Annex C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes

1. Overview

1.1 This annex of the Code of Practice establishes the requirements and procedures for the approval of new and revised taught programmes of study where proposed by the University’s Schools, either unilaterally or in collaboration with other Schools or partner providers. New programmes submitted directly by partner providers, such as the Validated Institutions or the Partner Colleges, are subject to the relevant procedures set out in Annexes L and O of this Code of Practice respectively.

1.2 The requirements and procedures of this Annex are designed to ensure that all such programmes:

- are consonant with the University Plan, the Education and Student Experience Strategy, the Internationalisation Strategy and, where relevant, the Graduate School Strategy and School/Faculty Plans;
- have appropriate aims and learning outcomes;
- have structure and content appropriate to the aims and learning outcomes;
- will have available human and physical resources such as will ensure achievement of aims and learning outcomes;
- reflect Kent’s research expertise (where proposed by University Schools), are inclusive, and are responsive and attractive to the core student population that Kent wishes to attract to fulfil the University's strategic plan (including any new and alternative markets);
- reflect the principles set out in the University’s Assessment Framework;
- reflect an inclusive, innovative and internationalist approach to learning, teaching and assessment practices;
- deliver plan targets and are financially sustainable;
- avoid the over-exploitation of core markets and reduce internal competition for the same students;
- are launched in an effective and timely fashion;
- meet current legislation, the UK Quality Code and the University’s regulatory requirements.

1.3 The procedures which follow are based on the principle that detailed consideration of proposed new programmes of study is best undertaken by academic staff in cognate disciplines with the support of staff with expertise in marketing, curricula development and quality assurance, and that the Education Board and the Graduate School Board, rather than considering proposals in detail, should be assured that proposals have received appropriate consideration by the relevant teams, panels and committees established for this purpose.

1.4 The procedure for programme approval will be geared to an annual cycle, with each of the successive stages of the process scheduled to take place at a set point in the academic year.

2. Annual Cycle for the Development and Approval of New Programmes of Study

2.1 New programmes of study developed by the University’s Schools will proceed to approval through the following three stages:

- The Planning and Development Stage
• The Curriculum Development Stage
• The Faculty/University Stage

2.2 The respective stages will take place in accordance with the following annual cycle:

- **Any time of year:** Planning of new provision;
- **March:** Annual Programme Portfolio Review (refer to Annex E);
- **March-September:** Development of business cases;
- **September onwards:** Meetings of the Business Case Committee (BCC).

### 3. Stages of New Programme Development and Approval

The procedure for the development and approval of new programmes of study consists of several stages of consideration by School and Faculty/University committees, each of which has areas of specific focus:

#### 3.1 Planning and Development Stage (Executive Group/Business Case Committee)

The process of outline development of a new proposal by a School may take place at any point in the academic year and should incorporate the following steps:

- The Faculties Support Office (FSO) will begin to track the progress of the proposal through the approval process by means of a Programme Proposal Cover Sheet (using the pro forma attached at Appendix A);
- The proposal is considered at the School Education Committee or Graduate Studies Committee and noted in the minutes;
- A School Programme Lead (SPL) is identified (see section 3.2.1 below for further detail of this role);
- The School’s Student Representatives are consulted on the proposal formally in a meeting of the Student Voice Committee (timing may require a specially convened meeting, where necessary);
- Initial discussions with Enrolment Management Services (EMS) and International Recruitment are undertaken as required;
- Where it is envisaged that the proposed programme will be delivered via either blended or distance learning UELT must be consulted about the assessment practice at this stage.

##### 3.1.1 Developments Requiring the Allocation of Significant New Resource – Executive Group Consideration

Heads of School (HoS) are required to judge if any new programme venture (or whole area) requires significant, new resource (e.g. a new post or posts, significant capital expenditure, significant expansion of space, but not, for example, a small increase in library budget).

##### 3.1.2 Where the allocation of significant new resource would be required, the HoS should consult their Faculty Dean and the Executive Group (EG) as part of normal business and strategic planning. The expected, but not exclusive, time to undertake this consultation is during the Planning Round in the Spring Term. Heads and their Schools should engage the services of EMS to provide a market research report in order to strengthen the case to EG. In all cases where a proposal requires the allocation of significant new resource, the Finance Section will provide an assessment of the relevant financial data and associated costs. It is within EG’s remit to decide whether it supports the School’s case, or whether it requires more information, etc., before making a decision. It is also within its remit to decide when resources will be released and how quickly a programme should be developed (i.e. whether it can proceed out of cycle, as per Appendix B). Formal submissions to EG should proceed via the FSO. If a School wishes to develop a programme out of cycle it must demonstrate to EG, via the market research report, that there is sufficient urgency for the proposed programme that additional resources should be considered outside of normal planning.

Should the decision of EG allow for the development in principle of the new programme proposal, the School may proceed with the preparation of the business case.
The BCC will recommend proposals to proceed to the curriculum development stage independent of any decision by Executive Group to approve new resource relating to the programme proposal.

### 3.1.3 Business Case Committee (BCC)

#### 3.1.3.1 The Business Case Committee shall comprise the Senior DVC and Provost (Chair), DVC Education and Student Experience, Dean of Graduate School, representative Associate Dean(s), the Director of Planning and Student Information and the Director of EMS. The BCC will be serviced by the FSO. Meetings will take place virtually with in-person meetings convened where deemed necessary.

