**Annex C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Courses**

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

# Overview

## Scope of this Annex

This annex of the Code of Practice establishes the requirements and procedures for the approval of new and revised taught courses of study whether proposed by a Division unilaterally or in collaboration with other Divisions or partner providers[[1]](#footnote-2). New courses submitted directly by partner providers, such as the Validated Institutions or the Partner Colleges, are subject to the procedures set out in Annex L of this Code of Practice.

## Aims of this Annex

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

* are consonant with the University Plan, the Education and Student Experience Strategy, the Internationalisation Strategy, the Student Employability Strategy and, where relevant, the Graduate and Researcher College Strategy and Divisional 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 the aims and learning outcomes.
* reflect Kent’s research expertise (except where proposed by a partner provider), are inclusive[[2]](#footnote-3), 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](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/credit-framework).
* Encourage and enable students to actively demonstrate that they can produce accessible resources following Kent’s Accessibility[[3]](#footnote-4) Guidance.
* reflect an inclusive[[4]](#footnote-5) ,innovative and internationalist approach to learning, teaching and assessment practices.
* deliver planned 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 the requirements of Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance and other current legislation as relevant, the [QAA UK Quality Code](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code) and the University’s regulatory requirements.

## Appropriate Consideration

The procedures which follow are based on the principle that detailed consideration of proposed new courses 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 and Student Experience Board and the Graduate and Researcher College 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.

# Phases of New Course Development and Approval

## Overview

The procedure for the development and approval of new courses of study consists of three phases of consideration by Division and University committees, each of which has areas of specific focus.

## Approval Deadline

The deadline for courses to come forward for approval by the Course Approval Sub-committee (CASC) will be the June CASC meeting each year. Therefore, for both new and major revisions to courses, specifications must be approved by the Division in time for submission to CASC and no later than two weeks before the date of the June meeting.

# Phase 1: Planning and Development

## Approval of the Planning Phase

The Planning and Development phase will be approved by the Business Case Committee (BCC), on behalf of the Executive Group (EG).

## New Proposal Steps

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

* + The relevant Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience (DDESE) or Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience (DDGSSE) will determine whether the proposal constitutes a new course of study or an amendment to an existing course. They will also determine whether the proposal requires significant new resource (see section 3.3 below for detail).
	+ Where it is envisaged that the proposal will require significant new resources (see section 3.3 below for detail), the steps in section 3.3 below will be followed.
	+ The proposal is considered at the Divisional Education and UG Student Experience Committee or Divisional Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience Committee and noted in the minutes.
	+ A Divisional Course Lead (DCL) is identified (see section 4.1.2 below for further detail of this role).
	+ The Division’s student representatives are consulted on the proposal formally in a meeting of the relevant Student Voice Forum (timing may require a specially convened meeting, where necessary).
	+ Where it is envisaged that the proposed course will be delivered via either blended or distance learning the Academic Practice department must be consulted about the assessment practice at this stage.
	+ Schools wishing to develop an apprenticeship course must do so in conjunction with Digital and Lifelong Learning (DaLL)[[5]](#footnote-6).
	+ Where a new pathway is added to an already existing course, it will require the Business Case Committee (BCC) approval if its provision of new modules includes 50% or more of the credit at the degree classification stages.
	+ Where a new ‘Year in’ (intercalated courses) course is proposed, it will require the BCC approval.

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

### Identification of Significant New Resource

Directors of Division are required to judge if any new course 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).

### Undertaking a Market Research Report

Where the allocation of significant new resource would be required, the Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience/Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience should consult their Director of Division 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. Directors and their Divisions should engage the services of MORA to provide a market research report. 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 Division’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 course should be developed (i.e. whether it can proceed out of cycle). Formal submissions to EG should proceed via the Director of Division. If a Division wishes to develop a course out of cycle it must demonstrate to EG, via the market research report, that there is sufficient urgency for the proposed course that additional resources should be considered outside of normal planning.

### Development in Principle

Should the decision of EG allow for the development in principle of the new course proposal, the Division may proceed with the preparation of the business case.

## Business Case Committee (BCC)

### Composition of the BCC

The Business Case Committee shall comprise the DVC Academic Strategy Planning and Performance (Chair), DVC Education and Student Experience, Dean of the Graduate and Researcher College, representative Directors of Division, the Director of Planning and Student Information and the Director of MORA. The BCC will be serviced by the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office (QACO). Meetings will take place virtually with in-person meetings convened where deemed necessary.

