

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

Document Administration

Document Title:	Code of Practice for Changes to Validated Programmes
Document Category:	Code of Practice
Version Number:	2.3
Status:	Approved
Reason for development:	To address the process of changes required to validated programmes.
Scope:	This procedure applies to staff and students.
Author / developer:	Head of Quality and Regulatory Compliance
Owner	Registrar
Assessment: (where relevant)	Tick relevant assessments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equality Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Information Governance <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Governance
Consultation: (where relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Trade Unions via HR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students via Bishop Grosseteste University Students' Union <input type="checkbox"/> Any relevant external statutory bodies
Authorised by (Board):	Senate
Date first authorised:	October 2016
Date current version authorised:	22 July 2019
Date current version effective from:	October 2019
Date next review due to commence*:	October 2022
Document location:	University Website
Document dissemination / communications plan	University website, Staff Portal, Student Portal.
Document control:	All printed versions of this document are classified as uncontrolled. A controlled version is available from the <i>University website</i> .
Alternative format:	If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact governance@bishopg.ac.uk

***Please note this document remains valid until formally revoked or replaced by the University.**



Version Control Table

Version Number	Date Authorised	Summary of Key Changes
2.2	October 2016	
2.3	22 July 2019	Updates to terminology

Introduction

1. The procedures for making changes to validated programmes/subjects are designed to allow programmes/subjects to be revised in the light of annual reviews, external examiner reports etc., while ensuring that the integrity of the validated programme/subject is maintained.
2. These provisions are designed to follow the precepts and guidance contained in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, specifically the core practices: *The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality course, the provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience and the provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.*
3. It is often necessary to make changes to current programmes outside of the cycle of validation and review. Such changes may range from updating content of individual modules to a major redesign of the programme curriculum. The approval route for the different types of modifications are described below:

Modification	Notification	Approval process	Notes
<i>Module Housekeeping</i>			
Updating of set texts ¹	Quality	See Programme Development Manual	Please note: the Library will need to be informed of the change
Updating of content and references	Quality	See Programme Development Manual	Where these do not alter the rationale, aims, learning outcomes or the assessment strategy of the module.
Textual corrections	Quality	See Programme Development Manual	
<hr/>			
Modification	Level of Approval	Approval process	Notes
<i>Minor Modifications</i>			
Addition, deletion or substitution of modules	Quality Assurance Committee	See Programme Development Manual	If the proposed changes are made to more than 40 credits in any one level of the award, or to more than 180 credits within the entire award, the programme will be subject to revalidation. In cases of dispute, Quality will have the final say of

¹ As defined in *Guidance Notes for the Creation and Maintenance of Reading Lists*



			what constitutes 'one third' or 'half' of the total programme/subject area or pathway. It should be noted that when a module is reassigned to a different level the learning outcomes of the module should be changed to reflect the level at which the module is to be delivered. Where it is proposed to adopt a module from another programme, the programme intending to import the module must seek approval from the relevant Programme Lead/School.
Changes to the semester of delivery of a module	Quality Assurance Committee	See Programme Development Manual	If the proposed changes are made to more than 40 credits in any one level of the award, or to more than 180 credits within the entire award, the programme will be subject to an Internal Scrutiny Event.
Changes to the defining features of a module	Quality Assurance Committee	See Programme Development Manual	Defining features of a module are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • title • aims • level • credit tariffs • learning outcomes assessment method and weighting between components of assessment
Changes to the assessment of a module	Quality Assurance Committee	See Programme Development Manual	This includes changes that have an effect on the workload of the students e.g. changes in the length of the assessment/examination. This excludes the minor changes noted under module housekeeping.
Changes to the content of a module other than minor updating	Quality Assurance Committee	See Programme Development Manual	
Adding a part-time mode of delivery	PMG followed by Quality	Internal Scrutiny Event	Approval mainly relates to timetabling and resourcing issues