#### 3.1.3.2 Schools should approach the FSO in the first instance in order to commence the process of submission to the BCC. All submissions should be made via the Business Case template, which is to be completed with the support of relevant Professional Service Departments (QAO, UELT, Finance, EMS, PBIO, Careers, IR and IP as necessary) and will cover the following matters: content and delivery; market research and planning; collaborative provision and financial requirements. The Business Case template for new programmes of study can be found as Appendix B.

### Market Research

#### 3.1.3.2.1 Initial Report

Schools wishing to propose a new programme of study must commission an initial, light-touch market research report from Enrolment Management Services (EMS). The intention of this report will be to demonstrate whether or not a market may exist for the proposed programme of study.

#### 3.1.3.2.2 Full Report

If the Business Case Committee agrees that the programme proposal has merit, it will commission a full market research report from EMS. This report will be reviewed by the BCC and, if it judges that the proposed programme has a demonstrable market and meets the University’s strategic aims and objectives, it will recommend that the proposal proceed to the curriculum development stage. Where Schools require additional resource outside of the Planning Round, the market research should demonstrate that this is sufficiently urgent.

#### 3.1.3.3 For Schools seeking permission to add a period abroad (with an approved partner institution), placement year, foundation year 4 or an existing minor subject (e.g. a language) to an existing programme, there is no requirement to submit an outline proposal to the BCC for approval. Such proposals need not be forwarded to the Programme Approval Sub-Committee (PASC) for approval but may be signed off at the curriculum development stage by the relevant Faculty Associate Dean. The Faculty Associate Dean should report the approval of such programmes to PASC for note and dissemination to other interested parties.

#### 3.1.3.4 BCC will consider applications using a set of agreed points to include University priorities, and a predefined basket of information such as basic thematic market research data, likely financial viability and the School’s recruitment track record.

#### 3.1.3.5 If the Committee has confidence in the likely financial and educational potential of the proposal, it will grant one of the following outcomes:

- **Priority 1:** Approve “Out of Cycle” – programme can immediately progress to QA approval stages and launch at the first available entry point.
- **Priority 2:** “In Cycle” progress to full market research – EMS will treat market research as a priority (with the aim of launching the programme at the next standard entry point). Deadlines will be provided for a) this work to be completed by EMS and b) resubmission to BCC. The deadlines will fit with the pre-agreed deadlines for launch at the next standard entry point. BCC can give permission for the new programme to be marketed at this point, in order to meet marketing publication deadlines.

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4 Except where the foundation year element is to be delivered as part of a collaborative arrangement with an external partner institution or organisation. Such proposals must be put forward for approval as per the procedures for the approval of Collaborative Academic Centres, available at [http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/procedures/collabprocedures.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/procedures/collabprocedures.html)
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- Priority 3: “In Cycle” progress to full market research – EMS will undertake market research (but will prioritise priority 1 programmes above this). Deadlines may be set by for the work to be completed.
- Not approved: programme not viable for Kent. School to be given feedback.

3.1.3.6 Once full market research has been conducted (as per priorities 2 and 3) the programme will be resubmitted to BCC for consideration for final approval. Once approved, the programme can progress to the curriculum development stage.

3.1.3.7 EMS can recommend to BCC a change in priority if market research indicates a need, e.g., a priority 2 programme that is found to be a more viable proposition than was originally thought can become priority 1.

3.1.3.8 The BCC retains the option of referring a proposal to the Executive Group where it takes the view that new resource required is significant and is aware that the proposal has not received prior consideration by EG. The Faculties Support Office will report these decisions to the relevant Head(s) of School and other interested parties.

3.1.3.8.1 The BCC will recommend proposals to proceed to the curriculum development stage independent of any decision by Executive Group to approve new resource relating to the programme proposal.

3.1.3.9 Additional guidance on the submission of outline proposals for new collaborative programmes of study is set out in section 5 below.

3.2 Curriculum Development and Approval Stages

The Curriculum Development Stage

3.2.1 Following BCC approval of the business case, a Programme Curriculum Development Team will be formed to draw up the detailed submission for the new programme. The team will consist of the following individuals:
- School Programme Lead (SPL);
- School DoE/DoGS;
- School QA administrator (where such is employed);
- FSO representative;
- Faculty Associate Dean (as appropriate to the level of the programme5);
- an appropriate DoE/DoGS from a different School within the Faculty;
- a representative from Student Support and Wellbeing;
- Faculty Learning Technologist.

The School Programme Lead should be an academic member of staff from within the proposing School (ideally, the academic staff member with the greatest investment in the development of the proposal). Ultimate responsibility for this development resides with the School, and accordingly the SPL should take the lead in developing the curriculum, formulating the structure of the programme and the production of the programme and module specifications (and any other relevant documentation) by the deadlines agreed by the team.

While ultimate responsibility for the development of the curriculum resides within the School, the FSO representative will take the lead in co-ordinating the work of the Programme Curriculum Development Team and will provide advice and guidance with regard to completing the required quality assurance documentation and on any associated matters.