### Approaching QACO in the first instance

Divisions should approach QACO in the first instance in order to commence the process of submission to the BCC. All submissions should be made via the Business Case Application template, which is to be completed with the support of relevant Professional Service Departments (as necessary QACO, Academic Practice, Finance, MORA, PBIO, Careers Service, IR and IP) and will cover the following matters: content and delivery. market research and planning. collaborative provision and financial requirements. The Business Case Application template for new courses of study can be found at Appendix E.

## Market Research

### Initial Report (pre BCC consideration)

Divisions wishing to propose a new course of study, which does not require significant new resource, must provide Initial Market Research data (e.g. assessment of market demand from sources such as IDP Demand tracker) to demonstrate whether or not a market may exist for the proposed course of study.

Should HESA data be required (for student numbers by institution) Divisions should contact MORA Market Insight Team (marketingoffice@kent.ac.uk) who will obtain the relevant data..

### Full Report (post BCC consideration)

If the Business Case Committee agrees that the course proposal has merit, it will commission a full market research report from MORA Market Insight Team (marketingoffice@kent.ac.uk). This report will be reviewed by the BCC and, if it judges that the proposed course has a demonstrable market and meets the University’s strategic aims and objectives, it will recommend that the proposal proceed to the Curriculum Development phase. Where Divisions require additional resource outside of the Planning Round, the market research should demonstrate that this is sufficiently urgent.

## Adding Period Abroad with Approved Partner Institution

For Divisions seeking permission to add a period abroad (with an approved partner institution), placement year, foundation year[[6]](#footnote-7) or an existing minor subject (e.g. a language) to an existing course, there is no requirement to submit an outline proposal to the BCC for approval. Such proposals need not be forwarded to the Course Approval Sub-committee (CASC) for approval but may be signed off at the Curriculum Development phase by the relevant DDESE or DDGSSE. The approval of such courses should be recorded in the Divisional CASC Report.

## Outcomes of BCC Consideration

The Division will submit the proposal to the BCC for its consideration. If the BCC 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” – proposal can immediately progress to QA approval stages and launch at the first available entry point.
* Priority 2: Approve “In Cycle” progress. BCC can give permission for the new course to be marketed at this point, in order to meet marketing publication deadlines in line with the conditions set out in 5.9.1 below. Once full market research has been conducted (see section 3.5 above) the proposal will be resubmitted to the BCC for consideration for final approval. Once approved, the proposal can progress to the Curriculum Development phase.
* Not approved: course not viable for Kent. Division to be given feedback.

### Marketing, Outreach, Recruitment and Admissions (MORA) Input

MORA can recommend to the BCC a change in priority if market research indicates a need, so that a priority 2 proposal that is found to be a more urgent proposition than was originally thought can become priority 1.

### Referral Back to Executive Group (EG)

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.

### QACO Reporting Responsibilities

The Quality Assurance and Compliance Office will report these decisions to the relevant DDESE or DDGSSE and other interested parties.

### BCC Recommended Proposals

The BCC will recommend proposals to proceed to the Curriculum Development phase independent of any decision by Executive Group to approve new resource relating to the proposal.

3.7.5 **Maximum Period of Validity of BCC approval**

 Courses approved by BCC must complete the Curriculum Development phase and be submitted to CASC no later than 12 months after BCC approval. Any course submitted to CASC after this period must be resubmitted to BCC.

## Additional Guidance

Additional guidance on the submission of outline proposals for new collaborative courses of study is set out in Appendix B.

# Phase 2: Curriculum Development and Divisional Approval

## Course Curriculum Development Team Formation

Following BCC approval of the business case, a Course Curriculum Development Team will be formed to draw up the detailed submission for the new course. The Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience/Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience (or nominee) will draw up the team members, to consist of the following:

* Divisional Course Lead (DCL)
* Divisional QA and Accreditations Manager
* an appropriate representative from a different subject area
* Divisional Learning Technologist
* a QACO representative (in an advisory capacity)
* a representative from Student Support and Wellbeing (in an advisory capacity)

### 4.1.1 Campus Representation

At least one of the above individuals must be a representative of the specific campus or campuses where the course will be delivered.

