



BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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Table of Contents

Section	Page
Introduction	3
Module Housekeeping	3
Changes needing Approval	3
Changes resulting in Re-validation of the Programme	4
Procedure for Completing Changes to Validated Programmes/Subjects	4
Changes resulting in Re-validation	5
Amount and Timing of Changes to Validated Programmes	5
Collaborative Provision	6

Introduction

1. The procedures for making changes to validated programmes/subjects are designed to allow programmes/subjects to be revised in the light of annual reviews, external examiner reports etc., while ensuring that the integrity of the validated programme/subject is maintained.
2. These provisions are designed to follow the precepts and guidance contained in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, specifically *Chapter B1 – Programme design, development and approval [2013] (2015)* which stipulates that higher education providers evaluate their processes for programme design, development and approval and take action to improve them where necessary.

Module Housekeeping

3. Programme teams may make certain minor changes to the programme or subject by asking for permission of QASA, who hold the definitive copies of programme and module specifications. These are
 - (i) up-dating of content, bibliographies and references, where these do not alter the rationale, aims, outcomes or assessment strategy of the module;
 - (ii) minor changes in assessment affecting assignments or examinations where the assessment strategy for the module and the weighting of the component is not affected: e.g. a change in the task of an assignment or the timing of an assignment.
 - (iii) textual corrections.

All changes must be made in tracked changes when submitting a marked-up copy containing the proposed amendments to QASA. When the housekeeping changes have been approved, the programme team must also amend any handbook copies etc. which may have been based on the old specification.

Changes needing Approval

4. The following changes may be made under the terms of this *Code of Practice* but require not only liaison with QASA as described above but also approval by the relevant School Board and the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC):
 - (i) the addition of one or more new modules, the addition of option modules, the replacement of one or more existing modules or the reassignment of one or more modules to another level, provided that the proposed change does not involve more than one third of the programme/subject area or pathway in any one year and not more than half the total programme or subject is changed between periodic reviews. In cases of dispute, QASA will have the final say of what constitutes 'one third' or 'half' of the total programme/subject area or pathway. It should be noted that when a module is reassigned to a different level the outcomes of the module should be changed to reflect the level at which the module is to be delivered. Where it is proposed to adopt a module from another programme, the programme intending to import the module must seek approval.



- (ii) changes to the title, rationale, aims or outcomes of a module;
- (iii) changes to the content of a module other than minor updating;
- (iv) changes to the assessment of a module other than those noted under Module Housekeeping. This includes changes that have an effect on the workload of the students e.g. changes in the length of the assessment/examination.
- (v) where there are implications for KIS categories.

Changes resulting in Re-validation of the Programme

5. The following changes cannot be made through the procedure for Changes to Validated Programmes and require revalidation of the programme or subject:
 - (i) any changes involving more than one third of the programme/subject in any one year or one half of the total programme/subject in the period between periodic reviews;
 - (ii) changes in the mode or medium of delivery or the addition of a new mode or medium of delivery: e.g. a change from full-time to part-time mode or the reverse, the introduction of distance learning, e-learning or web based delivery
 - (iii) the addition of new pathways or options to the programme/subject where the options constitute more than one third of a level;
 - (iv) a change to the title, aims or outcomes of the programme/subject;
 - (v) a proposal to change the pattern of delivery from semesters to terms or whole year delivery or the reverse.

Procedure for Completing Changes to Validated Programmes/Subjects

Module housekeeping

6. At the start of the process of planning any changes that would result in changes in module or programme specifications, academic staff should contact QASA, who will send the relevant specification to the academic staff electronically or otherwise allow the use of an electronic copy of the document. Any changes must be made in tracked changes in the electronic copy. After QASA has confirmed that the changes proposed are fit for purpose (that they qualify under changes to be notified only), such changes can be incorporated in student handbooks, unit study guides or other information to students as appropriate.
7. Changes as discussed above will be incorporated in the programme specification and appended documents by QASA.

Changes needing approval

8. The proposed change(s) must be submitted on the appropriate pro forma to the appropriate School Board for approval. The minutes of the Board must clearly indicate that the nature of the change(s) (from/to) and the rationale for each change has been discussed and approved by the Board.
9. The agreement of the External Examiner must be sought for the change and written confirmation in the form of letter or e-mail must be appended to the proforma.
10. The Head of School will notify the Academic Quality Manager of the change(s), attaching a copy of the relevant minute of the School Board, evidence of external examiner approval together with any necessary supporting documentation including the module/programme specification with clearly tracked changes.
11. The Academic Quality Manager will present the proposed changes to the relevant sub-committee of Senate and will notify all relevant departments following its approval.
12. A copy of any changed specification will be sent to any collaborative partner approved to deliver the programme as appropriate.

Changes resulting in Re-validation

See the *Code of Practice for the Validation of Programmes*.

Amount and Timing of Changes to Validated Programmes

13. The amount of change under these procedures, must not exceed one third of the programme or subject in any one academic year, or exceed 50% in any (normally six-year) revalidation cycle. A record of all changes notified to the Academic Quality Manager will be presented to the relevant sub-committee of Senate in order to monitor the year-on-year changes made to a programme.
14. Changes which are judged to be in excess of those in 13 must be achieved by re-validation of the programme.
15. All changes or revalidation must be carried out as early as possible and in the semester preceding that in which the changes become operational at the latest, as changes to programmes/subjects affect student experience. Changes should be justified (e.g. to improve student learning experience or to follow best sector practice). In particular it should be remembered that applicants to a programme acquire information on the University and on their chosen programme before and upon the official offer is made, and indeed before they accept a place of study at the University; the course should therefore be as much as possible in line with the course as it was when they were admitted to it. The applicants have the right to receive correct and up-to-date information, which also means that the University will need to inform candidates on any major relevant changes made to the offer. The need to be able to rely on the information provided by the University also goes for current students, who have made their choice of university and programme based on information provided to them before their being admitted as students or before their



making a choice of a module. Because of quality-related and legal implications, major changes in particular should not normally be made late in the academic cycle immediately preceding the delivery of a course, or of a module. QASA can advise on appropriate timescales for making changes to validated provision. In certain cases, QASA and/or a suitable Senate committee may refuse a change that could have substantial quality-related or legal implications.

16. It is incumbent on programme teams to ensure that the changes meet all the deadlines.
17. QASA, in collaboration with the Schools, must make sure that all relevant Departments, including Recruitment and Admissions, and Marketing, are informed of any changes made in School Boards and Senate Committees as soon as the definite approval to proceed has been granted.

Collaborative Provision

18. Partner institutions are not allowed to make changes to BGU provision but may comment on the provision in the AMRs and periodic reviews and request adaptations to the programme to be made by BGU on their behalf. Requests to such adaptations may be considered by a relevant University Senate sub-committee.