



Policy and Guidance on new courses and major changes to courses (including closure)

Education Committee

Valid from Michaelmas Term 2024

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Version history

3.1	May-25	Updates to Annexes and routine updates	Approved by Quality Assurance Subcommittee • First publication of Annex E Template for a proposal for a new PGR programme or changes to a PGR programme and Annex I Guidance on external consultation • Update to Annexes C and D to reflect that there was no <i>requirement</i> to consult directly with DAS for all course approvals; there was an expectation that course teams engage with the CTL resources and toolkits on accessibility in teaching. • Routine update to 1.1 to update numbering of Regulations which govern Education Committee's delegated responsibility in this area
3.0	Oct-24	Major review of all documentation and processes	Approved by Quality Assurance Subcommittee • Hyperlinks to related policy and guidance documentation have been added where relevant and appropriate. • References to external quality assurance processes have been updated. • Clarification that requests for transfer to part-time study for PGR students on programmes that are not usually offered on a part-time basis should use the standard Education Committee dispensation process and do not require the form formerly available as Annex J. (Section 2.2 footnote) • The expectation that the key documents that are produced as part of the course approvals process include the proposal document and the examination regulations for the course but that these will no longer include the course handbook or the course examination conventions. (Section 5) • More detail on the consultation and consideration that is expected during the department/faculty stage. (Section 7) • Greater clarity that CTL resources and the CTL consultancy service are available to support new course proposals and course change requests but that engagement with CTL is not a requirement for new courses or major change approvals. (Section 7.2) • Clarity that proposals are more likely to be successful and be considered more quickly if the different stages of consideration are not discrete, sequential steps but iterative and happening in parallel. (Section 7.5) • For new PG courses and major changes to PG courses, Education Committee approval needs to be obtained by the end of Trinity Full Term the year before the first entrants/the change takes effect rather than Hilary term because this reflects practice for the last few years. However, to ensure that advertising for the new/changed course can take place it is essential that the graduate admissions material is prepared and processes followed alongside the course approval process. (Section 7.7) • Embedding signposting of the consideration of student numbers within the course development and approval process, including referring departments/faculties to PACS and divisional offices for further information on this process. (Section 7) • Greater clarity that departments/faculties may need to revisit proposals after initial approval in response to feedback from the division and Education Committee. (Section 7.23) • Clarity that external views are required for new course proposals and for some but not all major course changes and that when external views are provided it is also important to respond to those comments and to provide evidence of this. (Section 7)

			• Clarity that paperwork received for Education Committee will first be reviewed by officers in EPS before it is presented to Education Committee or its delegate for approval. (Section 7.36) • Clarity that Education Committee may comment on the risks (including reputational) of approving or not approving a request for a new course or major change. (Section 7.38) • Clarity that any changes to a new course prior to the first intake are possible but require approval by or on behalf of Education Committee regardless of whether they are major or minor. (Section 7.40) • Making provision for the course approval process to be reviewed on a three-yearly cycle, noting that the current cycle of review is not yet fully complete and changes may be brought to the committee earlier if this is thought beneficial particularly as the new documentation beds in. (Section 11) • Replacement of all annexes, except annex K (relabelled annex J), with guidance and templates to support the revisions to the main policy document.
2.2	Jan-19		<i>Annex G</i> : replaced with revised fee justification form as issued by PRAS in December 2018
2.1	Jul-17		<i>Main document:</i> • Insertion of reference to new framework for the planning of new courses in para 7.17. Further details in <i>Annex O</i>. • New footnote on para 7.17 emphasising the importance of engagement with Student Registry. • New para 7.32 requiring new courses to have identified at least three colleges willing to admit students. <i>Annexes:</i> <i>Annex A</i>: minor amendments plus updating of the material relating to students who will require to take examinations under old regulations, and addition of a requirement to confirm consultation with Student Registry. <i>Annex D</i>: changes to the Graduate Committee cover sheet made at the request of the chair of Graduate Committee. <i>Annex G</i>: replaced with 2019-20 version of the fee justification form. <i>Annex H</i>: changes to reflect EdC standing orders agreed HT17 and the addition of <i>Annex N</i> to the <i>P&G</i>. <i>Annex I</i>: clarification that fundamental changes cannot be made less than three months before the start of a course, and changes to reflect the addition of <i>Annex N</i> to the <i>P&G</i>. Addition of <i>Annex N</i> which had previously been published as officers' guidance. Addition of <i>Annex O</i> which describes framework for the planning of new courses from 2017-18 onwards. Approved by the PVC (Education).
1.3	Jan-17	New version of Annex G	<i>Annex G</i>: replaced with revised fee justification form as issued by PRAS in December 2016. NB Footer on Annex G and P&G amended to read 'version 1.3 (January 2017)'. Footers on other annexes unchanged.
1.2	Sep-16	Minor updates and new Annex	<i>Main document</i>: New paragraph 7.35 on course changes after Education Committee approval. <i>Annex A</i>: section 3 additional guidance on accreditation information; section 14 new requirement to specify form of matriculation for part-time and distance learning courses; section 15 new requirement to consult Exams and Assessments team. <i>Annex H</i>: new guidance on delegated responsibility and roles in the approval of changes to courses and <i>Examination Regulations</i>. <i>*New* Annex M</i>: Proposal for a part-time variant of a full time postgraduate course.

			Approved on behalf of the PVC (Education)
1.1	Sep-15	Minor updates	Minor text corrections and policy change to Annex I: Vested interests Approved by PVC (Education)
1.0	Mar-15	Original publication	Approved by Quality Assurance Subcommittee

1. Background

1.1. Responsibility is delegated to Education Committee on behalf of Council for:

- undergraduate and taught postgraduate course structure and curriculum design;
- teaching, learning and assessment;
- structure of doctoral programmes; and
- approval of new courses.

(Council Regulations 15 of 2002, Section 2.3 (c), (d) (e) and (f)).

1.2. This document sets out Education Committee's policy on and guidance for the introduction of new courses and major changes to courses at all levels. It provides an overarching framework within which divisions, faculties and departments are expected to develop new courses and propose major changes, maintaining their own related policy and guidance where appropriate.

1.3. It builds on the University's overarching statement of educational policy contained within the Strategic Plan. It incorporates the expectations of the Office for Students, particularly with regards to the B conditions, and takes into account the UK Quality Code.

1.4. Proposals involving collaboration or partnership with other organisations, including the provision of placements, should also take into account the requirements of the [Policy and Guidance on education with others](#).

2. Scope

2.1. This document covers the proposal of new courses or major changes for all levels of award: undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research.

2.2. A major change is considered to be anything which impacts the overall aims of the programme or the way in which it is delivered. This could include for example, a significant reworking or shift in the balance of course content or the introduction of a new mode of study e.g. part-time¹ or distance learning. If there is any doubt as to whether a change constitutes a major change, contact should be made with Education Policy Support (courseapprovals@admin.ox.ac.uk) for advice early in the development process.

2.3. Education Committee engages directly with the approval of new courses and major changes to courses; very minor changes to courses can be approved by departments/faculties through their own deliberative structures; minor changes can be approved by divisions/LOUDCE. Education Committee expects divisions to provide guidance to their departments and faculties as to what types of changes may be approved at a local level and what types require referral on to the division for

¹ Occasionally it may be appropriate to offer a part-time variant of a postgraduate research programme on a one-off basis to meet the needs of a particular candidate. In these circumstances, applications should be submitted to edcapplications@admin.ox.ac.uk to be considered through the dispensations from regulations process.

consideration. Individuals wishing to propose minor changes to courses should refer to their divisional guidance, and not this document. When approving minor changes, divisions should be mindful of the cumulative impact of changes on the aims of the course or the overall way it is delivered. Where a series of minor changes may have had the cumulative impact of a major change, divisions should consider undertaking a course review to ensure the course still aligns with its overall aims and learning outcomes.

- 2.4. Occasionally departments or faculties may wish to make a change to a course which, while minor in impact in relation to the overall aims or content of the programme, represents a significant innovation in current practice in relation to teaching, learning or assessment, or a departure from the expectations of the [Policy and Guidance on undergraduate learning and teaching](#) or the [Policy and Guidance on graduate taught courses](#). Departments and faculties should bring forward proposals for this type of change through the division to Education Committee for consideration.

3. Aim

- 3.1. The guidance for the development of new courses and major changes is designed to ensure that the following have been considered:
- the academic case for expansion or change in the subject and category concerned including fit with the department/faculty, division and University strategy and priorities;
 - the potential of the course to attract high quality students in sufficient numbers to ensure the viability of the programme;
 - the availability of supervisors and appropriate departmental and central facilities and support (IT, library and subject-specific resources);
 - the ability of the faculty/department to provide appropriate organisational support;
 - the capacity of the collegiate University to meet the students' wider support needs;
 - the financial implications for the department or faculty and the wider University community;
 - the level of risk involved in each course proposal, including the means proposed for its delivery, and the required level of resource necessary to ensure that the required outcomes of the new course can be achieved;
 - the views of students;
 - the views of an external subject specialist and, where relevant, a sector or industry professional; and
 - the views of other departments which might be involved in or affected by the introduction of the new course.
- 3.2. The guidance is also intended to ensure that the course:
- is academically sound, with clear aims and learning outcomes and a teaching and assessment design which supports those aims;
 - is aligned with:
 - the [University awards framework](#) (and consequently the qualification descriptors set out in the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ));

- the relevant subject benchmark statement (where available);
- any specific requirements set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies; and
- is designed inclusively considering the needs of a diverse student body.

4. Internal reference points

4.1. For any new course or major change Education Committee expects the course team to engage with key internal reference points, these include:

- [Examinations and assessment framework](#)
- [Policy and guidance on course information](#)
- [Policy and guidance on providing education with others](#)
- [Policy and guidance on graduate taught courses](#)
- [Policy and guidance on research degrees](#)
- [Policy and guidance on undergraduate learning and teaching](#)
- [Procedures for the annual monitoring of courses](#)
- [University awards framework](#)

5. Key course documents

5.1. The final outcome of the approval process is a set of key documents for the course – a detailed overview of the new/revised course and the Examination Regulations. The documents support the department/faculty in organising the delivery of the course and in preparing the Examination conventions and the Course handbook which together with the Examination Regulations form the definitive record of the course. More information on the definitive record of the course is available in the [Policy and guidance on course information](#).

6. Vested interests

6.1. When staff are considering any change to a course they must be mindful of the impact that this change might have on students already studying for the award. Except in very specific circumstances changes should not be made which would impact on students who have already begun to work towards a summative assessment. Changes may be considered to later parts of a course on to which students have already enrolled, but not yet begun working towards summative assessment. More information on what to consider when making changes to courses which students have already started is available in [Annex A: Principles for determining whether a proposed change is minor or major](#). More information on communicating with students is available in [Annex G: Guidance on student consultation](#).

7. Process for the development and approval of new courses and major changes

Overview

7.1. The process of development and approval of new courses and major changes consists of three stages. All proposals go through these three stages.

- 7.2. **Within the department/faculty** – this is where the original idea for a new course or major change to an existing course originates. The detailed proposal is developed and consulted on locally with teaching colleagues and students. At an early stage, departments/faculties are strongly encouraged to seek initial feedback from the division who will discuss proposals with Education Policy Support (EPS) if appropriate. Divisions will also indicate any division-specific requirements in addition to the requirements covered by this policy and guidance document. Annex A: Principles for determining whether a proposed change is minor or major provides information on the approval level required for different types of change. Departments/faculties may also wish to make use of the resources provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) including their consultancy services. The department engages with the student number planning (SNP) and fee review processes in developing relevant aspects of the proposal. For proposals for new matriculated courses, colleges are approached with regard to their potential interest to offer student places.
- 7.3. **Scrutiny by the division** – through its officers and the relevant boards and committees the division undertakes a formal scrutiny process for the proposal. If applicable, the division will seek a formal review of the proposal from one or more external subject experts (see Annex I: Guidance on external consultation for further guidance), and the relevant committee of Conference of Colleges. It will also ensure consideration and approval of any new/changes in student numbers and seek approval of the proposal's tuition fees by or on behalf of Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. When given final approval by Divisional Board the proposal is recommended to Education Committee for consideration.
- 7.4. **Scrutiny by or on behalf of Education Committee** – proposers may be invited to attend the meeting of Education Committee at which the proposal is discussed. Proposals will be reviewed on behalf of Education Committee by relevant EPS officers and depending on the nature of the change(s), they may approve the proposal on behalf of the committee or refer it to the PVC (Education) or their delegate acting on behalf of the committee for a decision, rather than refer it for full consideration by the committee. (See Annex B: Consideration by or on behalf of Education Committee (in development) for further information).
- 7.5. While the stages may appear to be discrete, consecutive steps, proposals are likely to encounter fewer issues if there is regular dialogue between the department and division and between the division(s) and EPS as the proposal is developed. EPS holds regular meetings with each of the divisions and with OUDCE to facilitate the consideration of proposals for new courses and major changes to courses.