3.2.2 Schools should consult various stakeholders for input on its plans for the programme. Current students should be consulted on the proposal at an early point in its development, either via the Student Voice Committee or a special meeting convened for this purpose. A subject area external adviser should be identified by the School and consulted about the plans. The external adviser should subsequently provide a commentary on the fully developed proposal as it proceeds to the Faculty/University stage of the approval process. UELT should be consulted about assessment practice and must be consulted in advance where it is envisaged that the programme may be delivered remotely via digital technologies (see section 3.1). Advice on developing inclusive and innovative practices in learning, teaching and assessment will be

5 i.e. For UG programmes, the Faculty Associate Dean for Education; for PGT programmes, the Faculty Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.
provided by the representative of Student Support and Wellbeing. The Student Immigration Compliance Team should be consulted to ensure that the programme meets the requirements for UKVI compliance.

3.2.3 The Programme Curriculum Development Team should meet on at least one occasion or more frequently as required over a two/three week period, depending on the complexity of the proposal. After the initial meeting, matters may be progressed via email correspondence between the team members. The representative of the FSO will keep the formal record of these meetings and the development of the proposal. While all of the non-School team members will provide advice and guidance on the development of the curriculum and on the production of the programme/module specifications and related documentation, it remains the School’s responsibility to undertake these tasks and ensure that the proposal proceeds in a timely fashion.

3.2.4 The output of the Programme Curriculum Development Team should consist of the following documentation:

i) A programme specification in the approved format, available at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/index.html;

ii) A module mapping document detailing the programme level learning outcomes delivered by each module, available at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/index.html;

iii) For a new programme that is not similar to an existing programme, for example which includes the provision of a substantial number of new modules (see note), a supporting statement from an external academic adviser (or advisers, if appropriate to the proposal) should be provided (see Appendix E of this Annex), along with a written response from the School to any issues raised.

Note: ‘Substantial’ in this case is defined as where new modules equate to 50% or more of the credit at the degree classification stages.

iv) The external adviser’s supporting statement might usefully comment on:

- Curriculum content of the programme – are all subjects included that would be expected in order to achieve the award title, and does the programme fit together as a coherent entity?
- Does the programme content articulate/progress in an appropriate manner and at the correct level? (Refer to Credit Framework Annex 2 Level Descriptors at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfoannex2.html for details.)
- Does the programme content reflect the relevant QAA subject benchmark statement(s) (if applicable)?
- Does the programme structure reflect the relevant QAA guidance on qualification characteristics/Foundation Degree qualification benchmark (if applicable)?
- Any other areas of note considered appropriate by the external adviser.

A template pro forma for this commentary can be found at Appendix F.

v) Where appropriate, a statement indicating how the programme reflects the requirements of professional or statutory bodies;

vi) The module specifications of any new or revised modules relating to the new programme proposal, irrespective of stage, are to be submitted. Where the inclusion of existing and unrevised module specifications will help inform discussion of the proposed programme/module specifications, these might be included for reference only with a note of clarification from the School.

vii) Where such a submission was required, the Executive Group submission, the business case and all accompanying commentaries as indicated at section 3.1 above, as submitted

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6 See Kent Inclusive Practices (KIPs): https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentsupport/accessibility/inclusive-practice.html to highlight examples of mainstream adjustments (approved by Education Board (June 2017) to improve access for all).

7 See https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexc-appendixe.html
to and considered by, where relevant, the Executive Group and/or the Business Case Committee;

viii) The relevant extract of the Student Voice Committee minutes (or similar bespoke group) that notes the student discussion of the proposed programme specification (see Annex M Student Evaluation section 5.10;

ix) The official record of the development of the proposal by the Curriculum Development Team, as recorded by the FSO representative.

3.2.5 The Programme Curriculum Development Team should focus on the following matters when considering proposals:

- Engagement with the programme design principles as detailed in Appendix G of this Annex, in order to ensure the appropriateness of the design, level, coherence and currency of the curriculum;
- Engagement with the University’s Assessment Framework to ensure the adoption of best practice in the design of assessment;
- Adherence to any professional body requirements (subject related);
- Adherence to the applicable QAA subject benchmark statement(s);
- Adherence, where applicable, to the QAA Foundation Degree qualification benchmark;
- Adherence, where applicable, to the QAA guidance on qualification characteristics;
- Adherence to requirements of the Credit Framework, including compensation, trailing, condonement and level (refer to the Credit Framework, Annex 2);
- Confirmation of the accuracy and completeness of the module mapping document;
- Confirmation of appropriate progression throughout the stages of the programme;
- (Where appropriate to the proposal) whether the programme reflects current research or other advanced scholarship carried out by academic staff in the School;
- Engagement with the programme design principles as detailed in Appendix G of this Annex;
- That the programme specification provides for a balanced workload of modules across the terms;
- Engagement with the University’s policies on developing inclusive curricula8;
- Engagement with the University’s policies on internationalisation;
- Any other matters considered appropriate by the Curriculum Development Team.

3.2.6 Except where any optional modules in question are language modules offered by SECL or CEWL or are otherwise considered on an exception basis by the School to enhance employability, programmes must not be designed to accommodate student registration on optional modules where the level of the module differs from the credit level of the stage.

This, therefore, disallows the following:

(a) programme design that permits optional modules (other than language optional modules or employability-enhancing optional modules) at Level 4 to be studied in Stages 2, 3 or 4 of an undergraduate programme of study;

(b) programme design that permits optional modules (other than language optional modules or employability-enhancing optional modules) at Level 5 to be studied in Stages 3 or 4 of an undergraduate programme of study.