### 4.1.2 Appointing a Divisional Course Lead

The Divisional Course Lead should be an academic member of staff from within the proposing Division (ideally, the academic staff member with the greatest investment in the development of the proposal. The Divisional Course Lead should take the lead in developing the curriculum, formulating the structure of the course and the production of the course and module specifications (and any other relevant documentation) by the deadlines agreed by the team. The expectation is that the DCL will have an understanding of the requirements of this Annex and of the Code of Practice as a whole.

## Divisional Lead

Ultimate responsibility for the development of the curriculum resides with the Division. The Divisional QA and Accreditations Manager will take the lead in co-ordinating the work of the Course Curriculum Development Team and will provide advice and guidance with regard to completing the required quality assurance documentation and on any associated matters.

## Consulting Internal Stakeholders

The Division should consult appropriate external stakeholders as relevant (such as professional bodies, accrediting bodies or employers) for input on its plans for the course. Internal stakeholders should also be consulted, including:

* Current students should be consulted on the proposal at an early point in its development, either via the relevant Student Voice Forum or a special meeting convened for this purpose.
* A subject area external adviser should be identified by the Division and consulted about the plans. The external adviser should subsequently provide a commentary on the fully developed proposal as it proceeds to the University phase of the approval process.
* The Academic Practice department should be consulted about assessment practice and the course-level assessment strategy. It must be consulted in advance where it is envisaged that the course may be delivered remotely via digital technologies (see section 3.2).
* Advice on developing inclusive and innovative practices in learning, teaching and assessment will be provided by the representative of Student Support and Wellbeing[[7]](#footnote-8).
* The Student Immigration Compliance Team should be consulted to ensure that the course meets the requirements for UKVI compliance.

### 4.3.1 Other Stakeholders

Note that this list is not exhaustive and other stakeholders should be consulted, as appropriate to the individual proposal.

## Frequency of Course Curriculum Development Team Meetings

The Course 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 Divisional QA and Accreditations Manager will keep the formal record of these meetings and the development of the proposal. While all of the non-Divisional team members will provide advice and guidance on the development of the curriculum and on the production of the course/module specifications and related documentation, it remains the Division’s responsibility to undertake these tasks and ensure that the proposal proceeds in a timely fashion.

## Expected Documentation

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

1. A course specification in the approved format[[8]](#footnote-9), including a module mapping document detailing the course-level learning outcomes delivered by each module.
2. For a new course that is not similar to an existing course, 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[[9]](#footnote-10) , along with a written response from the Division 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.

1. The external adviser’s supporting statement might usefully comment on:
* Curriculum content of the course – are all subjects included that would be expected in order to achieve the award title, and does the course fit together as a coherent entity?
* Does the course content articulate/progress in an appropriate manner and at the correct level?[[10]](#footnote-11)
* Does the course content reflect the relevant [QAA subject benchmark statement(s)](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements) (if applicable)?
* Does the course structure reflect the relevant [QAA guidance on qualification characteristics](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks) or [QAA guidance on Foundation Degree characteristics](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/foundation-degree-characteristics-statement-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=6fc5ca81_10) (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*.*

1. Where appropriate, a statement indicating how the course reflects the requirements of professional or statutory bodies.
2. The module specifications of any new or revised modules relating to the new course proposal, irrespective of stage, are to be submitted. Where the inclusion of existing and unrevised module specifications will help inform discussion of the proposed course/module specifications, these might be included for reference only with a note of clarification from the Division.
3. The BCC submission, including all accompanying commentaries.
4. The relevant extract of the Student Voice Forum minutes (or similar bespoke group) that notes the student discussion of the proposed course specification (see [Annex M: *Student Evaluation*](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-m) section 5).
5. The official record of the development of the proposal by the Curriculum Development Team, as recorded by the Divisional QA and Accreditations Manager.
6. Where the course is an apprenticeship, a mapping between the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours within the apprenticeship standard and related degree course learning outcomes must be provided.

