programme documentation to the panel, programme team and pertinent service areas e.g., Admissions, Marketing, Management Information and Funding.

STAGE 1 AND 2 PANEL DECISIONS

The Stage 1 and 2 panels may recommend one of the following criteria:

(i)   The programme is permitted to proceed to the next stage
(ii)   The programme is permitted to proceed to the next stage subject to specific conditions and / or recommendations, including the dates by which they should be satisfied
(iii)   Reject the programme with advice to the programme team as to the reasons for doing so

Where the outcome of a meeting is, (ii) when all conditions and recommendations have been met, the chair will confirm on behalf of the panel that the programme may continue to the next stage. Where conditions and recommendations have not been met, the programme team may be offered the opportunity to address any issues, the chair may however prevent the programme from commencing to the next stage where appropriate.

STAGE 3 PANEL DECISIONS

The final decision to approve a programme is taken by the Stage 3 panel acting by delegated authority on behalf of the Higher Education Academic Board. The panel is always independent of the curriculum area offering the programme and ensures that the programme is sound and fit for purpose.

The Stage 3 panel should also be satisfied that any amendments made in respect of the comments of the panel at Stage 2 have been completely fulfilled and that the Stage 3 External Advisor(s) is assured in respect to the thoroughness of the process and the rigour of the proposed programme.

The Stage 3 panel may recommend one of the following criteria:

(i)   The programme is approved without amendment

(ii)   The programme is approved subject to specific conditions, including the dates by which they should be satisfied

(iii)   The programme is approved under either (i) or (ii) above, with a recommendation that the programme team consider certain matters on which they would report back to the meeting

(iv)   Reject the programme with advice to the programme team as to the reasons for doing so

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS

Recommendations will not prevent a (re)validation from either progressing or from being approved. If however a panel has made a recommendation(s) to the development team that is not implemented, the team should provide a rationale for their decision.

Conditions are defined as either:

- Academic - these should normally be addressed satisfactorily before the proposal can be approved and students or apprentices enrolled
- Documentary - these would not normally preclude approval and delivery of the proposal and the deadline set for them would usually reflect this position. There are also specific administrative requirements to be met after the event

On completion of the recommendations and / or conditions, the appropriate documentation is circulated to the panel membership who will ascertain whether the conditions and / or recommendations have been met; final approval, or otherwise, will be provided by consensus, where consensus cannot be found the Chair of the meeting will make the final judgement.

B4.5.8 FINAL APPROVAL CONFIRMATION

On panel approval of any Blackpool and The Fylde College programme, final confirmation of its approval will be evidenced though the issuing of a Blackpool and The Fylde College Final Approval letter signed by the Chair of the Stage 3 panel. Final Approval letters are retained by the Higher Education Directorate and utilised by Management Information and Funding in requesting a new learning aim from the Education and Skills Funding Agency through the Learning aim reference service (LARS)

B4.5.9 FURTHER DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

After Stage 3, a review of the programme handbook is undertaken. The review of this document relies on the contextualisation of a standard College template. The nature and content of the document will therefore not alter dramatically.

B4.5.10 APPRENTICESHIP DEVELOPMENT

The development of apprenticeships level 4 and above will, wherever possible, align with the processes defined in B4. There will, however, be validations and revalidations that require variation to the defined process, particularly where an apprenticeship standard does not include a level 4 and above qualification*; these variations may include, but are not limited to, the number of stages, the membership of panels and the documentation required at each stage.

Programme teams developing level 4 and above apprenticeships should always liaise with the Apprenticeship team prior to initiating the development or revalidation of an apprenticeship standard with the HE Directorate.

*programmes that do not contain a level 4 and above qualification will normally not require the submission of an OPP document, in such cases the Concept document created for the purposes of the Apprenticeship team's validation procedure with be provided to ASDC for information.

B4.6 MAJOR AND MINOR AMENDMENTS

B4.6.1 AMENDMENT OVERVIEW

Section B4.6 relates to higher education programmes delivered at Blackpool and The Fylde College, except in the case of amendments made to Lancaster University programmes as the amendment process is not delegated to Blackpool and The Fylde College.

The process for the amendment of current provision provides a mechanism for enabling changes, whilst ensuring the student or apprentice learning experience and academic integrity of programmes remain intact.