Timescales

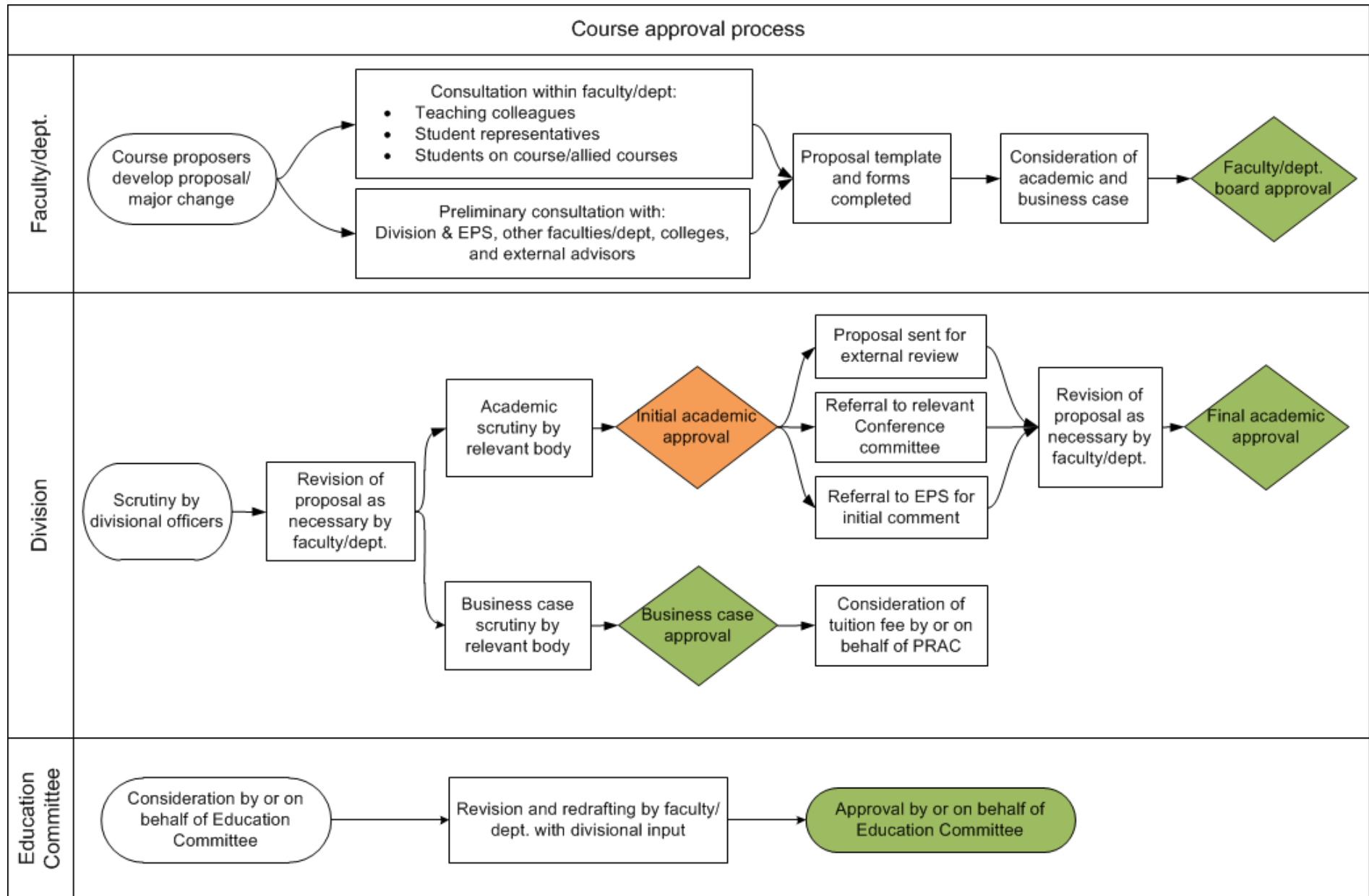
- 7.6. Proposals for new undergraduate courses will usually need to have secured final approval by the end of Trinity Term two years prior to when they will be advertised for entry, i.e. Trinity Term 2025 for entry in Autumn 2027.
- 7.7. Proposals for new postgraduate courses will need to have secured final approval by the end of Trinity Full Term in the academic year prior to when they will be advertised for entry i.e. Trinity Term 2025 for entry in Autumn 2026. In order to support advertising from the start of the admissions cycle it is essential that advertising

material, particularly the course information sheet, is prepared alongside the course proposal documentation and that the department/faculty liaises with Graduate Admissions and Recruitment about the new course during the annual update of admissions material process.

- 7.8. In addition to the development time within the department or faculty (which will vary significantly from proposal to proposal) for all new courses and major changes, proposers should normally allow at least two terms for scrutiny by division (this stage includes the referral to the relevant committee of Conference of Colleges which will be particularly detailed in relation to undergraduate courses) and at least one further term for scrutiny by Education Committee.
- 7.9. Major changes which are more limited in scope, e.g. only impact a single summative assessment/paper, may take less time to achieve approval.
- 7.10. Changes to active courses may be introduced for existing cohorts subject to consideration of vested interests (see Section 6 above).

Student numbers

- 7.11. The process for requesting new student numbers and for re-allocating existing student numbers is managed by the divisions and overseen by the Joint Student Number Planning Subcommittee. Further information is available from Planning and Council Secretariat and from the divisional offices.



Department/Faculty consideration

Developing the course proposal

- 7.12. There is a template for documenting new course proposals, a template for documenting a proposal for a major change(s) to existing courses, and a template specifically for postgraduate research programmes; these are included as Annex C: Template for a new course proposal, Annex D: Template for a proposal for a major change to an existing course and Annex E: Template for a new postgraduate research programme or a major change to a postgraduate research programme respectively. The templates provide a series of section headings, followed by guidance on what is expected to be included in each section. There may also be division-specific templates that need to be completed; the relevant divisional office should be contacted for further information.
- 7.13. Once initial support to develop the proposal within their department or faculty has been secured, proposers are strongly encouraged to make early contact with their division, who will be able to give an early view on the proposal and areas that are likely to require detailed attention. Divisions will consult Education Policy Support for advice, as appropriate.

Student consultation

- 7.14. The involvement of students in course design and development is considered good practice across the higher education sector and should take place in the development of all new courses and for proposed major changes. This also provides the opportunity to gauge the demand for new course developments.
- 7.15. Students can be involved in the development process for changes to courses and new courses in a variety of ways:
- analysis of existing student feedback on course design and content;
 - a specific questionnaire(s) or focus group(s) seeking comment on a proposal from students; currently on course (for major changes) or in a cognate area (for new courses); and
 - discussion with student representatives either through a specific meeting and/or existing consultative mechanisms such as the JCC/GCC.
- 7.16. Consultation undertaken, feedback received and its impact on the development of the proposal should be discussed in the proposal document. Further guidance on student consultation is provided in Annex G: Guidance on student consultation.

Wider consultation

- 7.17. At the early stage of a new course design or major change proposal there can be significant value in drawing on a wide range of external sources of advice. In this context 'external' means both from outside of the faculty/department and outside of the University as both can bring valuable insight during the development process.
- 7.18. In most cases, proposers will need to engage with:

- academic staff in cognate areas from the wider University who may have an interest in the proposal;
- professional staff such as those in library, technology, disability or equality services and those in Examination Services²;
- colleges, to identify those willing to offer places to students³ and for undergraduate programmes also to initiate discussions regarding tutorial provision;
- colleagues from other institutions offering similar courses to look at practice across the sector;
- contacts from academic subject associations, and sector networks;
- contacts made through research collaborations, industrial or professional partnerships, or other academic partnerships;
- employers or relevant community organisations, either through existing advisory bodies, the Careers Service or directly;
- current external examiners; and
- representatives of professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (even if the programme is not intending to seek accreditation);

7.19. Consultation undertaken, feedback received and its impact on the development of the proposal should be discussed in the proposal document. Further guidance on internal and external consultation is provided in Annex H: Guidance on internal consultation (in development) and Annex I: Guidance on external consultation.

7.20. New course proposals and some types of major change requests are expected to undergo scrutiny by someone external to the university (see Annex I: Guidance on external consultation). Therefore, departments and faculties should also consider at this point who they would wish to nominate to provide formal external review at the division level scrutiny stage.

Department/faculty approval

7.21. The department/faculty is responsible for undertaking a comprehensive review of the proposal including both academic and financial grounds.

7.22. Approval by department/faculty committee indicates that:

- the paperwork is complete (full proposal, supporting documentation and forms);
- the course is academically sound, can be well resourced and fits strategically with the plans of the department/faculty; and
- the business case is sound and the course is financially sustainable; and
- consultation with students, external advisors, other relevant departments/faculties and internal services has been undertaken and the feedback received has been incorporated into the proposal.

² Discussions with Examination Services (especially the Assessment Team and the Academic Records Office) are particularly important in relation to courses of unusual structures or where a reorganisation of existing programmes is contemplated.

³ This is different to the consultation with the relevant Conference of Colleges committee on the course proposal itself as described in section 7.31.

- 7.23. In some cases, it may be necessary for further departmental/faculty consideration if the division or Education Committee raise any concerns or require changes to be made as part of their consideration of the proposal.

Divisional consideration and scrutiny

- 7.24. The division is responsible for undertaking comprehensive detailed scrutiny of proposals. The bodies that undertake this scrutiny will vary depending on the governance structure of each division. Divisions may wish to create their own process map for this stage in the process, identifying the key responsible bodies within their own division.

Review by divisional officers

- 7.25. Once the division is aware that a major change or new course proposal is likely to be forthcoming that will require approval by Education Committee, it should notify Education Policy Support either by email (courseapprovals@admin.ox.ac.uk) or at one of the regular division/LOUDCE meetings held with EPS dedicated to course approval matters.
- 7.26. Proposal documentation will initially be reviewed by officers to check that it is complete and of sufficient quality to allow for rigorous scrutiny.
- 7.27. Officers will begin, where relevant (see Annex H: Guidance on internal consultation (in development) and Annex I: Guidance on external consultation), the process of arranging for:
- an external subject specialist (and where relevant also a sector professional) based on nominations from the department or faculty, to comment on the proposal following initial academic approval; and
 - the proposal to be considered at Senior Tutors' Committee or Graduate Committee of Conference (as appropriate).

Academic approval

- 7.28. The proposal will be scrutinised by the relevant academic body within the division who may suggest revisions of the proposal prior to seeking comments from the external reviewer (if required) and the relevant committee of the Conference of Colleges.

External review

- 7.29. Once any revisions have been undertaken, officers will send out the proposal for external review. All proposals for new courses will require comment from an external subject specialist and for those courses that relate directly to a particular profession or industry, comment from a senior member of that profession or industry should also be sought. This forms a key part of scrutiny as it allows divisions to access the subject and professional expertise necessary to assure themselves that the proposal meets the expectations for course content and standards in the subject area. See Annex I: Guidance on external consultation for guidance on when external review/consultation is required for major change requests.

- 7.30. Departments and faculties should respond to the external comments, making changes to the proposal if appropriate, and securing the necessary approvals, or explaining why further changes are not being made.