## When Considering Proposals

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

* Engagement with the course 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](https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/guidance/framework.html) to ensure the adoption of best practice in the design of assessment.
* Engagement with the School’s assessment strategy.
* 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, where applicable, to [the QAA ‘Outcome classification descriptions](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/annex-d-outcome-classification-descriptions-for-fheq-level-6-and-fqheis-level-10-degrees.pdf) for FHEQ Level 6 and FQHEIS Level 10 degrees’[[11]](#footnote-12).
* 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 course.
* (Where appropriate to the proposal) whether the course reflects current research or other advanced scholarship carried out by academic staff in the School.
* That the course specification provides for a balanced workload of modules across the terms.
* Engagement with the University’s policies on accessibility and developing inclusive curricula[[12]](#footnote-13).
* Engagement with the University’s policies on internationalisation.
* Engagement with the requirements of [Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance](https://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/cma/index.html), including proposals for risk mitigation, where appropriate.
* Any other matters considered appropriate by the Curriculum Development Team.

## Disallowed Course Designs

Except where any optional modules in question are language modules or are otherwise considered on an exception basis by the Division to enhance employability, course specifications 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:

1. course 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 course of study.
2. course 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 course of study.

## Approval of Finalised Proposals

Should the DDESE/DDGSSE be satisfied with the finalised proposal, they are authorised to approve any new or amended modules on behalf of the Division and to recommend the proposal’s submission to the University phase of the approval process (i.e. CASC).

Every course specification and module specification, whether new or revised, will be subject to scrutiny and the final decision of the Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience/Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience.

## Submission of Optional Module Titles

The submission to the University phase should consist of the documentation set out at section 4.5 above, with the exception of the module specifications. Where, however, it would be helpful to provide optional module titles to CASC, for example, where a course specification will consist of entirely or a majority of optional modules, the submission might include an indicative list of modules as an appendix that will not form part of the actual course specification.

# Phase 3: University-Level Approval

## Course Approval Sub-committee Members

At the University phase proposals for new courses of study will be considered for approval by the Course Approval Sub-committee (CASC). The voting membership of CASC will comprise the six Divisional Directors of Education and UG Student Experience and the six Divisional Directors of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience, one of whom will normally serve as Chair. Of the voting membership, at least one representative from each Division will attend each CASC meeting (including the Chair). Other members attending in an advisory capacity (i.e. the non-voting members) will include:

* the Head of Quality Assurance and Compliance
* the Graduate and Researcher College Head of Operations
* the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing
* The Divisional Course Lead (or nominee) to attend in support of the specific course proposal in order to answer any questions that the Sub-committee might raise and to receive feedback (for both new and substantially revised course specifications).

## QACO Responsibility

The meetings will be convened and serviced by the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office.

## CASC Meeting Schedule

Meetings of CASC will be staged on a monthly basis from October to July. For each proposal CASC will consider the full set of documentation as set out at 4.5 above, with the exception of the module specifications.

Course submissions will normally only be considered at a scheduled CASC meeting.

## Responsibilities of CASC

CASC 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 CASC are to:

* 1. Evaluate whether the proposed course is 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).
	2. Ensure that the proposal meets the requirements of the University’s Code of Practice for Quality Assurance and the Credit Framework.
	3. Determine whether the course specification can be delivered, learning outcomes achieved and quality and standards maintained.
	4. Ascertain whether the assessment strategy allows learning outcomes to be appropriately tested and are consistent with the best practice set out in the University’s Assessment Framework.
	5. Evaluate whether the proposing Division can provide the learning opportunities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes.
	6. Evaluate the external adviser’s supporting statement and the proposing Division’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 Division indicating the nature of such amendments.
	7. Ensure that the final proposal remains congruent with the original outline submission for the course and accompanying commentaries as approved by the BCC.
	8. Ensure that the course specification provides for a balanced workload of modules across the terms.
	9. Ensure engagement with the University’s policies on developing inclusive curricula.[[13]](#footnote-14)
	10. Ensure engagement with the University’s policies on internationalisation.
	11. Ensure engagement with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance.
	12. Ensure engagement with the University’s policies on employability. Ensure engagement, as appropriate, with Annex Q: *Work-based and Placement Learning.*
1. Ensure engagement, as appropriate, with the [QAA ‘Outcome classification descriptions](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/annex-d-outcome-classification-descriptions-for-fheq-level-6-and-fqheis-level-10-degrees.pdf) for FHEQ Level 6 and FQHEIS Level 10 degrees’.
2. Make decisions on the proposals in accordance with these terms of reference, specifying any conditions required for the approval of the proposals.
3. Report its decisions to the Education and Student Experience Board (ESEB) and the Graduate and Researcher College Board (GRCB) respectively.

