Annex B: Approval and Withdrawal of Modules

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# 1. Overview

This annex of the Code of Practice sets out the requirements which must be met by proposals for new modules and the procedures for consideration and approval of such proposals. Divisional Education and UG Student Experience Committees (DESEC) are authorised to approve new and revised modules proposed by its Boards of Studies. Members of Board of Studies who attend the DESEC may not play a decision-making role with regard to the approval of any modules that they have proposed.

Note: Where the text states ‘School’ this should be understood to refer to ‘School’ or ’Department’ at the sub-divisional level, as appropriate.

# 2. Module Designations

## 2.1 Compulsory Modules

A module will be designated as ‘compulsory’ where, due to the relevance of its content and learning outcomes to the course of study, it is stated in the relevant course specification that it is a module that must be taken and for which credit must be awarded in order for a student to remain in good standing on the course.

## 2.2 Optional Modules

A module will be designated as ‘optional’ where it is indicated in a list provided by the course-owning Division as one of a number of modules it provides for students to take on an opt-in basis as part of their course of study.

## 2.3 Elective Modules

A module will be designated as ‘elective’ where it is provided on an optional basis and falls outside the subject area of the student’s course of study.

# 3. New Modules

Proposals for new modules should be developed and considered by the relevant Board of Studies in the first instance and should include a module specification in the [approved format](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-b). Each module must be set out in a separate module specification.

# 4. **Student Consultation**

Students within the relevant School should be consulted on the proposal, along with any other relevant stakeholders, prior to its submission to the DESEC. The module specification will subsequently be used as the definitive source of information about the module by students, potential students and internal and external reviewers.

# 5. **Proposals**

The DESEC will consider proposals for new or amended modules for approval under the procedures set out below.

# 6. Module Approval

## 6.1 Introduction

The procedures for module approval differ where (a) the module comes forward as part of a proposal for a new or substantially amended course of study to be considered by the relevant Course Development Team convened in collaboration with the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office (QACO); or (b) the module is proposed in isolation and does not form part of a course proposal, as set out below.

## 6.2 Modules Coming Forward as part of a Course Proposal

New or amended modules put forward as part of a proposal for a new taught course of study or a substantially revised existing taught course will be considered via the process set out in sections 2-4 of [Annex C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Courses](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-c) of this Code of Practice.

## 6.3 Modules Coming Forward Outside of a Course Proposal

The formal procedure for the approval of new modules which do not come forward as part of a proposal for a new or substantially revised course of study is as follows:

## Where intended primarily for use as part of an undergraduate course:*[[1]](#footnote-2)*

1. Preparation of proposal.
2. Consideration of proposal by the Board of Studies and recommendation to the Divisional Education and Student Experience Committee (DESEC).
3. Consideration of proposal and decision by the DESEC. The DESEC may approve the proposed module, approve the module subject to required revisions or reject the proposed module.
4. Consideration of such proposals may be delegated by the DESEC to Chair’s Action or other designated member(s)[[2]](#footnote-3) of the Committee. Such consideration may take place electronically via the University’s designated software package for doing so.

## Where intended primarily for use as part of a taught postgraduate course:*[[3]](#footnote-4)*

1. Preparation of proposal.
2. Consideration of proposal by the Board of Studies and recommendation to the Divisional Graduate Studies and Student Experience Committee (DGSSEC).
3. Consideration of proposal and decision by the DGSSEC. The DGSSEC may approve the proposed module, approve the module subject to required revisions or reject the proposed module.
4. Consideration of such proposals may be delegated by the DGSSEC to Chair’s Action or other designated member(s) of the Committee. Such consideration may take place electronically via the University’s designated software package for doing so.
5. Note: As a condition of approval, the Divisional Education and UG Student Experience Committee or Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience Committee should be assured that the proposed new curriculum, as far as can be reasonably anticipated, does not present any non-justifiable disadvantage to students with disabilities.