Consideration by Conference of Colleges

- 7.31. For undergraduate courses, officers will send out the full proposal, i.e. the information required in Annex C: Template for a new course proposal or Annex D: Template for a proposal for a major change to an existing course, to Senior Tutors' Committee for consideration. For graduate courses officers will send the full proposal to Conference's Graduate Committee for information and comment.

Business case and planning approval

- 7.32. For new courses, the appropriate body will consider the business case for the proposal and sign off on the proposed student numbers and fees before submitting the latter for consideration by or on behalf of Planning and Resource Allocation Committee.

Division approval

- 7.33. Departments and faculties should submit a final proposal, which includes any revisions made in response to external and/or college comments, to the relevant academic body for final approval.

- 7.34. Final approval by relevant divisional body indicates that:

- the course is academically sound, can be well resourced and fits strategically with the plans of the division;
- consultation with students, external advisors, other relevant departments/faculties and internal services has been undertaken and incorporated;
- formal external comment has been received and if necessary acted upon;
- the proposal has been reviewed by the relevant committee of the Conference of Colleges;
- approval with regard to student fees has been received from PRAC.

- 7.35. Proposals for new courses should not be referred up from divisions for final approval by, or on behalf of, Education Committee unless at least three colleges have been identified as willing to admit students on the new course. Exceptions may be permitted in cases where a single college has agreed to admit all students on a particular course.

Education Committee scrutiny

Review by Education Policy Support Officers

- 7.36. Paperwork will initially be reviewed by officers to check that it is complete and of sufficient quality to allow for rigorous scrutiny by or on behalf of Education Committee.

Education Committee consideration

- 7.37. Education Committee, or those acting on its behalf (see Annex B: Consideration by or on behalf of Education Committee (in development)), will receive:

- the minute/report from the approving divisional body; and
- full proposal and supporting documentation (including external comment and comment from the relevant Conference of Colleges committee).

7.38. Education Committee will seek to satisfy itself that the guidance provided on the development of new courses or major changes has been followed and the key points for consideration given in Section 3 above have been covered, but particularly will take a view on:

- the strategic fit of the proposed course or major change with the strategic priorities and policies of the University;
- the coherence of the proposed course or major change with the educational character of the University; and
- the risk (including reputational risk to the University) of approving or not approving the proposed course or major change.

7.39. Education Committee may refer the proposal back for further development if the Committee is not satisfied, or it may approve the proposal with or without conditions.

7.40. Once final Education Committee approval has been given there should be no changes to the course as approved prior to the first intake of the course (except for very minor cosmetic changes). However, if any changes are deemed necessary these will require approval by or on behalf of Education Committee regardless of whether they are major or minor (see Annex A: Principles for determining whether a proposed change is minor or major).

8. Post-approval process

8.1. See Annex J: Implementing a new course or major change following approval for guidance on tasks to be completed once a new course or major change has been approved.

9. Monitoring and review of approved courses

9.1. Education Committee may approve a course for a specified period, or give approval provided that a review takes place within a given time period. Otherwise all new courses should be reviewed by the division after the first five years of operation.

10. Course closure

10.1. Where a faculty or department and the responsible division have decided that a course should be discontinued they should submit a proposal for closure for the approval of the Education Committee.

10.2. The proposal should cover the:

- reasons for the proposed closure and the steps taken to reach that conclusion;
- projected impact on resources (academic staff, administrative staff and facilities);
- plans in place to ensure the quality of the learning experience of students currently on the course is maintained once recruitment is ceased; and
- plans to manage the impact on students currently in the application cycle.

- 10.3. Any consideration of potential closure of an undergraduate course should be brought to the attention of the division, Education Policy Support and Senior Tutors' Committee at the earliest possible opportunity and will need to take into account the timelines relating to the production of the University prospectus etc.

11. Monitoring and review of the process

- 11.1. Education Policy Support and officers from the divisions and the Department for Continuing Education will review the process on a triennial basis, drawing on lessons learned from the process of approving new courses or major changes since the last review.
- 11.2. This document and the process that underpins it is currently under review. Most of the changes that are expected to be made have been made but a small number of areas have not yet been fully reviewed and may lead to further changes. The review is due to complete by the end of 2024-25.

Annex A: Principles for determining whether a proposed change is minor or major

This annex sets out the core principles for determining whether a proposed change is minor or major and gives a non-exhaustive table of examples for all types of change. For information on the terms in bold, see [Annex F: Glossary of terms](#).

A: Core Principles of Minor Course Changes: Future cohorts

For a proposed change to be considered MINOR for future cohorts, it must meet the following four core principles:

1. The change can be **readily and practically implemented** by the department/faculty/division.
2. The change does not conflict with existing policy.
3. There is **no detriment** to **future cohorts of students**.
4. There are **no material CMA (Competition and Markets Authority)** implications associated with the proposed change(s).

Details

- There is **no requirement for student consultation** to be undertaken formally.
- There is **no requirement for external consultation**.
- A proposed minor change that meets the four core principles A1-4 listed above, and which aligns with the indicative examples given in [Section E below](#), is considered minor. The change can therefore be approved by a division using its existing **QA processes** and there is no need for **EPS** involvement. Divisions/OU DCE should **keep appropriate records** of the change and the approvals, including date of effect.
- Divisions/OU DCE are strongly encouraged to discuss the potential cumulative impact of multiple minor changes to a course with **EPS** at an early stage in one of the regular meetings on course matters.

B: Core Principles of Major Course Changes: Future cohorts

For a proposed change to be considered MAJOR for future cohorts, it will meet **AT LEAST ONE** of the following four core principles:

1. There is potential for the change to lead **applicants** to choose a different course from that advertised in previous cycles.
2. The change conflicts with existing policy.
3. The change(s) would result in an impact on **other stakeholders** in the course approvals process who sit outside the Division (impacts that are outside the usual **annual course administration cycles**).
4. There are **CMA** implications associated with the proposed change(s).

Details

- There **is a requirement** to consider the extent of **student consultation** required and to record the decision made including rationale.
- There is **a requirement** to consider the extent of **external consultation** required and to record the decision made including rationale.

- A proposed change that meets at least one of the four core principles B1-4 listed, above, and which aligns with the indicative examples given in Section E below, is considered major, and can **only be approved by Education Committee** (or **delegate**).
- Divisions/OU DCE should ask departments/course teams to provide the information given in Annex D: Template for a proposal for a major change to an existing course for all taught courses irrespective of their level (UG/PG) or mode(s) of delivery and Annex E: Template for a new postgraduate research programme or a major change to a postgraduate research programme for research programmes.
- Divisions/OU DCE are strongly encouraged to discuss the impact of any proposed changes with **EPS** at an early stage in one of the regular meetings on course matters.

C: Core Principles of Minor Course Changes: On course students

Minor changes for on-course students should only be made if there is a reason they should not be delayed for a future cohort.

For a proposed change to be considered MINOR for on-course students, it must align with the following four core principles:

1. The change can be **readily and practically implemented** by the department/faculty/division.
2. The change does not conflict with existing policy.
3. There is **no detriment** to on-course students.
4. There are **no CMA implications** associated with the proposed change(s).

Details

- There is no requirement for student consultation to be undertaken formally as part of a minor change proposal. However, there should be clear communication to inform students about the changes made.
- There is **no requirement for external consultation**.
- A proposed minor change that meets the four core principles C1-4 listed above, and which aligns with the indicative examples given in Section E below, is considered minor and can be approved by a division using its existing **QA processes** and there is no need for EPS involvement.
- Divisions/OU DCE should keep **appropriate records** of the change(s) and the approvals, including date of effect.
- Divisions/OU DCE are strongly encouraged to discuss the potential cumulative impact of multiple minor changes to a course with **EPS** at an early stage in one of the regular meetings on course matters.

D: Core Principles of Major Course Changes: On course students

Major changes for on-course students must only be made if there is a reason they should not be delayed for a future cohort.

For a proposed change to be considered MAJOR for on-course students, it will meet AT LEAST ONE of the following four core principles:

1. There is potential for the change to have a **demonstrable impact** on students and/or may lead to students making different choices in later parts of the course (e.g. knock-on

impacts such that students would have made different choices earlier in the course because of the change).

2. The change conflicts with existing policy.
3. The change(s) would result in an impact on **other stakeholders** in the course approvals process who sit outside the Division (impacts that are outside the usual **annual course administration cycles**).
4. There are **CMA** implications associated with the proposed change(s).

Details

- There is a requirement for **consultation with all students impacted by the change(s)**. Changes that have a demonstrable **negative impact** on students are unlikely to be approved.
- There is a requirement to consider the extent of **external consultation** required (if any) and to record the decision made, including rationale.
- A proposed change that meets one of the four core principles D1-4 listed, above, and which aligns with the indicative examples given in Section E below, is considered major, and can only be approved by **Education Committee** (or **delegate**).
- Divisions/ODCE should ask departments/course teams to provide the information given in Annex D: Template for a proposal for a major change to an existing course for all taught courses irrespective of their level (UG/PG) or mode(s) of delivery and Annex E: Template for a new postgraduate research programme or a major change to a postgraduate research programme for research programmes.
- Divisions are strongly encouraged to discuss the impact of any proposed changes with **EPS** at an early stage. Major on-course changes are a priority for discussion at the regular meetings on course matters **EPS** has with each of the divisions and ODCE.

Section E: Examples of changes and their categorisation

Timing of change	Description of change	Examples/Further details	Category of change	Approval level
For future cohorts	Changing the title of a paper (but not the content of that paper) which has not already been advertised to students	Changing a paper title from XXXX to YYYY	Minor	Division
For on-course students	Changing the title of a paper (but not the content of that paper) that hasn't yet been reported to ARO as part of the annual assessment review exercise	Changing a paper title from XXXX to YYYY	Minor	Division
For future cohorts	The addition or removal of a core paper(s)		Major	EdC
For future cohorts	Addition or removal of OPTION papers which have not already been advertised to students or where advertising has made clear that listed option papers are indicative only and may be subject to change (No change to overall assessment load)	A student needs to take an option paper from a list. In previous years, there have been 8 option papers on the list but the decision is taken to reduce it to 6. Option papers can be added or removed from this list up to the point of publication. The overall assessment load remains the same.	Minor	Division
For on-course students	Addition or removal of OPTION papers which have not already been advertised to students or where advertising has made clear that listed option papers are indicative only and may be subject to change and where students have not yet received teaching or submitted an exam entry form for that group of option papers	A student needs to take an option paper from a list. In previous years, there have been 8 option papers on the list but the decision is taken to reduce it to 6. Option papers can be added or removed papers from this list up to the point of publication. The overall assessment load remains the same.	Minor	Division
For on-course students	Addition or removal of OPTION papers which have been advertised to students without any indication that the options available may change	Also includes where the assessment details have already been reported to ARO in order for the exam entry window to open even where an	Major	EdC

		indication that options may change has been given		
For on-course students	Significant changes to the content of a paper after students have started the course but before teaching begins on the paper	Changes to an advertised Part B paper while students are completing Part A	Major	EdC
For future cohorts	A change to the type of summative assessment tasks(s) required for a specific paper (unless novel form of assessment) where this has not been specifically linked to that paper in the advertised material	The summative assessment task is the type of work students are expected to submit, e.g. report; essay; oral presentation; poster; thesis. Changes are possible where the assessment information in the CIS refers to a possible range of assessment types.	Minor	Division
For future cohorts	A change to the conditions in which a summative assessment(s) is undertaken	Examples of conditions of a summative assessment include: invigilated exam (open/closed book); non-invigilated open book exam; length of exam.	Minor	Division
For future cohorts	Changing of a summative assessment(s) submission deadline(s) which have not already been advertised to students and where this does not lead to bunching of assessment	<i>Timing of assessments – see included CTL assessment design guide</i>	Minor	Division
For on-course students	Shortening of a summative assessment(s) submission deadline(s)	<i>Timing of and time available to complete assessments – see included CTL assessment design guide</i>	Major	EdC
For future cohorts	Changes to the volume (number) of summative assessment (increase or decrease)	For example, adding an additional core paper	Major	EdC
For on-course students	Changes to the volume (number) of summative assessment (increase or decrease) &/or a rebalance of the summative assessment		Major	EdC
For future cohorts	Introduction of a novel form(s) of summative assessment	The assessment is not in use by another course at that level in the division.	Major	EdC

For on-course students	A change to the type of summative assessment tasks(s) (within the same genre as advertised to students) required in the course	For example, changing an essay to a journal article of approximately the same word length and with the same completion period	Minor	Division
For on-course students	A change to the type of summative assessment tasks(s) required in the course which has already been advertised to students, but the students have not yet started the associated paper	For example, changing from an examination to a coursework submission	Major	EdC
For future cohorts	Multiple changes to the course content and/or summative assessment	For example, following a course review or in response to student feedback	Major	EdC
For future cohorts	The introduction of and/or change to a progression hurdle (including timing)	For example, changing the progression hurdle to year 4 of an integrated Masters from 2.2 to 2.1	Major	EdC
For future cohorts	Change of mode and/or intensity of delivery of the whole course	For example, changing from full-time to part-time and/or in-person to online or blended (and <i>vice versa</i>)	Major	EdC
For future cohorts	A change to the title of a whole course	PGCert Patient Safety to PGCert Patient Safety and Quality Improvement	Major	EdC
For future cohorts or on-course students	Creation of a new 'accredited' exit award/pathway	The exit award itself may or may not already exist. Where it already exists, the major change is the creation of the exit award pathway from the course. Alternatively, the major change might be the creation of both the exit pathway and exit award.	Major	EdC

Annex B: Consideration by or on behalf of Education Committee (in development)

Annex C: Template for a new course proposal

Departments wishing to propose a new course should use this template to provide the information required to enable appropriate consideration and scrutiny. Information can either be provided using the template provided (a Word version is available to download from [New Courses and major changes to courses | Academic Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)) or in a separate Word document. Each section of the template must be completed. Note that each section has an indicative word count which is intended to act as a guide to the level of detail required.