## **CASC Decisions**

Based on its assessment, CASC is empowered to make one of a number of decisions on behalf of ESEB and GRCB:

* + 1. That the proposal be approved.
		2. 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 CASC or, at the discretion of the Sub-committee, by the appropriate DDESE or DDGSSE.
		3. That the proposal be resubmitted in a revised form for further consideration by the Sub-Committee.
		4. That the proposal be rejected.

At the end of the approval meeting the Chair will inform the attending DivisionalCourse Lead 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 DDESE/DDGSSE. Failure to meet the conditions by the set deadline may result in the withdrawal of conditional approval and entail the resubmission of the course proposal. The status of the conditional approval shall be reported to CASC at its following meeting. however, conditions may be regarded as satisfied, and the course may be advertised, as soon as they have been signed off by the DDESE/DDGSSE, on behalf of CASC.

## CASC Reporting

If it is satisfied with the quality and standards of the proposal submitted, CASC will report to ESEB or GRCB, as relevant, that it has approved the proposed course on its behalf. ESEB and GRCB will report annually to the Senate on the new courses that have been approved under delegated powers.

## Commencement of New/Revised Courses

Under no circumstances may any new or substantially revised course of study commence delivery prior to the specification receiving the approval of CASC.

## CASC minutes

The minutes of CASC meetings will be made available to stakeholders. The Quality Assurance and Compliance Office will inform the Division on the progress of proposals throughout the approval process and will advise when the process has been completed. Where a new course has been approved, either directly by CASC or by the Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience/Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience in response to course conditions set by CASC, the Division will notify the Central Student Administration Office, Data Quality Team, MORA and any other relevant stakeholders. In addition, the Division will submit a formal report to the next meeting of CASC reporting the Divisional approval of the conditions set by CASC. The Central Student Administration will assign the POS codes for new courses.

## New Course Publicity and Recruitment

5.9.1 A new course may be advertised, and applicants offered places on such courses when, and only when, the course has been fully approved by the Course Approval Sub-committee, except where under exceptional circumstances the Business Case Committee or the Chair of the BCC authorises that a proposed new course might be advertised as subject to approval.

5.9.2 The University shall publish the approved course specifications online. The approved specification will remain the definitive statement of the curriculum to be provided for the course 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 CASC

### Appointing a CASC Chair

At the beginning of the first CASC meeting of the academic year, the voting members of CASC will normally agree which of them will act as the Chair of the Sub-committee for the coming academic year.

### Duties of a CASC Chair

The duties of the Chair of CASC 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 (as per 5.11.1 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 DDESE/DDGSSE), 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.

## **Voting Process at CASC**

### In the Event Agreement Cannot be Reached

Where the Sub-committee members cannot agree a recommendation on a course 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.

### Quorum

The meetings of the Sub-committee will be quorate when at least two Divisional Directors of Education and UG Student Experience and two Divisional Directors of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience are present. When a meeting becomes inquorate, 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 Divisional Directors of Education and UG Student Experience and two Divisional Directors of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience, without further consultation.

## **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, CASC is authorised to establish a panel to consider the proposal in detail, to discuss it with the course development team and to submit recommendations on the proposal to it. Such panels will normally include at least two members from CASC, one of whom shall be appointed as Chair, and at least one member external to the University with appropriate subject area expertise.

# Non-University Campus/Location

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

# Amendments to Approved Courses

## Consideration of Competition and Markets Authority guidance

7.1.1 Whether a change to a course is regarded as either minor or major, the Division must give proper consideration as to whether the proposed change is compliant with [Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority) and in particular whether it represents a ‘material’ change. Divisions should refer to the [University’s published CMA information and guidance](https://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/cma/index.html) for details, and, if uncertain, should seek advice from the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office.

7.1.2 Where a change is regarded as CMA material and will only affect prospective students, the nature of the change must be communicated to them in a timely manner.

7.1.3 Where a change is regarded as material and the planned changes will affect current (both FT and PT) and intermitting students, the Division/Schools must consult with the students. Consent should be obtained when the proposed changes will affect students currently studying the course in question (both FT and PT, including those who are currently on a year abroad, on a placement, resitting, have deferred or are intermitting).

7.1.4 The evidence of such communications described in 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 above must be made available on the Course and Module Approval System (CMAS). In the case of 7.1.3 the consultation/consent evidence must be presented to CASC with the course specification and other documentation (if required).