To ensure that Blackpool and The Fylde College meets its contractual obligations to both applicants, students and apprentices, as defined by the Office for Students and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), it is essential that the process, timeline, and the principles set out below, are adhered to in all cases of programme or module amendment. Amendments are categorised as either major or minor; where clarification is required, the programme team should consult with the Higher Education Directorate to ascertain the level of an amendment and the amount of information required to support a proposed change.

All major and minor amendments must be submitted on the Blackpool and The Fylde College Amendment Form to the Academic Standards and Development Committee who will consider the content and supporting documentation.

Proposed major and minor amendments should be accompanied by the comments of the External Examiner and, where appropriate, include consultation with current and prospective students or apprentices and applicants.

B4.6.2 AMENDMENT CATEGORIES

Major Amendments

Major amendments are amendments made to current programmes or modules, including the introduction of new modules, or changes to mandatory or elective modules which have an impact on:

- the material information* of the programme / module
- the organisation and management of teaching and assessment delivery or which make a substantial change to:
  - o the programme / module aims or learning outcomes
  - o the programme / module contents or structure
  - o the mode, method or location of delivery
  - o the overarching learning, teaching or assessment strategy for the programme / module

* See Section B4.6.3

Minor Amendments

Any amendment that is not identified as a major or editorial amendment will be treated as a minor amendment.

B4.6.3 MATERIAL INFORMATION

Amendment proposals must take account of the impact on 'material information' in the public domain as defined by CMA[1], this is in addition to considerations around:

- quality and standards, for example the integrity of programmes and modules
- organisation and management from the point from which a change is to be introduced

The CMA defines 'material information' as including:

- programme title
- mandatory modules for the programme and an indication of likely elective modules (including those which are generally available each year)
- information about the composition of the programme, how it will be delivered, the balance between the various elements (e.g. hours in lectures, seminars, work placements), the expected workload of students (e.g. self-study time), and details about the general level of experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the different elements of the programme
- the overall method(s) of assessment for the programme (e.g. exams, coursework, practical assessments, or a combination thereof)
- the award to be received on successful completion of the programme
- location of study, or possible locations, including for placements (where known)
- length of the programme
- whether the programme is accredited, for example by a professional, statutory or regulatory body, and by whom
- other extra costs students are likely to incur (e.g. field trips, equipment, bench fees, studio hire), indicating how much these extra costs are / likely to be (or how they are calculated), if they are elective or mandatory within the programme and if they have a direct impact on the outcome of students' academic success (eg a field trip on which a piece of work will be based)

Blackpool and The Fylde College therefore considers non-editorial amendments to include any change made to an existing module or programme:

- title
- aims or learning outcomes
- assessment
- mode, method or location of delivery
- indicative content
- contact hours

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf

- timetable
- Or to a module:
  - availability
  - status (e.g., pre-or co-requisites)
- Or to a programme:
  - delivery structure
  - regulations, including any amendments imposed by a PSRB
  - award

As a rule, proposals for major amendments should include sufficient and accurate material information as part of the submission documentation and be approved in time to publish this information to potential students or apprentices and applicants. The deadlines for approval of major and minor amendments take account of this need, as well as aligning with the timelines for the preparation and publication of marketing and recruitment materials.

B4.6.4 EDITORIAL AMENDMENTS

Editorial amendments are changes to modules and programmes that are necessary to bring them up to date but do not affect assessment, learning outcomes, mode of delivery, programme content or structure. Examples of such amendments are:

- Updating indicative reading lists
- Minor changes to a module's Indicative Content that does not affect its learning outcomes

Such changes will be considered by the programme team and where appropriate with support areas, for example, the Learning Resources Centre for updates to reading lists. Editorial amendments should be submitted on the appropriate Editorial Amendment Form to the Higher Education Directorate who will check the revised content and update the version control software utilised by Blackpool and The Fylde College for all its (re)validation documentation.

B4.6.5 AMENDMENT PRINCIPLES

- Every effort should be made to submit a proposal as early as possible prior to an amendment being implemented; other than in exceptional circumstances, no change will be applied to current applicants or students. Where such a change is unavoidable, the Higher Education Directorate should be consulted before any proposal is developed.
- Module amendments should be considered within the wider context of the programme to which it contributes. When developing a proposal, due care should be taken to assess the impact on programme(s) aims, learning outcomes and assessment strategy, ensuring that the revised module maintains the appropriate sound pedagogy.