3.2.7 Should the Associate Dean be satisfied with the finalised proposal, they are authorised to approve any new or amended modules on behalf of the Faculty and to recommend the proposal’s submission to the Faculty/University stage of the approval process (i.e. PASC). The submission to the Faculty/University stage should consist of the documentation set out at 3.2.4 i–x above, with the exception of the module specifications.

8 See the Code of Practice: ANNEX B: Approval and Withdrawal of Modules (Appendix A), which outlines inclusive design principles required at the module specification stage to ensure consistency of approach across programme and module design processes.
3.3 **The Faculty/University Stage (PASC)**

3.3.1 At the Faculty/University stage proposals for new programmes of study will be considered for approval by the Programme Approval Sub-committee (PASC). The voting membership of PASC will comprise the six Faculty Associate Deans, one of whom will serve as Chair. Other members attending in an advisory capacity (i.e. the non-voting members) will include the Head of Quality Assurance, the Graduate School Administration Manager and the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing. The meetings will be convened and serviced by the Quality Assurance Office.

3.3.2 In any year the meetings of PASC will be staged on a monthly basis from February to July, with one additional meeting to be scheduled in October. Meetings outside of this cycle will be considered only as part of the ‘fast-track’ procedure, where consent to proceed via this route has been granted in advance by the BCC. For each proposal PASC will consider the full set of documentation as set out at 3.2.4 i-x above, with the exception of the module specifications. The SPL and the relevant FSO representative will be invited to attend the meeting in support of the programme proposal and in order to answer any questions that the Sub-committee might raise and to receive feedback.

Programme submissions will normally only be considered at a scheduled PASC meeting, except where it has been agreed by the BCC that a programme might proceed out-of-cycle via the ‘fast-track’ procedure.

3.3.3 The Programme Approval Sub-committee is responsible for making a detailed assessment of the design, level, coherence and currency of the curriculum under approval and of the capacity of the School to provide learning opportunities sufficient for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The terms of reference of PASC are to:

a) Evaluate whether the proposed programmes are set at the required academic level, and where appropriate, consistent with the relevant subject benchmarks, or other appropriate external reference points (e.g. PSRB requirements, QAA Statements of Qualification Characteristics, the UK Quality Code, any relevant international requirements).

b) Ensure that the proposal meets the requirements of the University’s Code of Practice for Quality Assurance, Credit Framework Collaborative Provision: Policies and Procedures and criteria for admission;

c) Determine whether the programme specification(s) can be delivered, learning outcomes achieved and quality and standards maintained.

d) Ascertain whether the assessment strategies allows learning outcomes to be appropriately tested and are consistent with the best practice set out in the University’s Assessment Framework;

e) Evaluate whether the proposing School can provide the learning opportunities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes;

f) Evaluate the external adviser’s supporting statement and the proposing School’s response to this. Where a proposal has been amended in the light of comments received by an external adviser, a statement should be provided by the School indicating the nature of such amendments;

g) Ensure that the final proposal remains congruent with the original outline submission for the programme and accompanying commentaries as approved by the BCC;

h) Ensure that the programme specification provides for a balanced workload of modules across the terms;

i) Ensure engagement with the University’s policies on developing inclusive curricula;\(^9\)

j) Ensure engagement with the University’s policies on internationalisation;

k) Make decisions on the proposals as per 3.3.3 a-i, specifying any conditions required for the approval of the proposals;

l) Report its decisions to the Education Board and the Graduate Studies Board respectively.

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\(^9\) See the Code of Practice: ANNEX B: Approval and Withdrawal of Modules (Appendix A), which outlines inclusive design principles required at the module specification stage to ensure consistency of approach across programme and module design processes.
3.3.4 Based on its assessment, PASC is empowered to make one of a number of decisions on behalf of the Education Board and the Graduate School Board:

A. That the proposal be approved;

B. That the proposal be approved subject to the prior satisfaction of specified conditions set out in the minutes of the approval meeting. These conditions might include revisions to the proposal or provision of additional resources – to be signed off either by the Chair of PASC or, at the discretion of the Sub-committee, by the appropriate Faculty Associate Dean;

C. That the proposal be resubmitted in a revised form for further consideration by the Sub-Committee;

D. That the proposal be rejected.

At the end of the approval meeting the Chair will inform the attending SPL of the Sub-committee’s decision, of any conditions that it wishes to set, the deadline for meeting these conditions and whether they should be signed off by the Chair or by the appropriate Faculty Associate Dean. Failure to meet the conditions by the set deadline may result in the withdrawal of conditional approval and entail the resubmission of the programme proposal. The status of the conditional approval shall be reported to PASC at its following meeting; however, conditions may be regarded as satisfied, and the programme may be advertised, as soon as they have been signed off by the Associate Dean (Education) or (Graduate Studies), as appropriate, on behalf of PASC.

3.3.5 If it is satisfied with the quality and standards of the proposal submitted, the Programme Approval Sub-committee may report to the Education Board or the Graduate School Board, as relevant, that it has approved the proposed programme on its behalf. The Education Board and the Graduate School Board will report annually to the Senate on the new programmes that have been approved under delegated powers.