7.1.5 It is the University’s expectation that where the course proposals lead to CMA material changes, these would be implemented before the recruitment window starts (at least 18 months for UG courses and 12 months for PG courses).

7.1.6 Where a proposal is made for the withdrawal, suspension or material amendment of a course to take place prior to the start of the next academic year, this will have implications under CMA legislation which must be risk-assessed and considered prior to their approval. Amendments may be possible if there is a strong rationale, e.g., in order to adhere to PSRB requirements or for significant pedagogic reasons that had not been previously anticipated.

7.1.7 Where such a proposal is made to existing and/or advertised courses, the Division must request a CMA risk assessment by emailing kentcma@kent.ac.uk.

7.1.7.1 The request must include the revised course specification(s) with tracked changes, rationale for the changes and, where the proposed changes will affect the candidates, application numbers to date. Where requested changes affect current students, the request must include confirmation and evidence for their consent.

7.1.7.2 The Division should consider and put in place means of mitigation for any potential risk. Means of mitigation could include, for example, continuing with a previous version of the course, or setting aside a financial allowance for students’ compensation (including refund of fees where appropriate).. Consideration of mitigation should be included in the risk assessment.

7.1.7.3 The CMA risk assessment must be requested in advance of CASC. It is also advisable to seek the assessment prior to any deliberations about the changes as these may impact on the outcome.

7.1.7.4 The proposed changes will be assigned one of the following risks – low, moderate or high.

7.1.7.5 Where the risk level has been identified as high and the Division wishes to proceed with the approval process, the request will have to be reviewed and approved by the DVC Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance and the DVC Education and Student Experience prior to submission to CASC. QACO will liaise with both DVCs to obtain their commentary.

7.1.7.6 The CMA risk assessment will be provided within five working days.

7.1.8 The CMA risk assessment is for guidance only and is designed to support the Divisions in their decision-making whether or not to proceed with the approval process for the proposed changes in-cycle or to defer such changes to a later date.

7.1.9 Where the Division wishes to proceed with the proposed changes it will be required to follow the normal course specification approval process as set out in this Annex and submit the specification to CASC.

7.1.10 QACO will ensure that the CMA risk assessment is available to CASC. However, the Division will be required to provide information regarding how the identified risks will be mitigated (if appropriate).

## Additional Consultations When Proposing Major Changes

When proposing major changes (see section 7.5 below for guidance on what constitutes a ‘major’ change) to approved courses of study, Schools should in the first instance consult the relevant Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience/Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience and the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office with an outline of the proposal. This consultation should be undertaken by the Divisional Course Lead allocated to the proposal. Such proposals do not require initial consideration by 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 courses*.*

## Documentation Arising When Major Changes Are Approved

Should the relevant DDESE/DDGSSE be satisfied with the outline proposal for making substantial changes to an existing course of study, they will recommend the development of a revised course specification (with changes shown as tracked-changes), the drafting of any proposed new modules and, where necessary, an amended module mapping document. **An account detailing the changes to the** course **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 Forum minutes).** This documentation will be uploaded to the online Course and Module System (CMAS) by the Divisional QA and Accreditations Manager. The DDESE or DDGSSE will convene a Course Curriculum Development Team, as detailed at section 4.1 above, in order to consider the proposal. In such cases, the consideration given to the proposal by the Course Curriculum Development Team will take place virtually via CMAS.

## Minimum Documentary Requirements for a Change to be Put Forward

As a minimum requirement, commentary on the proposal by Course Curriculum Development Team members will be required from the Divisional Course Lead and the representative DoE/DoGS from a different subject area. Where such commentary has been provided and the DDESE/DDGSSE is satisfied with the soundness of the submission and the rigour of the scrutiny provided, they may approve any new/amended modules associated with the proposal and authorise the submission of the course specification and the module mapping document to the Course Approval Sub-committee (CASC) for approval***.* The Division’s account detailing the changes to the** course **and the rationale for their introduction will also be provided to CASC. CASC will consider the proposal as part of its standard cycle of meetings. The** Divisional **Course Lead will be invited to attend the relevant meeting of CASC.**

## What Constitutes a Major Change

7.5.1 A major change to a course specification includes:

* Any amendment that constitutes a material change to the course information[[14]](#footnote-15).
* Any amendment resulting in a change to the course 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 course, as this will necessarily involve a change in learning outcomes.
* A change to, or the addition of, a different campus for delivery of the course. 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.