- A. Academic grounds
- B. Evidence of Demand
- C. Matriculation and college membership
- D. Course design
- E. Course organisation, administration and oversight
- F. Teaching (UG & PGT)
- G. Teaching resources
- H. Assessment (UG & PGT)
- I. Assessment arrangements and resources
- J. Arrangements for suspensions
- K. Facilities and other physical resources
- L. Recruitment and admissions
- M. Student numbers
- N. Fees and additional course costs
- O. Consultation undertaken
- P. Documentation to be attached

A. Academic grounds

Outline the academic grounds for the proposed new course, including:

1. The context and rationale for the new course development at this time
2. How the new course relates to existing provision, within the University and elsewhere
3. The strategic fit of the new course within the department/faculty, division and University
4. The intended year of first entry
5. Whether the course will meet any PSRB accreditation requirements or will otherwise confer additional recognition on completion

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

B. Evidence of Demand

Provide a statement on the evidence of demand for the new course, including:

1. A brief explanation of whom the new course is intended to attract
2. An overview of what is offered at competitor institutions (how does the course compare in content/style/duration, how many students apply, what kind of fees do they attract)
3. An explanation of what would attract students to this course at Oxford over other offerings at the University or elsewhere
4. An explanation of what considerations there are in relation to widening participation and equality and diversity in the new course design. This might include an exploration

of protected characteristics and other key demographic factors in the intended applicant pool. Indicative word count: 500-1000 words
C. Matriculation and college membership 1. Is the course matriculated? Yes/No 2. If yes, will students matriculate in person or in absence? 3. If yes, which colleges have agreed to take students? Provide evidence of agreement (which may be in principle but must be a minimum of 3 colleges and must cover all the places agreed for the course).
D. Course (programme) design Give an overview of the course, including: 1. The course-level aims and learning outcomes; this should include reference to relevant subject benchmark statements and professional body or accreditation requirements 2. The course-level competence standards (see also EAF Annex D), the study intensity (full-time/part-time) and delivery method (in person, blended, wholly online) 3. How the course demonstrates inclusive educational practice in terms of the teaching and supporting learning (see the Disability Inclusion Statement) 4. A mapping of how the course design develops students' academic skills over the course of their study 5. A description of how the course embeds the development of students' academic study skills over the course of study 6. How employability is embedded within the design of the course – both within the curriculum and activities specific to the course which sit outside of the curriculum Indicative word count: 1500-3000 words Guidance • Annex F: Glossary of terms • Writing effective learning outcomes • Inclusive teaching and learning at Oxford • Examinations and Assessment Framework • Disability Inclusion Statement
E. Course organisation, administration and oversight 1. Identify the course leadership and the body (e.g. organising committee, standing committee) that will be responsible for organising and supervising the new course and provide details of its: a. composition (including student representation) b. reporting lines to the relevant faculty/department(s) and division(s) 2. Provide a detailed overview of the new course oversight, organisation and administration, demonstrating that there are sufficient core staffing levels to ensure smooth running of the course. If this is a joint course or a new course drawing on resources outside of the home department or faculty, list the department/faculties and divisions involved and provide evidence of their support.

3. Describe the administrative support for the new course. Can the new course be supported by the department's current administrative team? Yes/No. If no, what steps are being taken to provide the necessary resource.
4. Provide an overview of the arrangements for student representatives and representative structures associated with the new course, and articulate their integration into course management, quality assurance and enhancement and oversight.

Indicative word count: 1000-2000 words

Guidance

- [Policy and guidance on student engagement and representation](#)

F. Teaching (UG & PGT)

Describe the teaching for the course and an explanation for the proposed balance between different teaching approaches across the duration of the course from first to final year of study, i.e. lectures, tutorials, classes or seminars, and laboratory or fieldwork.

Indicative word count: 1500-3000 words

Guidance

- [Inclusive teaching and learning at Oxford](#)
- [Accessible teaching and learning at Oxford](#)
- [An introduction to inclusive teaching at Oxford \(Canvas course\)](#)
- [Recommended patterns of teaching guidance \(UG\)](#)

G. Teaching resources

1. Describe how the teaching will be resourced
2. Have those expected to supply such teaching been consulted and indicated their willingness and availability to do so in the timescales which are proposed? Yes/No/in progress
3. Will it be necessary to make any adjustments on other courses to release teaching resources for the proposed new course? Yes/No/Not applicable
4. Are there any implications for the availability of resources for other courses within the division because of the proposed new course? Yes/No/Not applicable
5. Are there sufficient resources to allow for planned absences i.e. as a result of sabbatical leave? Yes/No/Not applicable. How will unanticipated absences be addressed?

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

H. Assessment design (UG & PGT)

1. Describe the programme's approach to summative assessment design. You should provide the following information:
 - a. The educational rationale for the summative assessment tasks/timing/conditions
 - b. A description of how the summative assessment aligns with the course/programme learning outcomes
 - c. An overview of the balance between formative/summative assessment
 - d. A description of how the assessment and feedback design is inclusive

- e. A description of how summative assessments have been designed to minimise academic misconduct
2. Provide an assessment table /other visual representation for each year of the programme indicating formative & summative assessment points, reassessments points, assessment weightings, exam board points, and progression hurdles and exit awards if applicable (examples available on request)
3. For each assessment, state whether reassessment is a re-working of the first assessment attempt or a completely new question/assignment. Describe what support, if any, is available for the reassessment attempt.
4. Describe the opportunities for 'in year' re-sits of summative assessment
5. Describe the reassessment arrangements for group work and any other instance where the second attempt assessment may be/is different to the first attempt assessment (e.g. live, oral presentations).
6. Describe the marking practice(s) for summative assessments

Indicative word count: 1500-3000 words

Guidance

- [Designing inclusive assessments](#)
- [Different types of summative assessments at Oxford](#)
- [Exams and assessment framework](#)

I. Summative assessment arrangements and resources

1. Has the course assessment structure been discussed with Education Services (specifically the Assessment Team and Student Records)? Yes/No. See Annex H: Guidance on internal consultation (in development) for information on expectations and provide a copy of related correspondence as an Appendix.
2. Is there currently appropriate staffing to set and examine the proposed assessment structure? Yes/No. If no, what steps are being taken to ensure that the proposed assessment structure can be robustly examined?
3. Can the proposed assessment structure be supported by the department's current administrative team? Yes/No. If no, what steps are being taken to provide the necessary resource?

Indicative word count: 300-600 words

J. Arrangements for suspensions

1. Describe how student suspensions will be managed when summative assessment is completed over more than one term/requires groupwork/fieldwork/any other instances where a student returning at the point they left may cause difficulties.
2. Will it be possible for a student to suspend for less than three terms at a time? Yes/No. If yes, describe how this will be managed and the impact on the course and assessment structure.

Indicative word count: 300-600 words

K. Facilities and other physical resources

1. Where the new course involves additional student numbers or may have an impact on space and facilities, please address the impact, where relevant, in relation to the following:
 - a. Students' study or working space
 - b. Library provision (including space, books, and other learning resources)
 - c. Laboratory provision
 - d. Access to specialist learning facilities
 - e. Opportunities to work with staff and other graduate students (PGT courses)
 - f. Online learning provision
2. Provide details of any other resource implications of the new course, including IT, specialist equipment, accommodation and/or regular requirement for special tuition.

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

L. Recruitment and admissions

1. Describe the criteria for admission to the course
2. Provide the essential information required for admissions setup including proposed deadlines, details of supporting materials, integrated CV etc
3. Provide a copy of the draft course information sheet (CIS)
4. Will the course require students to have [ATAS](#) clearance? Yes/No/Not applicable

Indicative word count: 400-800 words

Guidance and resources

- [Annex F: Glossary of terms](#)
- [Undergraduate Admissions Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Admissions and Funding handbook](#)

M. Student numbers

State the proposed cohort size for the course, including agreed intake numbers, for the first three years (the medium-term planning profile), and any plans for proposed future expansion beyond that

Indicative word count: 100-200 words

N. Fees and additional course costs

Contact your divisional office for the current version of the PRAC Course Fee Proposal Form and course costings spreadsheet.

1. Have the fees for the course been approved? Yes/No/In progress
2. Are there any additional course costs, e.g. for optional field trips? Yes/no

If yes, please provide brief details.

Indicative word count: 100-200 words

O. Consultation undertaken

For each form of consultation undertaken for the new course please provide evidence and responses to the feedback received, or where a certain type of consultation has not been undertaken, briefly explain why this was not considered necessary.

1. Home department/faculty
2. Students
3. Other Departments/Faculties, as relevant
4. Other professional services, as relevant, including
 - a. libraries
 - b. Education Services particularly the Assessment Team and Student Records
 - c. IT Services
5. Colleges
6. External advisors
7. PSRB

Indicative word count for explanations (not supporting evidence): 500-1000 words

Guidance and resources

[Annex G: Guidance on student consultation](#)

[Annex H: Guidance on internal consultation \(in development\)](#)

[Annex I: Guidance on external consultation](#)

P. Documentation to be attached

For the proposed change(s) please attach documentary evidence of the following (as clearly labelled appendices):

1. Approval of relevant department/faculty/divisional bodies
2. Draft Examination Regulations (in Word)
3. Evidence of all consultations undertaken and responses to the feedback received
4. Evidence of college agreement to take students (matriculated courses)
5. Confirmation of fee and student number approvals
6. Any diagrammatic representations to aid clarification, e.g. course structure etc.
7. Draft course information sheet
8. Any division-specific additional information, e.g. divisional new paper template

Annex D: Template for a proposal for a major change to an existing course

Departments wishing to propose a major change to a course should use this template to provide the information required to enable appropriate consideration and scrutiny. Information can either be provided using the template provided (a Word version is available to download from [New Courses and major changes to courses | Academic Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)) or in a separate Word document. This template has several sections **not all of which will be relevant for all major changes**. Compulsory sections are indicated in bold below. Each section has an indicative word count which is intended to act as a guide to the level of detail required.