3.3.6 The minutes of PASC meetings will be made available to stakeholders. The FSO will serve as the office with responsibility for advising all stakeholders on the progress of proposals throughout the approval process and for reporting on the completion of this process to interested parties (other than the EB and the GSB). The FSO should notify appropriate stakeholders at the time the programme conditions are signed off, with a formal report to be submitted to the next meeting of PASC. Central Student Administration will assign the POS codes for new programmes.

New Programme Publicity and Recruitment

3.3.7 A new programme may be advertised and applicants offered places on such programmes when, and only when, the programme has been fully approved by the Programme Approval Sub-committee of the Education Board and the Graduate School Board, except where under exceptional circumstances the Business Case Committee or the Chair of the BCC or, for partner providers, the relevant member of EG authorises that a proposed new programme might be advertised as subject to approval.

3.3.8 The relevant Faculty shall publish approved programme specifications on its website, with the exception of the programmes of study offered by the Validated Institutions, the specifications for which will be published by the Quality Assurance Office. The approved specification will remain the definitive statement of the curriculum to be provided for the programme and award. These specifications may only be amended following the successful completion of the relevant re-approval process as set out in this Code of Practice.

The Chair of PASC

3.3.9 Before the first PASC meeting of the academic year, the voting members of PASC will agree which of them will act as the Chair of the Sub-committee for the coming academic year. The duties of the Chair of PASC will include leading the meetings of the Sub-committee, agreeing the minutes as the official record of the meetings, exercising the Chair’s prerogative for an additional casting vote as required (see 3.3.10 below), taking action on the behalf of the Sub-committee outside of meetings with regard to confirming the satisfaction of the conditions of approval relating to any particular proposal (except where these have been formally remitted to the appropriate Associate Dean), and dealing with any other matters relevant to the terms of reference of the Sub-committee on its behalf as might from time-to-time arise. In the event of their non-availability the Chair may deputise another voting member to act on their behalf.
3.3.10 Voting Process at PASC

Where the Sub-committee members cannot agree a recommendation on a programme proposal, the voting members present will be polled and a majority established. Where no majority view can be established, the Chair will command an additional casting vote. The meetings of the Sub-committee will be quorate when at least two Associate Deans (Education) and two Associate Deans (Graduate Studies) are present. When a meeting becomes unquorate, the Sub-committee's recommendations will be subject to ratification by the absent voting members before they may be confirmed. However, any recommendations requiring confirmation during the Long Vacation will only require the agreement of two Associate Deans (Education) and two Associate Deans (Graduate Studies), without further consultation.

3.4 Professional Statutory Regulatory Body Accreditation Panels

Where the establishment of such a panel is a condition of accreditation by an external professional or subject area body, PASC is authorised to establish a panel to consider the proposal in detail, to discuss it with the programme team and to submit recommendations on the proposal to it. Such panels will normally include at least two members from PASC, one of whom shall be appointed as Chair, and at least one member external to the University with appropriate subject area expertise.

4. Other Relevant Matters of Note

4.1 Non-University Campus/Location

Where it is proposed that an existing University programme be taught at a new non-University campus location, a complete programme proposal and specification will be required but any existing module specifications need not be included.

5. Collaborative Provision

Outline Approval by the Executive Group/Business Case Committee

5.1 The University will consider proposals for new collaborative programmes of study with Validated Institutions or leading to dual awards or joint awards only where the collaborative partner(s) have successfully completed the process of institutional approval set out in Collaborative Provision: Policies and Procedures: Part 1.

5.1.1 Proposals for new programmes of study to be provided by or in conjunction with partner organisations approved as per Collaborative Provision: Policies and Procedures: Part 1 must be considered by the Executive Group in the first instance in order that a decision may be reached in principle as to whether the proposal in question is one that the University wishes to pursue.

5.1.2 Outline proposals for new programmes leading to dual or joint awards should be submitted by the cognate or liaising School. Such proposals must include written confirmation from a representative of each collaborative partner setting out their indicative agreement to proceeding on the basis of the outline submission and the attached business plan.

5.1.3 Outline proposals to offer an existing programme leading to a dual award or joint award with a prospective new partner must be submitted to the Executive Group for approval and must include written confirmation from a representative of each collaborative partner setting out their indicative agreement to proceeding on the basis of the outline submission and the attached business plan. All such proposed new partners must first have satisfied the requirements for institutional approval set out in Collaborative Provision: Policies and Procedures: Part 1 prior to the submission of the outline programme proposal to the Executive Group.

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10 A Validated Institution is an institution which has received approval from the University of Kent to offer programmes devised, delivered and assessed by the institution, but approved by the University for University of Kent credit and academic awards.

11 A collaboration leading to a dual award involves the development of a programme of study that leads to the granting of separate academic awards by both the University of Kent and the partner institution.

12 A collaboration leading to a joint award involves the development of a programme of study that leads to the granting of a single award by two or more collaborating partners.
5.1.4 All outline proposals made by Kent School for programmes leading to a collaborative award should be made by means of the pro forma attached at Appendix B. Should the decision of EG allow for the development in principle of the new programme proposal, the School may proceed with the preparation of the business case as per the procedure and requirements set out at 3.1.2 above.