7.5.2 Where there is doubt as to whether a proposed change to a course specification constitutes a minor or major change, advice should be sought from the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office (qaco@kent.ac.uk).

## Proposals for Minor Changes

Proposals for minor changes to approved courses of study, which involve no revision of the course aims and intended learning outcomes, should be uploaded to the online Course and Module System (CMAS) in the form of a revised course specification (with revisions shown as tracked-changes) and a brief rationale of the changes made. The relevant DDESE/DDGSSE is authorised to approve such changes.

## Changes to Joint Honours Courses

Where a change to a joint honours course is required, the course owning School must communicate with a non-owning department and:

* assess the implications of the changes on existing students
* agree a proposal for the management of existing cohorts
* agree responsibility for communicating with existing students and applicants. The evidence of such consultations should be available on the Course and Module Approval System (CMAS)

The course owning School may not implement its changes for the intended year where:

* non-owning School has significant concerns that have not been resolved and/or
* sufficient time has not been allowed for the re-approval of the respective specifications of the non-owning School (modifications of all affected programme specifications must take place at the same time as those of the owning School).

# Inclusive Curricula

## Fulfilment of University Inclusivity Policies

In accordance with the University's commitment to accessibility and meeting the [Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations (2018)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/952/introduction/made), new courses or any substantially amended courses, must satisfy the Course Approval Sub-committee (CASC) that they reflect the University’s policies for developing inclusive and innovative practices in learning, teaching and assessment.

## Anticipatory Adjustments

In developing new curricula Divisions are required to identify anticipatory adjustments made on grounds of inclusivity and consider how best to deliver these through designing learning and teaching experiences that are inclusive by design. [Kent Inclusive Practices (KIPs)](https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/accessible-content/kent-inclusive-practices) are the University’s approved means to achieve this. In addition, the accessible content guides should be consulted to produce documents, presentations, video, and web pages that meet regulation requirements.

## Student Support and Wellbeing Representative

To advise on these areas of development, a representative of Student Support and Wellbeing will participate in the meetings of the Course Curriculum Development Team and the meetings of CASC. More information about inclusive curriculum design principles can be found in the module specification inclusive principles (See Annex B: *Approval and Withdrawal of Modules,* Appendix A).

## Digital Accessibility Information

[The Kent accessibility pages](https://www.kent.ac.uk/accessibility) are the main source of digital accessibility information and will be regularly updated.

# Course Withdrawal

## Annual Divisional Review

Divisions will review annually the portfolio of courses that they offer and will make decisions about the retention and withdrawal of those courses (see [Annex E](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-e) of the Code of Practice).

## Condition for Automatic Consideration of Course Withdrawal

Any course of study that does not register any students for 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 courses of study that have not recorded any student registrations over a three-year period[[15]](#footnote-16). Divisions will be required to annotate and return the list by a stated deadline, indicating which if any of the courses should be retained. Consideration should be given to any students (both FT or PT) who are currently on a year abroad, on a placement, resitting, have deferred or are intermitting . Any courses 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 course 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 course for a further academic year. Where the DDESE/DDGSSE is not satisfied, the course will be withdrawn.

## Reporting to CASC

Courses withdrawn through this exercise will be reported as such to CASC, which will formally record the course withdrawal. The withdrawal will be reported through the CASC minutes for action by i) Marketing, Outreach, Recruitment and Admissions (MORA),which will inform any applicants of the discontinuation of the course, and ii) the Central Student Administration Office (CSAO), which will amend the status of the course accordingly. Should there be any applicants for the course in question, consideration must be given as to whether the withdrawal is compliant with [CMA guidance](https://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/cma/index.html). The withdrawal will be reported by CASC to ESEB/GRCB, as appropriate.

## Withdrawing a Course Outside of the Normal Annual Exercise

Outside of the annual exercise set out at section 9.1 above, where a Board of Studies requests the withdrawal of a course 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 arrangements for allowing existing students to complete their studies (both FT and PT, including any students who are currently on a year abroad, on a placement, resitting, have deferred or are intermitting) in line with OfS and CMA guidance, and uploaded to the online Course and Module System (CMAS) for consideration by the relevant DDESE/DDGSSE. Where the DDESE/DDGSSE sanctions the requested withdrawal of the course, the outcome will be reported to CASC, which will formally record the course withdrawal. The withdrawal will be reported through the CASC minutes for action by i) Marketing, Outreach, Recruitment and Admissions (MORA), which will inform any applicants of the discontinuation of the course, and ii) the Central Student Administration Office (CSAO), which will amend the status of the course accordingly. Should there be any applicants for the course in question, consideration must be given as to whether the withdrawal is compliant with CMA guidance. The withdrawal will be reported by CASC to ESEB/GRCB, as appropriate.