# 7. Credit Framework Criteria

All modules must conform to the criteria as set out in the Kent Credit Framework sections 3.2-3.3. Approval of a module by the relevant DESEC or DGSSEC will confirm that the Committee is satisfied that the module is set at the appropriate level, that the module contains a variety of assessment methods which allow achievement of the Module Learning Outcomes at the threshold standard for a pass and, other than where the module as a whole is graded on a pass/fail basis, also afford students the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level.

# 8. Impact on Learning Outcomes

The module-owning Division must state how the introduction of a new module will impact on the learning outcomes of all existing courses of study in which the module is compulsory and for which the module-owning Division is responsible. Where the introduction of a new module will impact on the Course Learning Outcomes, a revised course specification and module mapping must be submitted for re-approval as per Annex C.

# 9. **Pre-requisites**

The module specification must list all possible pre-requisites[[4]](#footnote-5) relating to that module, including where the module is attached to two or more different courses of study.

# 10. **Re-assessment Methods**

The module specification must specify which reassessment method will apply, either (a) via the like-for-like reassessment of failed individual component(s) of assessment; or (b) by reassessment instrument (i.e., retrieval by 100% exam, coursework or project). Variation of the method of reassessment stated in the approved module specification will only be considered for students with ILPs or in response to an extraordinary circumstance for an individual student. Such variations will require the prior written agreement of the relevant Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience (DDESE) or Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience (DGSSE).

# 11. Pass-compulsory Components

Modules must state explicitly where an assessment component is pass-compulsory.

# 12. High Risk of Non-delivery

1. Module specifications must be designed in such a way that a high risk of non-delivery is not created (such a risk might include both a single member of teaching staff and/or a resourcing concern). A high risk of non-delivery creates risk for both student satisfaction and for compliance.
2. When a new or revised module is submitted for approval it should include a confirmation that more than one person is available to teach it and/or that the Division plan includes consideration of cover and succession planning.
3. Divisional approval of modules should include consideration of the title and curriculum description in order to confirm these are not overly constraining.
4. Consideration should be given as to whether any specialist modules might be delivered intensively across a few weeks rather than a full term, so as to minimise the risk of non-delivery.

# 13. Changes to Approved Modules

1. Boards of Studies are authorised to approve minor changes to existing modules. Such changes should not be approved unless a revised module specification has been submitted.
2. Where major changes to a module are proposed, a revised module specification must be submitted by the Board of Studies for approval by the Divisional Education and Student Experience Committee or the Divisional Graduate Studies and Student Experience Committee, as appropriate.
3. A major change to a module includes:

* Any amendment resulting in a change to the intended learning outcomes for the module.
* A major change to the learning or teaching methods or to the methods of assessment, e.g. a change to the delivery mode from lectures to e-learning.
* A change in the level or volume of credit of a module, as this will necessarily involve a change in learning outcomes and assessment.
* A combination of minor changes that, when aggregated, can be considered to be a major change.

1. Where there is doubt as to whether a proposed change to a module constitutes a minor or major change, advice should be sought from the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office (qaco@kent.ac.uk).
2. Note: Where a new or revised course specification is to be submitted to the Course Approval Sub-committee (CASC) for approval, new and/or major revisions to module specifications must be approved by the Division first. It is necessary, therefore, to take account of the annual deadline for submissions to CASC when planning new modules or major changes to existing modules. Please refer to [Annex C Appendix A](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-c) for further guidance.
3. Whether a change to a module is regarded as either minor or major, the Division must give proper consideration as to whether the proposed change is compliant with CMA ([Competition and Markets Authority](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority)) guidance and in particular whether it represents a change to ‘material information’. Divisions should refer to the [CMA information and guidance pages](https://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/cma/index.html) for details and should also seek advice from the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office.
4. Other interested Schools should be consulted as appropriate with regard to changes to modules.
5. The module-owning Division must state how any change to an existing module (whether a minor or major change) will impact on the learning outcomes of all existing courses of study in which the module is compulsory and for which the module-owning Division is responsible. Where a change to a module will impact on the Course Learning Outcomes, a revised course specification and module mapping must be submitted for re-approval as per Annex C.