5.1.5 Outline proposals for new programmes of study with **Validated Institutions** may take the form used for such submissions within the Validated Institution. Such submissions should include written confirmation from the Validated Institution that the submission and the business plan for the proposal bear its and, where relevant, its parent organisation’s official approval. Should the decision of EG allow for the development in principle of the new programme proposal, such submissions **need not proceed** to the Business Case Committee, the remit of which is focussed on determining the viability of provision to be delivered by Kent’s Schools. Following outline approval from EG, proposals from the Validated Institutions should proceed via the approval procedure set out in Annex L of this Code of Practice.

5.1.6 Following initial consultation with the appropriate cognate School, outline proposals for new programmes of study with **Partner Colleges** must be submitted by the Partner College for approval by the University’s Executive Group. The outline proposal will include evidence of an approved business plan and indicate that the College will be responsible for providing resources and facilities sufficient to staging the programme. The outline proposal should first have been approved within the Partner College. Should the decision of EG allow for the development in principle of the new programme proposal, such submissions **need not proceed** to the Business Case Committee, the remit of which is focussed on determining the viability of provision to be delivered by Kent’s Schools. Following outline approval from EG, proposals from the Validated Institutions should proceed via the approval procedure set out in Annex O of this Code of Practice.

5.2 **Memoranda of Agreement**

The University policies and procedures for collaborative provision require that an appropriate Memorandum of Agreement be drafted and signed by all parties concerned prior to the commencement of the programme (at Kent, the signatory must be a member of the Executive Group). The drafting of the Memorandum can begin once outline approval is given by Executive Group. The Programme Approval Sub-committee will require confirmation that the Memorandum of Agreement has been signed in order to confirm final approval of the relevant programme. The delivery of the programme may not commence unless the agreement has been reported to the Secretary of PASC as signed by all parties and a copy of the signed agreement lodged with the QA Office.

As a standing feature of the agenda of PASC meetings the secretary will update the Sub-committee on the status of any MoAs currently in preparation.

5.3 **Consideration of Programmes Leading to Dual Awards or Joint Awards**

5.3.1 Following approval by the Business Case Committee for the development of a new programme leading to a **dual award** or a **joint award**, a detailed submission for the new programme should be drawn up by the Programme Curriculum Development Team in collaboration with the partner institution as per the requirements of section 3.2 above. Advance permission should be gained from the Chair of PASC where is it proposed that either the programme specification or module specifications for the proposal should be submitted in the format required by the partner institution rather than as per the University’s templates.

5.3.2 In addition to the requirements of section 3.2 above, the following matters must also be presented and considered:

i) An assessment of the capacity of the proposed partner institution to implement a quality assurance system consistent with the requirement of Kent’s Code of Practice for Quality Assurance and Collaborative Provision: Policies and Procedures: Part 2, Section 5, Joint Awards or Section 6, Dual Awards;

ii) An assessment of the infrastructure of support for student learning available at the partner institution;

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13 Kent has collaborative arrangements whereby some of its students undertake programmes of study delivered by one of three local FE Partner Colleges.
iii) The CVs of the core academic staff to be involved in the delivery of the programme at the partner institution(s);

iv) A statement of the proposed cross-institutional support structures;

v) Confirmation of the language(s) of instruction and assessment and whether, where applicable, the programme of study meets the requirements of Collaborative Provision: Policies and Procedures: Part 2, Section 2.6, Programmes Taught and/or Assessed in a Language other than English.

vi) An assessment of the compatibility of the regulatory framework of the partner institution with that of Kent; where necessary, specific conjoint regulations may be devised and approved by the parties;

vii) Adherence to Annex 4: Minimum Credit Requirements for Awards of the Credit Framework;

viii) The marking scheme and grade criteria agreed by Kent and the partner(s), including any proposed conversion scales for marks;

ix) An indicative statement of content of the modules to be delivered by the partner and a comprehensive module mapping document indicating the programme level learning outcomes to be met by the modules approved and provided by the Kent and the partner institution(s);

x) A written statement from the appropriate representative of the partner institution(s) that it has read and is broadly satisfied with the proposal as submitted by the Kent school for approval. Where a proposal is subsequently revised, endorsement of such revisions by all contributing bodies is required. Final approval by PASC may be contingent on a report on the outcome of consideration of the proposal through the partner institution’s own quality assurance systems being received.

Guidance on the detail of the above requirements can be obtained from the Quality Assurance Office. In cases where a School is looking to establish a new dual award or joint award programme with a partner institution where Kent has already established such provision, the Quality Assurance Office should be consulted as to which, if any, of the above requirements might not be necessary for the proposal in question.

5.3.3 Where, on the basis of the submitted proposal, it is considered necessary by Kent (i.e. by any one or more of the relevant bodies: EG, the BCC, Faculty or PASC) or where it is a requirement of the partner institution or the relevant PSRB, a conjoint programme approval panel may be established to consider the proposal in detail, which may include consideration of the materials set out at 3.2.4 above. The University’s representatives on such panels should normally include the relevant Faculty member of PASC. Other staff, who should have not been involved in the development of the proposal, may also be nominated as required. The reports of such programme approval events should be forwarded to PASC along with the programme proposal for its final consideration.

5.3.4 Following approval of the programme by PASC and the partner institution(s), the appropriate memorandum of agreement may be signed by designated senior representatives of the parties. The MoA must be signed prior to the commencement of the programme.