- New modules added to current programmes should be considered within the wider context of the programme and be viewed as an amendment of the programme.
- Cumulative amendments made to a programme within its validation period should be monitored to determine if the programme has been amended sufficiently to trigger the re-validation process. Such amendments may have been made directly to the programme or through amendments to modules contributing to a programme, or a combination of both.
- Where major amendments are proposed to a current programme, the programme team should consult with all relevant Service Areas to determine if those changes have an impact on the service's ability to support the delivery of the programme in its revised form. The programme team should also consider if there is sufficient capacity and experience to deliver the revised programme.
- Except for Editorial Amendments, appointed external examiners, or other external advisors should consider amendments. Comments provided through this external input must form part of the submitted amendment form. Proposals which do not include this evidence should not progress through the approval process until such evidence can be provided.
- Major and minor amendments should be considered, normally in December, of the calendar year prior the academic year in which it will be implemented.

B4.6.6 PROCESS OVERVIEW

The initial stage of the amendment process is a supportive, developmental activity which seeks input from internal and external colleagues, employers, PSRBs, and students or apprentices to help inform the development. Major and Minor amendments should have been reviewed by the associated external examiner(s) and / or by an independent external advisor who will act as a critical friend in reviewing a draft of the proposal and providing a balanced, objective, subject and sector-based perspective.

For major amendments to programmes, programme teams are strongly encouraged to consult with internal stakeholders such as Careers, Student Support and Wellbeing and Marketing and Admissions to inform decisions on curriculum design.

New and existing modules should be developed within the context of the programmes(s) to which they contribute. Careful thought should be given to assessment elements, as well as the frequency and timing of assessment, to ensure that programme learning outcomes can be met and that bunching of assessment is avoided.

The amendment form and supporting evidence sets out the academic case for approval and should provide the Panel / Committee with a full representation of the proposal, including the rationale for change, the scope and detail of the change, how it aligns to, or impacts on other programmes / modules, and what the impact may be on staff and students or apprentices.

The academic case is to demonstrate that the proposal has structural integrity and academic coherence, a sound, authentic assessment strategy can be delivered within the experience of the academic team and the material resources available, and that it meets national sector threshold standards ensuring that the learning experience will be of a high-quality and meets the College's obligations as defined by external stakeholders including the OfS, the QAA, and the CMA.

B4.6.7 AMENDMENT OUTCOMES

Whether an amendment decision is made by the Academic Standards and Development Committee the following outcomes are available:

- Approve the amendment
- Approve the amendment subject to defined conditions and / or recommendations
    - After conditions and / or recommendation being addressed final written approval will normally be provided by the Chair of the meeting, their decision is therefore final. Updates relating to conditions and / or recommendations will, normally, be submitted to the Chair within 10 working days of the meeting and a decision will be made within 5 working days
- Reject, in such cases the Committee must provide justification for their decision.
- Defer, in such cases the programme team may be asked to bring back the amendment for the proposer to clarify a matter that cannot be addressed in the meeting.

Appendix B4 – A Higher Education Programme (Re)Validation Process Overview

Validation Process Overview

B&FC
BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE

Planning Permission	Stage 1 Initial Proposal	Stage 2 Formative Development	Stage 3 Summative Approval

Accelerated

Standard

Programme Validation / Re-validation

Validation / Re-validation Approval

ASDC Not Approved

Potentially close programme / withdraw proposal

End

Stage 1 Development

Initial Documentation
To be submitted 1 week before the event

Validation Document

Programme Specification

Module Specifications

Stage 1 Validation Event

Not Approved — Stage 1 Approval

Approved

Conditions & Recommendations

Stage 2 Development

Formative Documentation
To be submitted 2 week before the event

Validation Document

Programme Specification

Module Specifications

Stage 2 Validation Event

Not Approved — Stage 2 Approval

Approved

Conditions & Recommendations

Stage 3 Development

Summative Documentation
To be submitted 3 weeks before the event

Validation Document

Programme Specification

Module Specifications

Stage 3 Validation Event

Not Approved — Stage 3 Approval

Approved

Conditions & Recommendations

Programme Validated

Appendix B4 – B Programme Amendment Process