- A. Summary of change (compulsory)**
- B. Academic grounds for change (compulsory)**
- C. Overview of change (compulsory)**
- D. Course (programme) design (compulsory)**
- E. Course organisation, administration and oversight
- F. Teaching (UG & PGT)
- G. Teaching resources
- H. Assessment (UG & PGT)
- I. Summative assessment arrangements and resources
- J. Arrangements for suspensions
- K. Transitional arrangements (compulsory)**
- L. Facilities and other physical resources
- M. Recruitment and admissions
- N. Student numbers
- O. Tuition fees and additional course costs
- P. Consultation undertaken (compulsory)**
- Q. Documentation to be attached (compulsory)**

A. Summary of change (compulsory)

Provide an overview of the proposed change(s) including:

1. An outline of the change(s) relative to the current course
2. When the change will be effective from
3. Which cohort entry year the change will apply to
4. The year of the course the change affects
5. Whether the change impacts students who have already started the course

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

B. Academic grounds for change (compulsory)

Outline the academic grounds for the proposed major change(s), including:

1. The context and rationale for making the proposed major change(s) at this time
2. How the proposed change(s) relates to existing provision, within the University and elsewhere, if appropriate/relevant
3. The strategic fit of the revised programme within the department/faculty, division and University
4. How, if at all, the proposed change(s) may affect demand for the course

5. If relevant, is there an awarding gap(s) for this programme (Yes/No/Not known)? If yes, please provide a brief overview of how, if at all, the proposed change(s) may have an impact on this.

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

C. Overview of change (compulsory)

Please provide a comparison of the old and new versions of the course, preferably in tabular format. This should include:

1. Changes to teaching and/or assessment and/or course structure
2. The award-level aims and learning outcomes; this should include reference to relevant subject benchmark statements and professional body or accreditation requirements
3. The award-level [competence standards](#) (see also [EAF Annex D](#))
4. Whether the proposed change(s) will result in any changes to the current patterns of delivery, particularly if this includes teaching or assessment outside the standard 8-week/3-term structure, or changes to intensity of delivery (e.g. full-time to part-time, distance learning to in-person)
5. Whether the change affects PSRB accreditation (if relevant)

Indicative word count: 1000-2000 words

Guidance and resources

- [Writing effective learning outcomes](#)
- [Inclusive teaching and learning at Oxford](#)
- [An introduction to inclusive teaching at Oxford \(Canvas course\)](#)
- [Examinations and Assessment Framework](#)

D. Course (programme) design (compulsory)

Describe the impact of the proposed change(s) on the course design, including:

1. The alignment of the proposed change(s) in relation to the overall course-level aims
2. How the proposed major change(s) relates to inclusive educational practice on this course and the mode(s) of teaching and learning (see [Disability Inclusion Statement](#))
3. How the proposed change(s) will impact how the course embeds the development of students' academic skills
4. How the proposed change(s) will impact how employability is embedded within the design of the course – both within the curriculum and activities specific to the course which sit outside of the curriculum.
5. In what way(s) the proposed change(s) will impact students' learning experiences.

Indicative word count: 1000-2000 words

Guidance and resources

- [Annex F: Glossary of terms](#)
- [Writing effective learning outcomes](#)
- [Inclusive teaching and learning at Oxford](#)
- [Examinations and Assessment Framework](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Statement](#)

E. Course organisation, administration and oversight

Will the proposed change(s) require any changes to course organisation, administration, and/or oversight? Yes/No. If yes, provide brief details.

Indicative word count: 400-8000 words

F. Teaching (UG & PGT)

1. Does the proposed change(s) require associated change(s) to teaching approaches? Yes/No
2. If yes, describe the proposed change(s) to teaching and how this will impact students' learning. Consider:
 - a. whether teaching will be synchronous/asynchronous
 - b. students' access to learning materials
 - c. how students will interact with their tutors and peers
 - d. the impact on students of studying in different time zones and how this will be managed through the teaching and summative assessment design

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

Guidance and resources

- [Inclusive teaching and learning at Oxford](#)
- [Accessible teaching and learning at Oxford](#)
- [An introduction to inclusive teaching at Oxford \(Canvas course\)](#)

G. Teaching resources

1. Does the proposed change(s) impact on teaching resources? Yes/No

If yes:

2. How will the new or altered teaching be provided?
3. Have those expected to supply such teaching been consulted and indicated their willingness and availability to do so in the timescales which are proposed?
4. Will it be necessary to make any adjustments in other parts of the course or syllabus in order to release teaching resources for the proposed change(s)?
5. Are there any implications for the availability of resources for other courses within the division and across the University because of the proposed change(s)?
6. Are there sufficient resources to allow for programmed teaching staff absences i.e. as a result of sabbatical leave? How will unanticipated absences be addressed?

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

H. Assessment design (UG & PGT)

1. Does the proposed major change(s) involve a change(s) to summative assessment? Yes/No

If yes:

2. Provide an assessment table/other visual representation for each year of the programme indicating formative & summative assessment points, reassessments points, assessment weightings, exam boards, and progression hurdles and exit awards if applicable, highlighting the points of assessment change(s) (examples available on request)

3. Describe the impact of the proposed change(s) on the assessment structure, including:
 - a. the overall impact on students' learning of the proposed change(s) to summative assessment (if relevant)
 - b. the educational rationale for the summative assessment tasks/timing/conditions and the way(s) in which the proposed change(s) will impact these
 - c. how the summative assessment aligns with the overall course learning outcomes and the way(s) in which the proposed change(s) will impact these
 - d. the balance and timing of formative/summative assessment and the way(s) in which the proposed change(s) will impact these
 - e. how the assessment/feedback design is inclusive and the way(s) in which the proposed change(s) will embed inclusive assessment/feedback further
 - f. how summative assessments have been designed to minimise academic misconduct and the way(s) in which the proposed change(s) will impact this
4. State whether the reassessment is a re-working of the first assessment attempt or a completely new question/assignment. Describe what support, if any, is available for the reassessment attempt.
5. Describe the opportunities for 'in year' re-sits of summative assessment and the impact of any proposed summative assessment change(s) upon re-sits
6. Describe the reassessment arrangements for group work and any other instance where the second attempt assessment may be/is different to the first attempt assessment (e.g. presentations)
7. Describe the marking practice(s) for summative assessments and indicate if the proposed change(s) to summative assessment will include a change(s) to these marking practice(s)

Indicative word count: 1500-3000 words

Guidance and resources

- [Designing inclusive assessments](#)
- [Different types of summative assessments at Oxford](#)
- [Exams and assessment framework](#)

I. Summative assessment arrangements and resources

1. If changes are being proposed to summative assessment, has the assessment structure been discussed with Education Services (specifically the Assessment Team and Student Records)? Yes/No. See [Annex H: Guidance on internal consultation \(in development\)](#) for information on expectations and provide a copy of related correspondence.
2. Is there currently appropriate staffing to set and examine the revised summative assessment structure? Yes/No. If no, what steps are being taken to ensure that the revised assessment structure can be robustly examined?
3. Can the revised assessment structure be supported by the department's current administrative team? Yes/No. If no, what steps are being taken to provide the necessary resource.

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

J. Arrangements for suspensions

3. Will the proposed major change have an impact on students who are currently suspended or who may suspend before the change is introduced? Yes/No

If yes:

4. Describe how student suspensions will be managed when assessment is completed over more than one term/requires groupwork/fieldwork/any other instances where a student returning at the point they left is likely to cause difficulties.
5. Will it be possible for a student to suspend for less than three terms at a time? Yes/No. If yes, describe how this will be managed and the impact on the course and assessment structure.

Indicative word count: 300-600 words

K. Transitional arrangements (compulsory)

Departments are expected to teach and assess according to the course structure that was advertised to students within set limits (generally linked to the maximum period of suspension that a student can take).

1. Describe the transitional arrangements that will be put in place to facilitate this expectation. Particular attention should be given to groupwork, fieldwork and any other aspects of the course that may be more challenging to provide transitional arrangements for.
2. Where a change is being requested for on-course students, describe and provide evidence of student consultation.

Indicative word count: 400-800 words

L. Facilities and other physical resources

1. Does the proposed major change(s) impact on teaching and learning spaces and/or facilities? Yes/no

If yes, outline, where relevant, the impact of the proposed change(s) on:

2. Students' study or working space
3. Library provision (including space, books, and other learning resources)
4. Laboratory provision
5. Access to specialist learning facilities
6. Opportunities to work with staff and other graduate students (PGT courses)
7. Online learning provision

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

M. Recruitment and admissions

1. Will the proposed major changes have an impact on admissions criteria. Yes/no. If yes, please provide brief details.
2. Will the proposed change require a change to the published course information sheet? Yes/no. If yes, please provide draft amended course information sheet(s) and give an evaluation of the likely Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) implications.

Indicative word count: 400-800 words

Guidance and resources • Annex F: Glossary of terms • Higher Education Providers: Consumer Law (publishing.service.gov.uk)
N. Student numbers Are changes to student numbers being proposed because of this proposal? Yes/no. If yes, has approval been granted? Yes/no/in progress
O. Fees and additional course costs Are there any additional course costs, e.g. for optional field trips? Yes/no. If yes, please provide brief details. If any change to the fee is being requested as part of this course change, the PRAC process should be followed. Indicative word count: 100-200 words
P. Consultation undertaken (compulsory) For each form of consultation undertaken for the proposed change(s), please provide evidence and responses to the feedback received, or where a certain type of consultation has not been undertaken, briefly explain why this was not considered necessary. 1. Home department/faculty 2. Students 3. Other Departments/Faculties, as relevant 4. Other professional services, as relevant, including a. libraries b. Education Services particularly the Assessment Team and Student Records c. IT Services 5. Colleges 6. External advisors 7. PSRB Indicative word count for explanations (not supporting evidence): 500-1000 words Guidance and resources Annex G: Guidance on student consultation Annex H: Guidance on internal consultation (in development) Annex I: Guidance on external consultation
Q. Documentation to be attached (compulsory) For the proposed change(s) please attach documentary evidence of the (as clearly labelled appendices): 1. Approval of relevant department/faculty/divisional bodies 2. Draft Examination Regulations (in Word) 3. Evidence of all consultations undertaken and responses to the feedback received 4. Any diagrammatic representations to aid clarification, e.g. course structure etc. 5. Draft updated course information sheet (if relevant) 6. Any division-specific additional information, e.g. divisional new paper template

Annex E: Template for a new postgraduate research programme or a major change to a postgraduate research programme

Departments wishing to propose a new PGR programme or changes to an existing PGR programme should use this template to provide the information required to enable appropriate consideration and scrutiny. Information can either be provided using the template provided (a Word version is available to download from [New Courses and major changes to courses | Academic Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/academic-support/new-courses-and-major-changes-to-courses)) or in a separate Word document. Each section of the template must be completed for new programmes. For proposals for major changes, sections A-C must be completed with other sections completed as appropriate for the type of change being requested. Note that each section has an indicative word count which is intended to act as a guide to the level of detail required.

- A. Programme title (all proposals) and summary of change (change proposals only)
- B. Academic grounds
- C. Evidence of/impact on demand
- D. Matriculation and college membership (new programmes only)
- E. Programme design
- F. Programme organisation, administration and oversight
- G. Induction, skills training and employability
- H. Supervision
- I. Location of study and collaborative provision
- J. Assessment
- K. Arrangements for suspensions
- L. Facilities and other resources
- M. Recruitment and admissions
- N. Student numbers
- O. Fees and additional course costs
- P. Consultation undertaken
- Q. Documentation to be attached

A. Programme title (all proposals) and summary of change (change proposals only)

Give the name of the (proposed) programme, the study intensity (full-time/part-time) and the expected first cohort date for new programmes or the expected date of implementation for major changes.

For major changes to programmes, give a summary of the change.

Indicative word count: 150-300 words

B. Academic grounds

Outline the academic grounds for the proposed new programme/changes to an existing programme, including:

1. The context and rationale for the new programme development/changes to an existing programme at this time
2. How the new programme relates to/proposed changes impact existing provision, within the University and elsewhere
3. The strategic fit of the new programme within the department/faculty, division and University (new programmes only)
4. Whether the programme or changes to the programme are related to a RCUK or other funding bid

5. Whether the course will meet any PSRB accreditation requirements or will otherwise confer additional recognition on completion

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

C. Evidence of/Impact on demand

Provide a statement on the evidence of demand for the new programme/impact on demand of the changes, including:

1. A brief explanation of whom the new programme is intended to attract/whether the changes are being made to make the programme more attractive and if so to whom
2. An overview of what is offered at competitor institutions (how does the programme compare in content/style/duration, how many students apply, what kind of fees do they attract) (new programmes only)
3. An explanation of what would attract students to this programme at Oxford over other offerings at the University or elsewhere (new programmes only)
4. An explanation of what considerations there are in relation to widening participation and equality and diversity in the new programme design. This might include an exploration of protected characteristics and other key demographic factors in the intended applicant pool.