5.3.5 Proposals to add a new partner institution to an existing dual award or joint award programme must be forwarded via the School and Faculty to PASC for approval. Proposed partner institutions must first have successfully completed the process of institutional approval set out in Collaborative Provision: Policies and Procedures: Part 1.

Amendments to Approved Programmes leading to Dual or Joint Awards

5.3.6 Where major changes are proposed to approved programmes leading to dual awards or joint awards, including any which involve revision of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes, the approval of such amendments by the Programme Approval Sub-committee may be contingent upon confirmation from the partner institution that it has itself considered and is prepared to approve the proposed changes to the programme.
6. Amendments to Approved Programmes

6.1 When proposing substantial changes (see 6.4 below for guidance on what constitutes a ‘substantial’ change) to approved programmes of study, Schools should in the first instance consult the relevant Faculty Associate Dean and the nominated representative of the Faculties Support Office with an outline of the proposal. This consultation should be undertaken by the SPL allocated by the School to the proposal. Such proposals do not require initial consideration by either EG or the BCC, unless the proposal would require the provision of significant new resource. Other interested Schools should be consulted as appropriate with regard to changes to programmes.

6.2 Should the Associate Dean be satisfied with the outline proposal for making substantial changes to an existing programme of study, s/he will recommend the development of a revised programme specification, the drafting of any proposed new modules and, where necessary, an amended module mapping document. An account detailing the changes to the programme and the rationale for their introduction will also be provided, along with evidence of the discussions staged with students within the School with regard to the proposed developments (e.g. Student Voice Committee minutes). This documentation will be submitted to the FSO, where it will be uploaded on to the online Programme and Module System (PMAS). The Associate Dean will convene a Programme Curriculum Development Team, as detailed in 3.2.1 above, in order to consider the proposal. In such cases, the consideration given to the proposal by the Programme Curriculum Development Team will take place virtually via PMAS.

6.3 As a minimum requirement, commentary on the proposal by Programme Curriculum Development Team members will be required from the Faculty Associate Dean and the representative DoE/DoGS from a different School within the Faculty. Where such commentary has been provided and the Faculty Associate Dean is satisfied with the soundness of the submission and the rigour of the scrutiny provided, s/he may approve any new/amended modules associated with the proposal and authorise the submission of the programme specification and the module mapping document to the Programme Approval Sub-committee (PASC) for approval. The School’s account detailing the changes to the programme and the rationale for their introduction will also be provided to PASC. PASC will consider the proposal as part of its standard cycle of meetings. The SPL will be invited to attend the relevant meeting of PASC.

6.4 A substantial change to a programme specification includes:

- Any amendment resulting in a change to the programme intended learning outcomes or educational aims.
- A major change to the learning or teaching methods, e.g. a change to the delivery mode from lectures to e-learning.
- A change in the volume of credit of the programme, as this will necessarily involve a change in learning outcomes.
- A change to, or the addition of, a different campus for delivery of the programme. In such cases the approval submission must be accompanied by a rationale from the School or Collaborative Partner, to include an indication of the resources required and confirmation that those resources will be available at the new campus.
- A combination of minor changes that, when aggregated, can be considered to be a major change.

Where there is doubt as to whether a proposed change to a programme specification constitutes a minor or substantial change, advice should be sought from the Faculties Support Officer (fso@kent.ac.uk) or the Quality Assurance Office (qa@kent.ac.uk).

6.5 Proposals for minor changes to approved programmes of study, which involve no revision of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes, should be submitted to the Faculties Support Office in the form of a revised programme specification and a brief account of the changes made. The FSO will liaise with the relevant Faculty Associate Dean, who is authorised to approve such changes.

6.6 Where substantial changes are proposed to approved programmes leading to dual awards or joint awards, as defined in 5.1 above, the approval of such amendments by PASC may be contingent upon confirmation from the partner institution that it has itself considered and is prepared to approve the proposed changes to the programme.
6.7 Whether a change to a programme is regarded as either minor or substantial, the School must give proper consideration as to whether the proposed change is compliant with CMA (Competition and Markets Authority\(^{14}\)) guidance and in particular whether it represents a ‘material’ change. Schools should refer to the CMA information and guidance pages at [https://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/cma/index.html](https://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/cma/index.html) for details, and should seek advice from the Faculties Support Office.

7. Inclusive Curricula

The Programme Approval Sub-committee (PASC) should be satisfied that new programmes or any substantially amended programmes reflect the University's policies for developing inclusive and innovative practices in learning, teaching and assessment. In developing new curricula, Schools are encouraged to identify the common adjustments made on grounds of inclusivity and to consider how best to deliver these through an anticipatory approach or through designing learning and teaching experiences that are inclusive by design (see Kent Inclusive Practices [KIPs])\(^{15}\). Use of digital and assistive technologies should feature in the implementation of such anticipatory practices (e.g. preference for electronic delivery of resources (where appropriate), Moodle, KentPlayer)\(^{16} \ 17\). To advise on these areas of development, a representative of Student Support and Wellbeing will participate in the meetings of the Programme Curriculum Development Team and at the meetings of PASC. More information about inclusive curriculum design principles can be found in the module specification inclusive principles\(^{18}\).