# Course Title Changes

## Major Amendment

A course title change is regarded as a material change by the CMA and thus will be a major amendment.

## Requirement for a Rationale

When a proposed title change is submitted to the Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience/Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience for approval it should be accompanied by a rationale setting out the reason for the change. A proposed title change may require discussion with another School, for example, where it is similar to the title of a course already offered by that School. The discussion and outcome must be included in the rationale.

## Submission for Consideration and Approval

The process for amendments to courses, including consideration of CMA implications, outlined in section 7 above must be followed.

# Course Suspension

## Process

Where a course of study is to be suspended, the Division must prepare a written rationale, outlining the reasons for not continuing to offer the course, the period of time for which it is to be suspended (see 11.4 below), whether any offers have been made to applicants and details of the arrangements for allowing existing students to complete their studies (both FT and PT, including any students who are currently on a year abroad, on a placement, resitting, have deferred or are intermitting), and submit it to the Divisional Director of Education and UG Student Experience or Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience for consideration. Where the relevant DDESE/DDGSSE agrees to the suspension of the course they will ensure it is reported to QACO so that a record of the suspension can be made. The Division will report the suspension to i) MORA, which will inform any applicants of the suspension of the course, and ii) the CSAO, which will amend the status of the course accordingly. Should there be any applicants or existing students (both FT or PT, including those who are currently on a year abroad, on a placement, resitting, have deferred or are intermitting) for the course in question, consideration must be given as to whether the suspension is compliant with CMA guidance.

## Reinstating a Suspended Course

When a suspended course of study is to be offered once more, the Division will report this to QACO, MORA and CSAO, which will amend the status of the course accordingly.

## Process for Temporary Suspension

Where a course 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 section 11.1. Instead, the Division should liaise with MORA in the first instance to discuss the implications of suspension. Once MORA has confirmed that the suspension is appropriate, the Division should inform QACO and CSAO.

## Maximum Time a Course can Remain Suspended Before Withdrawal

A course of study may be suspended for no more than two years. After two years if the course in question is not run it must be formally withdrawn (refer to section 9.2 above). Course suspensions will be considered during Annual Course Portfolio Reviews (see [Annex E](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-e)).

1. N.B. While Professional Doctorates lead ultimately to research degree awards, the hybrid taught/research nature of their curriculum may make it beneficial for the proposers of new Professional Doctorate courses to opt into the process of approval set out in this annex, rather than the cognate process set out in the Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Research Degrees*.* The consent of the Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience should be sought in such cases [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See [Kent Inclusive Practices (KIPs)](https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentsupport/accessibility/inclusive-practice.html) for examples of mainstream adjustments to improve access for all. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. See [Kent’s Accessibility Guidance](https://www.kent.ac.uk/accessibility) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. See [Appendix A of Annex B](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-b)*,* which outlines inclusive design principles for assessment. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Please contact headofdall@kent.ac.uk. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. 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, See [Annex O](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-o) of this Code of Practice. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. See [Kent Inclusive Practices (KIPs)](https://www.kent.ac.uk/studentsupport/accessibility/inclusive-practice.html) for examples of mainstream adjustments to improve access for all. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. See Annex C: Appendix H (for UG) or Appendix I (for PGT) of the [Code of Practice](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-c) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. See Annex C: Appendix D (Guidance) and Appendix F (pro forma) of the [Code of Practice](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-c) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Refer to [Credit Framework Annex 2: *Level Descriptors*](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/credit-framework#annex-2)for details [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. See Appendix A of Annex B, which outlines inclusive design principles required at the module specification stage to ensure consistency of approach across course and module design processes. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. See Appendix A of Annex B, which outlines inclusive design principles required at the module specification stage to ensure consistency of approach across course and module design processes. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Refer to the [CMA information and guidance for staff at the University of Kent for guidance.](https://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/cma/index.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Such lists to be requested from the Data Quality Team. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)