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

D. Matriculation and college membership (new programmes only)

It is assumed that all new research programmes will be matriculated.

1. Will students matriculate in person or in absence?
2. Which colleges have agreed to take students? Provide evidence of agreement (which may be in principle but must be a minimum of 2 colleges and must cover all the places agreed for the programme).

E. Programme design

Give an overview of the programme, including:

1. The programme-level aims and learning outcomes; this should include reference to any professional body or accreditation requirements
2. The programme-level [competence standards](#) (see also [EAF Annex D](#))
3. How the programme demonstrates inclusive educational practice (see the [Disability Inclusion Statement](#))
4. If the programme is being offered part-time, confirm that the programme level aims, learning outcomes and competence standards are the same as for full-time students.
5. If the proposal is for a new MSc(Res)/MLitt, explain how and to what extent the research Masters programme will be integrated with any existing DPhil programmes.
6. If exit awards will be available for those who cannot or do not wish to continue to completion of the original intended award, please explain what these will be.

Where a major change is being requested highlight the impact of the change on the above.

Indicative word count: 1500-3000 words

Guidance

- [Annex F Glossary of terms \(P&G new courses\)](#)
- [Writing effective learning outcomes](#)
- [Inclusive teaching and learning at Oxford](#)

- [Examinations and Assessment Framework Annex D](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Statement](#)

F. Programme organisation, administration and oversight

1. Identify the programme leadership and the body (e.g. organising committee, standing committee) that will be responsible for organising and supervising the new programme and provide details of its:
 - a. composition (including student representation)
 - b. reporting lines to the relevant faculty/department(s) and division(s)
2. Provide a detailed overview of the new programme oversight, organisation and administration, demonstrating that there are sufficient core staffing levels to ensure smooth running of the programme. If this is a joint programme or a new programme drawing on resources outside of the home department or faculty, list the department/faculties and divisions involved and provide evidence of their support.
3. Describe the administrative support for the new programme. Can the new programme be supported by the department's current administrative team? Yes/No. If no, what steps are being taken to provide the necessary resource.
4. Provide an overview of the arrangements for student representatives and representative structures associated with the new programme, and articulate their integration into programme management, quality assurance and enhancement and oversight.

Where a major change is being requested highlight the impact of the change on the above.

Indicative word count: 1000-2000 words

Guidance

- [Policy and guidance on student engagement and representation](#)

G. Induction, skills training and employability

1. Describe the induction arrangements. If the programme is to be offered part-time or is a proposal for a new MSc(Res)/MLitt programme, describe the impact of this on induction arrangements.
2. Describe how skills training is embedded within the programme. If the programme is to be offered part-time, describe the impact of this on skills training.
3. Describe how employability is embedded within the design of the programme.

Indicative word count: 500-1,000 words

Guidance

- [Policy and guidance on research degrees](#)

H. Supervision

1. Describe the supervision arrangements for the new programme/any changes to the supervision arrangements for the programme and how progress will be monitored.
2. If the programme is to be offered part-time, describe the impact of this on supervision arrangements, noting that good practice is for part-time students to have a supervisory team.

Indicative word count: 300-600 words

Guidance

- [General Regulations Governing Research Degrees: Part 3 Supervision of Probationer Research Students](#)
- [General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy: Part 5 Supervision of Students](#)
- [General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Letters: Part 4 Supervision of Students](#)
- [General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Science by Research: Part 4 Supervision of Students](#)
- [Policy and guidance on research degrees](#)
- [Divisional guidance on supervision](#)

I. Location of study and collaborative provision

1. Describe the requirements, or changes to the requirements, for study outside the home department/Oxford, for example for fieldwork, at another institution as part of a Doctoral Training Centre arrangement.
2. Specify whether there is any collaborative provision of teaching, supervision or facilities.
3. If the programme is offered part-time, describe the expectations of study in Oxford and elsewhere.

Indicative word count: 300-600 words

Guidance

- [General Regulations Governing Research Degrees: Part 4 Residence and other Requirements of Probationer Research Students](#)
- [Policy and guidance on providing education with others](#)

J. Assessment

Set out the requirements, or changes to the requirements, for transfer of status, confirmation of status (DPhil only) and final examination, including:

1. The timing of milestone assessments including for part-time if offered
2. The material required for milestone assessments and the impact on taught components of part-time study (if offered)
3. Whether the final submission will be standard thesis (in which case please state the proposed word count) or whether an integrated thesis is permissible, stating the required number of publications.

Indicative word count: 1000-2000 words

Guidance

- [General Regulations Governing Research Degrees](#)
- [General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Letters](#)
- [General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Science by Research](#)
- [General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#)

K. Arrangements for suspensions

1. Describe how student suspensions will be managed if there are any summatively assessed taught elements, e.g. as part of transfer of status requirements, where a student suspending for less than a year may cause difficulties.
2. Describe how student suspensions will be managed where suspension may have an impact on the subject of research, e.g. recruitment of study participants, longitudinal data collection, creation of laboratory samples.

Indicative word count: 300-600 words

L. Facilities and other resources

1. Where the new programme/major change to the programme involves additional student numbers or may have an impact on space, facilities or other resources, please address the impact, where relevant, in relation to the following:
 - g. Students' study or working space
 - h. Library provision (including space, books, and other learning resources)
 - i. Laboratory provision
 - j. Access to specialist learning facilities
 - k. Opportunities to work with staff and other graduate students
 - l. Online learning provision
2. Provide details of any other resource implications of the new course, including IT, specialist equipment, accommodation and/or regular requirement for special tuition.

Indicative word count: 500-1000 words

M. Recruitment and admissions

1. Describe the criteria for admission to the programme
2. Provide the essential information required for admissions setup including proposed deadlines, details of supporting materials, integrated CV etc
3. Provide a copy of the draft course information sheet (CIS)
4. Will the course require students to have [ATAS](#) clearance? Yes/No/Not applicable

Indicative word count: 400-800 words

Guidance and resources

- [Annex F Glossary of terms \(P&G new courses\)](#)
- [Graduate Admissions and Funding handbook](#)

N. Student numbers

State the proposed cohort size for the programme, including agreed intake numbers, for the first three years (the medium-term planning profile), and any plans for proposed future expansion beyond that. For changes to programmes, state any changes to student numbers.

Indicative word count: 100-200 words

O. Fees and additional course costs

Contact your divisional office for the current version of the PRAC Course Fee Proposal Form and course costings spreadsheet.

1. Have the fees for the course been approved? Yes/No/In progress
2. Are there any additional course costs, e.g. for fieldwork? Yes/No

If yes, please provide brief details.

Indicative word count: 100-200 words

P. Consultation undertaken

For each form of consultation undertaken for the proposal please provide evidence and responses to the feedback received, or where a certain type of consultation has not been undertaken, briefly explain why this was not considered necessary.

1. Home department/faculty
2. Students
3. Other Departments/Faculties, as relevant
4. Other professional services, as relevant, including
 - a. libraries
 - b. Education Services particularly the Data Quality Team
 - c. IT Services
5. Colleges
6. External advisors
7. PSRB

Indicative word count for explanations (not supporting evidence): 500-1000 words

Guidance and resources

- [Annex G: Guidance on student consultation \(P&G new courses\)](#)
- [Annex H: Guidance on internal consultation \(P&G new courses\)](#)
- [Annex I: Guidance on external consultation \(P&G new courses\)](#)

Q. Documentation to be attached

In support of the proposal, please attach documentary evidence of the following (as clearly labelled appendices):

1. Approval of relevant department/faculty/divisional bodies
2. Draft Examination Regulations (in Word)
3. Evidence of all consultations undertaken and responses to the feedback received
4. Evidence of college agreement to take students
5. Confirmation of fee and student number approvals
6. Draft course information sheet
7. Any division-specific additional information, e.g. divisional new paper template

Annex F: Glossary of terms

This glossary serves two main purposes:

- To provide definitions of terms and concepts which may be unfamiliar to those involved in the course design and approvals process
- To ensure that, within the specific context of course design and approvals at Oxford, there is a common and consistent understanding of these terms.

It is recognised that outside of the specific purposes and context described there may be other meanings and usages of these terms.

Term	Definition
Accredited exit award or pathway	An award often at a lower level than a student's original target award. A student might opt to work towards the exit award if they no longer wish to or feel able to work towards the original target award OR a student might be offered an alternative award to recognise their actual academic progress if they were unable to fulfil all the requirements of their original target award. In some cases, a student might be eligible for an award at the same level but not meet requirements for a specific named pathway leading to award of a qualification for an alternative named pathway.
Advertised	In its advertising of courses to applicants the University aim is to provide comprehensive, clear information to enable applicants to make an informed choice of course. The information made available in advertising includes the course structure and the fees/costs (including any additional course costs), relevant non-course-related information (such as accommodation options and college costs) and any important or 'surprising' rules and regulations. Each course has a dedicated webpage (for both undergraduate and graduate courses) which includes details of the course structure and content, teaching methods, examination methods, resources available, fees/costs, scholarship funding, and relevant non-course-related information (such as accommodation options, visa information, etc.).
Annual assessment review exercise	The annual assessment update exercise conducted by the Academic Records Office (ARO), details available online https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/course-and-assessment-setup#tab-2145246#tab-2145246 See also 'ARO'
Annual course administration cycles	Administrative tasks or events that support the running of a course and happen on a cyclical basis, e.g. enrolment, assessment review, exam entry, boards of examiners, matriculation, graduation. Changes which take place outside of established cycles may not be deemed 'readily and practicably implemented' in the context of course changes. See also 'other stakeholders'.

Applicants	Individuals who are preparing or have already submitted an application for entry to a particular course and who later may become 'offer holders' and then 'on-course students'.
ARO	Academic Records Office Specialised team within Student Records (part of Education Services) responsible for ensuring the accuracy and security of entries in the university's student records system (SITS), which powers the functionality available to staff and students in eVision. Includes administration of individual student records and records of course and summative assessment structures.
ATAS	Academic Technology Approval Scheme Clearance through this scheme is required for certain subjects, mainly in the sciences. https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/ATAS
Blended	In blended learning different approaches to teaching and learning are used within the same course, i.e. a combination of in-person and online activities, (which may be synchronous or asynchronous).
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority The CMA monitors compliance with consumer protection laws and has issued guidance setting out the responsibilities of higher education providers in relation to both current and prospective students. Further details are available https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/consumer-protection-compliance
Collaborative provision	or 'Education with others' Relates to instances where the university works in partnership with other organisations to deliver programmes or courses which lead to a qualification from Oxford Currently the university engages in five broad categories of education with others: 1. taught collaborative provision, 2. collaborations involving postgraduate research students, 3. minor collaborations, 4. international placements, 5. integrated/professional placements. For further information see the Policy and guidance on providing education with others https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies/providing-education-with-others
Communication to inform students	In the context of this document and particularly <u>Annex A: Principles for determining whether a proposed change is minor or major</u> this refers to a communication that informs on-course students of a change that has been made to their course but for which there was no requirement for student consultation to take place in advance of the change being made. The communication should clearly describe the nature of the change and the impact on students.