8. Programme Withdrawal

8.1 Schools will review annually the portfolio of programmes that they offer and will make decisions about the retention and withdrawal of those programmes (see Annex E section 5 of the Code of Practice).

8.1.1 Any programme of study that does not register any students for three consecutive academic years will be considered for withdrawal. To facilitate this process, the Faculties Support Office will present each School in the Autumn Term with a list of programmes of study that have not recorded any student registrations over a three-year period\(^{19}\). Schools will be required to annotate and return the list by a stated deadline, indicating which if any of the programmes should be retained. Any programmes not identified by the School for retention within the deadline set will be withdrawn on the authority of the relevant Associate Dean. Where a non-recruiting programme is marked by a School for retention, a rationale for doing so must be provided. In such cases, the relevant Associate Dean of the Faculty will take the rationale into account before reaching a decision. If the Associate Dean is satisfied by the rationale, s/he will sanction the retention of the programme for a further academic year. Where the Associate Dean is not satisfied, the programme will be withdrawn.

8.1.2 Programmes withdrawn through this exercise will be reported as such to the Programme Approval Sub-committee (PASC), which will formally record the programme withdrawal. The withdrawal will be reported through the minutes of PASC for action by i) Enrolment Management Services (EMS), which will inform any applicants of the discontinuation of the programme, and ii) the Central Student Administration Office (CSAO), which will amend the status of the programme accordingly. The withdrawal will be noted by the Education Board or the Graduate School Board, as appropriate.

8.2 Outside of the annual exercise set out at 8.1 above, where a School requests the withdrawal of a programme of study, it must prepare a written rationale outlining the reasons for the withdrawal, stating whether any offers have been made to applicants and providing details of the

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\(^{15}\) [https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentsupport/accessibility/inclusive-practice.html](https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentsupport/accessibility/inclusive-practice.html), approved by Education Board June 2017

\(^{16}\) See: [https://www.kent.ac.uk/elearning/kentplayer/index.html](https://www.kent.ac.uk/elearning/kentplayer/index.html) for the University’s policy on Lecture capture.

\(^{17}\) Follow the link to Kent Productivity Tools: [www.kent.ac.uk/tools](http://www.kent.ac.uk/tools) to highlight a selection of free tools, apps and software that offer different ways to access study material and increase productivity.


\(^{19}\) Such lists to be requested from the Data Quality Team.
arrangements for allowing existing students to complete their studies (including any students currently resiting), and submit it to the Faculties Support Office for consideration by the relevant Faculty Associate Dean. Where the Associate Dean sanctions the requested withdrawal of the programme, s/he will report this outcome to PASC, which will formally record the programme withdrawal. The withdrawal will be reported for action through the minutes of PASC by i) Enrolment Management Services (EMS), which will inform any applicants of the discontinuation of the programme, and ii) the Central Student Administration Office (CSAO), which will amend the status of the programme accordingly. The withdrawal will be noted by the Education Board or the Graduate School Board, as appropriate.

8.3 Programme Title Changes

Where a School agrees a programme title change with the relevant Faculty Associate Dean, the Associate Dean will liaise with the relevant member of the FSO in order to ensure that the programme title change is reported to PASC, for note and dissemination to interested parties, as appropriate.

8.4 Programme Suspension

8.4.1 Where a programme of study is to be suspended, the School must prepare a written rationale, outlining the reasons for not continuing to offer the programme, the period of time for which it is to be suspended (see 9.3.3 below), whether any offers have been made to applicants and details of the arrangements for allowing existing students to complete their studies (including any students currently resiting), and submit it either, as appropriate to the proposal, to the Associate Dean (Education) (for undergraduate programmes) or the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) (for postgraduate programmes) for consideration. Where the Associate Dean agrees to the suspension of the programme s/he will liaise with the relevant member of the FSO in order to ensure that it is reported to i) Enrolment Management Services (EMS), which will inform any applicants of the suspension of the programme, and ii) the Central Student Administration Office (CSAO), which will amend the status of the programme accordingly.

8.4.2 When a suspended programme of study is to be offered once more, the School will report this to the Associate Dean (Education)/(Graduate Studies), the FSO, EMS and CSAO, which will amend the status of the programme accordingly.

8.4.3 Where a programme of study is to be suspended for the current recruitment cycle (e.g. due to low numbers of applicants/offers), it is not necessary to follow the procedure laid out in 8.4.1. Instead, Schools should liaise with EMS in the first instance to discuss the implications of suspension. Once EMS has confirmed that the suspension is appropriate, the School should inform FSO who will keep a record and inform CSAO.

8.4.4 A programme of study may be suspended for no more than three years. After three years if the programme in question is not run it must be formally withdrawn (refer to section 8.1 above). Programme suspensions will be considered during Annual Programme Portfolio Reviews (see Annex E).
Appendices:

Appendix A: Programme Proposal Cover Sheet
Appendix B: Business Case Template
Appendix D: Pro forma for Requesting for a New Programme Proposal to Proceed Out of Cycle ('Fast-Track')
Appendix E: Guidance on the use of External Advisers for Programme Approval
Appendix F: Pro forma for the use of External Advisers in Programme Approval
Appendix G: Developing Programme Specifications - Design Principles
Appendix H: Undergraduate Programme Specification Template
Appendix I: Postgraduate Taught Programme Specification Template
Appendix J: Terms of Reference for the Business Case Committee