# 14. Module Withdrawal

1. Divisions will review annually the portfolio of modules that they offer and will make decisions about the retention and withdrawal of those modules (see [Annex E](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-e) section 5 of the Taught Code of Practice).
2. Any module that does not register any students for a period of three consecutive academic years will be considered for withdrawal. To facilitate this process, the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office will present each Division in the Autumn Term with a list of modules that have not recorded any student registrations over a three-year period[[5]](#footnote-6). Divisions will be required to annotate and return the list by a stated deadline, indicating which if any of the modules should be retained. Any modules not identified by the Division for retention within the deadline set will be withdrawn on the authority of the relevant Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience or Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience. Where a non-recruiting module is marked by a Division for retention, a rationale for doing so must be provided. In such cases, the DDESE/DDGSSE will take the rationale into account before reaching a decision. If the DDESE/DDGSSE is satisfied by the rationale, they will sanction the retention of the module for a further academic year. Where the DDESE/DDGSSE is not satisfied, the module will be withdrawn. Where module(s) not owned by a Division contribute to course(s) offered by that Division, the Division in question must check the list for such modules and must annotate the list to indicate such modules should be retained.
3. Modules withdrawn through this exercise will be reported as such to the relevant Divisional Education and Student Experience Committee (DESEC) or Divisional Graduate Studies and Student Experience Committee (DGSSEC), as appropriate), which will formally record the withdrawal. The DDESEC/DGSSEC will report these decisions to the Central Student Administration Office (CSAO).
4. Other than via the annual exercise set out at 14.1 above, where a Division wishes to propose the withdrawal of a module, it must submit a request to the appropriate DESEC/DGSSEC via the system used for module approval. The request should be accompanied by the following:

* A statement confirming that no students are registered for the module or will be required to take it, including resitting and intermitting students. If there are students still registered on the module the statement should set out how those students will be properly taught and supported.
* A statement that the module is either not a component of any course offered in another School, or, if the module is a component of a course offered in another School a statement that the School has been advised. Evidence in the form of a response from the other School must be provided with the withdrawal request.
* A statement confirming that the Division has engaged with the requirements of [Competition and Markets Authority guidance](https://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/cma/index.html) in considering the proposed withdrawal.

1. Where withdrawals are part of a course restructure the withdrawal request should be submitted at the same time as the revised course specification and the withdrawal submission should indicate that it is part of a course restructure.
2. Where a module to be withdrawn is subject to an existing Articulation Agreement, the Division will notify the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office. This may result in a review of the Articulation Agreement.

# 15. Alternative Assessment

1. Occasionally it is necessary to create an alternative assessment, for example, for students with ILPs or in response to an exceptional circumstance for an individual student. The process for approval of alternative assessment is as follows.
2. The relevant School will draw up a rationale that sets out why the alternative assessment is required, details of the form that it will take, which student(s) will undertake the assessment and confirmation that the alternative assessment meets the required Module Learning Outcomes.
3. The School will submit the rationale to the appropriate Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience/Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience for approval or rejection. The outcome will be recorded at the next DESEC/DGSSEC, as appropriate.
4. Validated Institutions will be required to have their own internal procedure in place for the approval of alternative assessments, including a process to ensure that the relevant External Examiner is satisfied with the alternative assessment. The Validated Institution must inform the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office of any alternative assessments once approved.

1. For the purposes of this Code integrated Master’s courses are regarded as undergraduate courses. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The designated member will be a Director of the Board of Studies from a different subject area. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For the purposes of this Code Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma courses are regarded as postgraduate courses. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Pre-requisite module is a module that students are required to take prior to the module in question. Normal progression requirements through the stages do not need to be listed as a pre-requisite in the module specification. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Such lists to be requested from the Data Quality Team. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)