	For further information see Annex G: Guidance on student consultation
Competence standards	Competence standards are the 'academic, medical or other standards applied for the purpose of determining whether a person has a particular level of competence or ability' in their course. There is no obligation to make adjustments to competence standards but there is a requirement to make reasonable adjustments to the conditions that test the competence. Competence standards must not be unlawfully discriminatory in themselves. https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/glossary#collapse1802401
Conditions in which summative assessment is taken	The description of how a summative assessment is to be taken e.g. in-person, online, closed-book, open-book, mode of completion together with other information that might appear in the assessment brief, e.g. whether calculators or certain reference materials are permitted.
Core paper	A paper which students are mandated to take in order to be eligible to be awarded their intended qualification.
Course documentation	The documentation that provides the definitive record of a course i.e. a description of the essential framework of a course, its curriculum structure and the way that it is assessed. The relevant general and special regulations in the Examination Regulations, supplemented by the relevant course handbook and examination conventions, form the definitive record of a course. The information in the definitive record of a course, as applicable to each specific cohort of students, should have been reflected in advertising materials aimed at those cohorts. See also the Policy and guidance on course information.
Course information sheet (CIS)	A document closely aligned with the admissions webpage for a particular course which summarise the content, structure, assessment and course costs. This document forms part of the student's contract with the University.
Course review	A review of a course that might be undertaken by the faculty/department or division on a cyclical basis or at a specified point in time, for example PGT courses are expected to be reviewed after their first five years.
Course syllabus	Detailed information about course arrangements e.g. teaching staff, learning outcomes, synopses of papers, reading lists.
Demonstrable impact	A change that would affect students' continued engagement with their studies e.g. require them to change where or when they need to complete aspects of their course and/or would influence them to make different choices about their continuing studies e.g. option paper choices.

Education Committee (or delegate)	Education Committee (EdC) is the approving authority for course changes and new courses. Education Committee also delegates authority to approve changes via other routes - EdC Chair's action, EPS officer action, divisional level approval.
Education with others	see 'Collaborative provision'
EPS	Education Policy Support
Examination Regulations	The Examination Regulations hold details about the requirements students must meet in order to be eligible for the award of their intended qualification. The Examination Regulations applicable to any given course are comprised of the General (e.g. General Regulations for the First and Second Public Examination) and Special (e.g. Regulations for the Preliminary Examination in History) Regulations.
External consultation	Proposals for new courses and some types of major change approval requests for existing courses are expected to undergo scrutiny by someone external to the university, e.g. external examiner to the course, director of a cognate course at another higher education institution (HEI), industry expert, representative of a professional body. Departments and faculties should nominate appropriate external reviewers. Detailed information about external consultation is available in Annex I: Guidance on external consultation
Formative assessment	Assessment which is set as a learning activity or to track progress and for which no formal mark or grade is awarded. See also 'summative assessment'.
Future cohorts	Cohorts who have not yet enrolled on their course or who are not due to enrol on their course within the next three months. This category also encompasses applicants in the system and offer holders.
Learning outcomes	When a student successfully completes a course, the learning outcomes are the knowledge and skills that they should possess. Learning outcomes may be stated for an individual paper or unit or for a whole degree, in the latter case the overall outcomes would be expected to draw together the paper or unit outcomes.
Multiple changes	Where more than one change is being made simultaneously e.g. as the result of a course review or where successive changes are being made, the overall/cumulative impact on the course should be considered. For example, several minor changes made year on year and potentially affecting the same cohort of students might result in a more substantial impact for that cohort.
No detriment	There will be no demonstrable negative impact on students because of the course change.

Novel form of summative assessment OR novel summative assessment task	A summative assessment task (see definition below) that is not in use by another course at the same level within the division.
On-course students	Students who have enrolled or those who will enrol on their course within the next 3 months.
Online course	A course which is delivered exclusively online (as opposed to 'in-person' or through 'blended learning')
Option papers	A paper which is not amongst those that students are mandated to take for their course (core paper). Students must take one paper from a prescribed list and have some degree of freedom to choose according to their interests. It is different from an optional paper which is an additional paper that students may take that is beyond the minimum requirements for the course.
Other stakeholders	Stakeholders such as Education Services (particularly the Assessment team, Student Records), colleges, libraries, who may be required to undertake work to facilitate implementation of the proposed new course or course change(s). See also 'annual course administration cycles'.
Programme aims/objectives	Brief description of the overall goals/purpose of a course.
Progression hurdle	The academic standard that a student needs to meet to be permitted to progress onto the next stage of a course e.g. to progress onto the fourth year of an integrated Master's degree students must have achieved an average of 2:1 in Part B.
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies PSRBs are a very diverse group of professional and employer bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals. They provide membership services and promote the interests of people working in professions; accredit or endorse courses that meet professional standards, provide a route through to the professions or are recognised by employers. Examples include General Medical Council (GMC), Institute of Physics, Bar Standards Board
QA (Quality Assurance) processes	The established quality assurance processes in use within a division such as use of desk-based exercises for yearly updates to course descriptions or consideration and sign-off of proposals for change by appropriate committees
Readily and practically implemented	In this context a change that can be implemented by the department/faculty/division without requiring any action by other stakeholders outside of their normal service level or outside of standard timeframes for such services being provided. See also 'annual course administration cycles'.

Rebalance of summative assessment	A redistribution of summative assessments within a course, e.g. moving a summative assessment task from the second year of an FHS into the first year of the FHS.
Student consultation	Depending on the type of change it might be necessary to seek student views on the proposed change and in some cases student consent to the change will be required. Detailed information about student consultation is available in Annex G: Guidance on student consultation
Summative assessment tasks	Tasks, e.g. oral presentations, multiple choice questions (MCQs), short answer exam questions, dissertations, field reports, extended essays etc. that are set as a summative assessment.
Summative assessment	Assessment which evaluates student learning and for which a formal mark or grade is awarded which contributes to the students' overall outcome. (As opposed to formative assessment which is set as a learning activity or to track progress and for which no formal mark or grade is awarded.)
Volume of summative assessment	Refers to the quantity of summative assessment students are required to complete, e.g. the number of exam papers set, the number of coursework submissions students complete, the word counts for summative assessments or a combination of these factors.

Annex G: Guidance on student consultation

1. What is 'student consultation'?

It is good practice to draw on student feedback, whether collected formally and/or informally, to inform ongoing course developments; this might, for example, take the form of mid- or end-of-term evaluation activities. Student consultation has two primary purposes in the course approvals process, as follows: to drive enhancement and to support the justification for change.

Student consultation, in which students can feedback in a timely manner on a proposed change(s) to a course, must be undertaken for all new course proposals. For major changes, the timing, type and amount of student consultation, and the expected engagement of students, will depend on the type of change(s) being proposed and the date of implementation. If a decision is taken not consult with students as part of the process for a major change proposal, the reasons for this must be recorded.

2. Why do we undertake student consultation?

The [Competition and Markets Authority \(CMA\)](#) requires all students to be provided with key information prior to them commencing their studies; this is known as the '**core material information**'. Where a proposed change to a course might affect this core material information, students should be given the opportunity to comment on these proposed changes. The documented student consultation information is used, alongside other internal/external consultation data (as appropriate), to inform the course approvals process.

3. Which students need to be consulted?

All on-course students that would be affected by a course change(s) should be given the opportunity to comment on the changes being proposed. This includes students who would be impacted by the change in their next or subsequent years of study and students who have suspended their studies. It does not apply to students who have withdrawn.

If the proposed change is not consistent with how the course has been advertised, applicants (including those who have started an application but not yet submitted it) and offer-holders should be informed, as a minimum, **once the change has been approved** to allow students the opportunity to withdraw. Depending on the type of change(s) being proposed and the timescale for implementation, a department should also consider the benefit of consulting applicants and offer-holders on the proposed changes.

Where a change will not affect on-course students or current year applicants, i.e. it is a change for a future intake for which advertising has not yet started or where the change will be consistent with current advertising, it is good practice to gather student feedback as part of the development of proposals for consideration. Consultation of this nature may be conducted through (Graduate) Joint Consultative Committees ((G)JCCs) or other consultative fora.

4. What methods can be used for student consultation?

The approach(es) used for student consultation will depend on several factors, including the type of course, the nature/timing of the proposed change(s) and their likely impact on students, as well as the study location of the students (see Table 1 for examples).

- Due to challenges of survey fatigue and potential accessibility issues with in-person feedback opportunities for students at Oxford, it is suggested that **departments and faculties utilise more than one approach to collecting student feedback on the proposed change(s)**; this may be more relevant where student numbers are large and where there might be greater potential for a lower response rate.
- **Using more than one approach to engage students in the consultation process might also be useful where it is considered that the proposed change(s) may have more significant impacts on students.**
- **Regardless of the method(s) you choose to consult with students, you should report back to them what you learned from their feedback and the changes, if any, that you have made in response.** Closing the feedback loop in this way ensures that students have greater confidence that their input is not only heard but acted upon, thus fostering an environment of mutual respect and continued student engagement.
- As part of the course approvals process, you should provide a summary of the Department/Faculty response to the student consultation undertaken (see **Form 1**).

Further information is also available in the [Policy and guidance on student engagement and representation](#) and in the University's [Student-Staff Partnerships Toolkit](#).

5. How much consultation do we need to do?

As a minimum, for the course approvals process departments/faculties should:

- i) be able to demonstrate that all students affected by the change(s) have been contacted and that they have been provided with a period of time, commensurate with the timing, nature and likely impact of the proposed change(s), in which to submit their feedback;
- ii) provide opportunity for discussion of the major changes/new course proposals at the relevant student representation panel(s).

In practical terms this means that, **as a minimum**, the department/faculty should for all types of major change and for new course proposals:

1. Table all major changes/new course proposals on the agenda for discussion at the relevant student representation panel(s) (JCC/GJCC). Items should set out what the change is, why it is being proposed, and the input from students being requested. Where changes are made to proposals either in response to student feedback or for other reasons, revised proposals should be considered again at relevant student representation panels.

In addition, if the proposed change will have a direct impact on students, the department/faculty should:

2. Send an email to all students affected to inform them of the proposed change(s) and outlining opportunities for students to provide their feedback. This should be sent to the students' University of Oxford email address. The email should clearly set out the proposed change(s) with the associated rationale and outline the option(s) for students to provide their feedback within a reasonable and clearly specified timeframe.

Despite staff and student efforts, it can be challenging to get a representative sample of student responses to a call for feedback on a proposed major course change(s) or feedback on new course proposals. Departments/faculties may therefore find it helpful to use their initial email contact with students to state that *“if no response is received by [insert a clearly specified date/time], it will be interpreted as you [the student] being in support of the proposed course change(s).”*

However, where an academic judgement is made that a change is likely to be particularly impactful, including for the change to be considered as having a negative, departments/faculties should take **additional steps** to encourage student engagement with the consultation process. For example:

- Sending a reminder email(s) to all affected students to offer the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed course change(s); it may be necessary to extend the deadline for receiving feedback
- Using other method(s) to collate student feedback (see Table 1)

3. If changes are made to course change proposals following a first round of student consultations, a second round of emails should be sent to all students.

For example, if course change proposals are modified in light of negative student feedback but it is still desirable or necessary for a change to be made.

A summary of the methods used to engage students in the consultation process and the student response rate should be included as part of the course approvals documentation (see Form 1). **This means that even if student response rates to the consultation are low, there is a clear record that attempts have been made by the Department/Faculty to engage students in the process, as commensurate with the nature of the proposed course change(s).**

Table 1: Examples of Student Consultation Methods

Student Consultation Method	Benefits	Challenges
Online surveys Digital questionnaires to collect feedback on the proposed changes	• Efficient for quickly gathering data from large groups, including students based overseas • Can be embedded within the email informing all affected students of the proposed change(s) • Anonymous responses can encourage honesty	• Survey and e-mail fatigue often leads to low survey response rates at Oxford • May lack the depth of response in comparison face-to-face feedback • Takes time to analyse student feedback
In-class group discussions Session(s) where students discuss the proposed change(s) and/or an overview of proposed change(s) in small pairs or groups in class, with opportunities for students to feedback in different formats (including anonymously)	• Encourages reflexive discussions, with opportunities for students to ask questions • In-class consultation provides opportunities to capture a range of student feedback across different formats, e.g. using online polling	• Discussions can go 'off-topic' • Dominant personalities can overshadow quieter students • Takes time to analyse student feedback
Focus groups Session(s) where a group of students discuss the proposed changes with a nominated member of staff as facilitator	• Encourages reflexive discussions, with opportunities for students to ask questions • Ability to recruit students from specific demographic(s) • Generates instant verbal feedback that staff can make notes on and take forward	• Takes time to organise and co-ordinate • May require incentives (e.g. honorariums, meals) to encourage student attendance
Student representative panels, e.g. Student-Staff Liaison Committees or Joint Consultative Committees Minuted meetings where student course representatives give feedback on proposed course changes on behalf of the student body	• Provides a platform for anonymous student voices • Gives students a chance to ask questions • Can highlight collectively identified issues or successes	• Student representatives may struggle to represent all student perspectives • Student representatives may not feel able to convey honest views • Takes time to organise and co-ordinate

Pop-up feedback events Informal opportunities for students to give immediate feedback on proposed change(s) to staff, e.g. at an 'information table', ideally located in an area with high student footfall	• Encourages spontaneous, candid feedback • Can be engaging and fun for students, especially if offered as a chance to vote on options • Gives students a chance to ask questions	• May not capture comprehensive or reflective feedback • Takes time to set up and physically resource the information table • May take time to analyse student feedback
Student feedback forums/Town Hall meetings Structured meetings where any student can voice concerns and suggestions regarding proposed change(s) to faculty and administration in an open forum	• Fosters transparency and community engagement • Allows for a wide range of issues relevant to the proposed change(s) to be discussed • Gives students a chance to ask questions	• Requires time and resource to advertise and mediate a large event • Risk of focusing on grievances over constructive feedback on proposed change(s)

Form 1: Summary of the departmental/faculty response to student consultation⁴

SECTION A: STUDENT CONSULTATION Consultation with students should be undertaken for all new programmes and most major changes to existing programmes.
1. Title of the existing course undergoing a major change(s) OR title of the proposed new course
2. Methods of student consultation Please list all the method(s) used to engage students in the consultation process
3. Date(s) of student consultation opportunities Please give the dates of all student consultation activities undertaken, including date(s) of emails sent to all students affected by the proposed change(s) and the timeframe students were given to respond.
4. What was the response rate? Please indicate the response rate for each method of student consultation undertaken.
5. Number of students contacted Please give details of the number of students contacted and their respective year(s) of study. No actual student names should be provided.
6. What questions did you ask students in the consultation? Please provide a link to any survey(s) used and/or a summary of the consultation questions you asked students (e.g. questions embedded with the department/faculty email sent to all affected students).
7. What issue(s) was raised by students and how you have responded to their feedback? Please provide a summary of the students' feedback and outline how you have responded to any negative feedback during your student consultation.
8. How and when have you fed back to the students the way(s) in which you have used their feedback to inform the proposed course change(s)/new course development? Please outline briefly the way(s) in which you have informed students of the outcome of the consultation process.

⁴ Adapted from the University of Bristol template as an example: [Bristol Student Consultation form.docx](#)

SECTION B: CONFIRMATION	
Template completed by:	
Position:	
Date:	

Please attach the completed report as an appendix to the major change proposal/new course proposal documentation.

Annex H: Guidance on internal consultation (in development)

Annex I: Guidance on external consultation

1. What is 'external consultation' and why do we undertake it?

It is good practice to draw on the views of those external to the University who have expertise relevant to the course being proposed or changed.

External consultation supports the University in assuring itself that courses (continue to) meet the expectations of the Office for Students with regards to quality of provision. External consultation is a key part of a robust approval process for new courses or major changes to courses and plays a central part in the University's mechanisms for ensuring that its students and the wider public can have confidence in the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities we provide.

External reviewers provide a subject specialist perspective outside of the department or faculty putting forward the proposal. They can comment on matters of quality and standards that are specific to that discipline area and make comparisons against national standards and similar courses elsewhere.

2. What is the nomination process?

Two reviewers who meet the criteria for nomination (below) should be identified and their details provided to the relevant divisional office. They will be approached in order, with the second only being approached if the first is unable to participate. Proposals relating to a course with specific industrial or professional relevance, where completion of a course can lead on to entry to a specific profession or preparation for a career in industry, should also make two nominations for an industry/professional specialist reviewer.

3. What are the criteria for nomination?

The person specification¹ for an external reviewer is adapted from that for an external examiner, as they fulfil similar functions:

- knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
- competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study
- relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being proposed, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
- competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
- sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers
- familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
- fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s)
- meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
- awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
- competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Those asked to provide an external viewpoint should be sufficiently external to the university to fulfil the role of 'critical friend'. It is also important to minimise conflicts of interest and so

¹ Adapted for sense from Section 3 of the [Examinations and assessment framework \(EAF\)](#)

departments and faculties should be mindful to try and avoid nominees falling into the following categories or circumstances:

- a member of a governing body or committee of the University or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the University or one of its collaborative partners*
- anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the proposed programme of study*
- anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the proposed programme of study
- anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the proposed programme of study
- anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the proposed programme(s) or modules in question
- former staff or students of the University unless a period of five years has elapsed
- anyone involved in a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution or a current or recent external examiner.

Where a potential conflict of interest is identified this should be made known to and advice sought from appropriate contacts e.g. divisional officers, Education Policy Support.

*Noting that some flexibility may have to be employed in selection of external reviewers for small or specialist subject areas.

4. How much consultation do we need to do?

External consultation **must** be undertaken for all **new course proposals**. For major changes, the timing, type and amount of external consultation will depend on the type of change(s) being proposed and the date of implementation. It is required for requests for major changes to courses where the change being requested involves significant changes to teaching and/or assessment, for example following a major review of the course. If a decision is taken not consult externally as part of the process for a major change proposal, the reasons for this must be recorded.

For major changes, the views of current or recent external examiners may be sufficient.

This note of guidance and questions are available separately on the [website](#) as a Word document for ease of use.

Note of guidance for external reviewers

Dear External reviewer,

Firstly, thank you for agreeing to act as an external reviewer for the University as part of its process for approving new courses or major changes to existing courses. A robust approval process for new courses or major changes to courses is a central part of the University's mechanisms for ensuring that its students and the wider public can have confidence in the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities we provide.

This letter outlines the new course and major change approval process, how your review fits into that process, and how your comments will be considered.

Aim of the course approvals process (major changes and new course proposals)

The process aims to ensure that the following have been considered:

- the academic case for expansion or change in the subject and category concerned including fit with the department/faculty, division and university strategy and priorities;
- the potential of the course to attract high quality students in sufficient numbers to ensure the viability of the programme;
- the availability of supervisors and appropriate departmental and central facilities and support (IT, library and subject specific resources);
- the ability of the faculty/department to provide appropriate organisational support;
- the capacity of the collegiate University to meet the students' wider support needs;
- the financial implications for the department or faculty and the wider university community;
- the level of risk involved in each new course or major change proposal, including the means proposed for its delivery, and the required level of resource necessary to ensure that the required outcomes of the new or changed course can be achieved;
- the views of students;
- the views of an external subject specialist and, where relevant, an industry professional; and
- the views of other departments which might be involved in or affected by the introduction of the course or changes to the course.

And that the proposed course is, or continues to be:

- academically sound, with clear aims and learning outcomes and a teaching and assessment methodology which supports those aims.
- aligned with:
- the [University awards framework](#) (and consequently the qualification and level descriptors set out in the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ));
- the relevant subject benchmark statement; and
- any specific requirements set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- designed inclusively to take into account the needs of a diverse student body.

Structure of the process

Proposals originate and are developed within a department or faculty. Formal scrutiny is then undertaken through the appropriate bodies of the division². Once a proposal has received initial academic scrutiny by the division it is sent out for external review.

The reason we involve an external reviewer is that they provide a subject specialist perspective outside of the department or faculty putting forward the proposal. They can comment on matters of quality and standards that are specific to that discipline area and make comparisons against national standards and similar courses elsewhere.

The comments from the external reviewer are considered by the division as part of its decision whether or not to recommend the course for approval to the University through its Education Committee.

Completing your report

You should receive the:

- full course proposal
- a series of questions which it would be useful for you to address in your review.

However, if you have any comments which fall outside these questions please feel free to include them.

² The University is structured into departments and faculties which are entities at the same level, these are grouped together in four divisions (and the Department for Continuing Education).

External review questions (new course proposals)

Please comment on the potential of the course to attract high quality students in sufficient numbers to ensure the viability of the course.

Please comment on the aims and intended learning outcomes of the proposed course in respect of:

- subject content;
- subject specific skills; and
- general, transferrable skills.

Please comment as to whether the aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme meet the subject benchmark statements, the relevant level descriptor of the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications³ and standards set by professional bodies (where relevant).

Please comment on the suitability of the proposed methods of teaching and assessment including the suitability of the type and spread of assessment, in relation to the intended aims and learning outcomes of the course, and, to the best of your knowledge, in comparison with similar courses elsewhere.

Please comment as to whether the design of the syllabus will enable the aims and intended learning outcomes to be met in respect of:

- subject content
- subject specific skills
- general, transferable skills
- progression of skills and knowledge through the course.

If not, please indicate ways in which this might be addressed.

Do you consider that the course takes appropriate account of recent developments in the subject? If not, please indicate ways in which this might be addressed.

Do you consider that the course is appropriate to prepare graduates for employment in the relevant sectors (for industrial, scientific and professional courses)? If not, please indicate ways in which this might be addressed.

Do you have any other comments on any aspect of the documentation?

External review questions (major changes to courses proposals)

Please comment on the impact of the changes to the course on its ability to attract high quality students in sufficient numbers to ensure the viability of the course.

³ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>

Please comment on whether the aims and intended learning outcomes are still valid or have been appropriately amended in light of the changes to the course, particularly in respect of:

- subject content;
- subject specific skills; and
- general, transferrable skills.

Please comment as to whether the (revised) aims and intended learning outcomes of the course continue to meet the subject benchmark statements, the relevant level descriptor of the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications⁴ and standards set by professional bodies (where relevant).

Please comment on the suitability of the proposed changes to methods of teaching and/or assessment including the suitability of the type and spread of assessment, in relation to the (revised) aims and learning outcomes of the course, and, to the best of your knowledge, in comparison with similar courses elsewhere.

Please comment as to whether changes to the design of the syllabus will enable the aims and intended learning outcomes to continue to be met in respect of:

- subject content
- subject specific skills
- general, transferable skills
- progression of skills and knowledge through the course.

If not, please indicate ways in which this might be addressed.

Do you consider that the changes to the course take appropriate account of recent developments in the subject? If not, please indicate ways in which this might be addressed.

Do you consider that the course continues to prepare graduates for employment in the relevant sectors (for industrial, scientific and professional courses) as a result of the changes? If not, please indicate ways in which this might be addressed.

Do you have any other comments on any aspect of the documentation?

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>

Annex J: Implementing a new course or major change following approval

This is a checklist of tasks that need to be completed once a new course, or major change, has been agreed by or on behalf of Education Committee. The tasks will vary according to the type of course and the type of change so this is provided as an initial prompt only.

- Where a change has been approved which affects on-course students, ensure that all students have been directly informed of the change and that all relevant course information has been updated.
- Communicate approval to those involved, including libraries
- Start programme set-up process ([Programme of Study Setup - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#) – this process gets the course set up on the student system, including the generation of a course code)
- Finalise:
 - Examination Regulations (and get these published in the [Gazette](#))
 - Examination conventions (using the latest [EAF](#) template)
 - Course handbook
 - Any outstanding details of teaching/paper contents etc, including staffing, IT support, timetable
 - Any outstanding collaborative provision agreements and arrangements
 - Specimen exam papers
 - Transcript text
- Liaise with EPS about any changes required to General Regulations in the Examination Regulations.
- Ensure that next:
 - Annual SNP return includes numbers for the new course
 - Annual Fee-setting return includes the new course
 - Assessment review exercise incorporates the changes/new course
- Liaise with Undergraduate Admissions (UAO) and Graduate Admissions and Recruitment (GAR) as appropriate regarding marketing materials (web and print) including prospectus entry and any communication with applicants required (e.g. because of changes to the course information sheet). UAO will need to get UCAS code if new UG programme.
- Liaise with the Assessments Team in Education Services about examinations timetable, submission set-up.
- Liaise with the Academic Records Office in Education Services about assessment set-up in SITS.
- If new award type/degree title, contact Planning and Council Secretariat about:
 - Amendment of Statutes
 - Style of gown and hood