	Assurance Committee		
Changes in the medium of delivery: e.g. the introduction of distance learning, e-learning or web-based delivery	PMG followed by Quality Assurance Committee	Internal Scrutiny Event	Approval mainly relates to resourcing issues
Adding an off-site/flying faculty (UK only) delivery	PMG followed by Quality Assurance Committee	Internal Scrutiny Event	
A proposal to change the pattern of delivery from semesters to terms or whole year delivery or the reverse	Quality Assurance Committee /Academic Enhancement Committee	Internal Scrutiny Event	
<i>Major Modifications</i>			
Change to the title of an award/adding a new award title to a programme	Senate	Validation Event	Changes to the title of an award require prior approval from the Portfolio Management Group.
Changes to the programme aim or outcomes	Senate	Validation Event	
Any changes involving more than 40 credits in any one level of the award, or to more than 180 credits within the entire award/programme	Senate	Validation Event	
The addition of new pathways or options to the programme/subject where the options constitute more than one third of a level	Senate	Validation Event	

Module Housekeeping

(minor modifications to programmes and modules which do not require formal Committee approval)

4. Programme teams may make certain minor changes to the programme or subject by asking for advice from Quality, who hold the definitive copies of programme and module specifications. These are
 - (i) up-dating of set texts². (N.B. The Library will need to be informed of the change);
 - (ii) updating of content and references, where these do not alter the rationale, aims, outcomes or assessment strategy of the module;
 - (iii) minor changes in assessment affecting assignments or examinations where the assessment strategy for the module and the weighting of the component is not affected: e.g. a change in the task of an assignment or the timing of an assignment; and
 - (iv) textual corrections.

All changes must be made in line with the principles set out in the Programme Development Manual and be approved by Quality. When the housekeeping changes have been approved, the programme team must also amend any handbook copies etc. which may have been based on the old specification.

Minor Modifications to modules which require Committee approval.

5. The following changes may be made under the terms of this *Code of Practice* and require not only liaison with Quality as described above but also approval by the relevant School Board and the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC):
 - (i) the addition of one or more new modules, the addition of option modules, the replacement of one or more existing modules or the reassignment of one or more modules to another level, provided that the proposed change does not involve more than one third (40 credits) of the programme/subject area or pathway in any one year and not more than half (180 credits) the total programme or subject is changed between periodic reviews. In cases of dispute, Quality will have the final say of what constitutes 'one third' or 'half' of the total programme/subject area or pathway. It should be noted that when a module is reassigned to a different level the outcomes of the module should be changed to reflect the level at which the module is to be delivered. Where it is proposed to adopt a module from another programme, the programme intending to import the module must seek approval;
 - (ii) changes to the defining features of a module, e.g. title, rationale, aims, level, credit tariffs and learning outcomes of a module;

² As defined in *Guidance Notes for the Creation and Maintenance of Reading Lists*



- (iii) changes to the semester of delivery of a module, e.g. moving delivery from Semester 1 to Semester 2, or from single semester to full year delivery;
- (iv) changes to the core content of a module other than minor updating;
- (v) changes to the assessment of a module other than those noted under Module Housekeeping. This includes changes that have an effect on the workload of the students e.g. changes in the length of the assessment/examination;
- (vi) where there are changes to the assessment type information supplied to perspective and current students. E.g. where there are CMA requirements to make students and/or applicants aware of the changes;
- (vii) adding a part-time mode of delivery, where approval mainly relates to timetabling and resourcing issues; and
- (viii) The creation/addition of a new medium of delivery: e.g. the introduction of distance learning, e-learning or web-based delivery.

All changes must be made with the principles set out in the Programme Development Manual.

Major Modifications

6. The following changes cannot be made through the *Code of Practice for Changes to Validated Programmes* and are defined as major modifications:

- (i) any change to the title of an award or the addition of a new award title to a programme;
- (ii) any changes to the programme aims or outcomes;
- (iii) any changes involving more than one third of the programme/subject in any one year or one half of the total programme/subject through the addition or replacement of modules;
- (iv) the addition of new pathways or options to the programme/subject where the options constitute more than one third of a level; and
- (v) a proposal to change the pattern of delivery from semesters to terms or whole year delivery or the reverse.

7. Major programme modifications are approved through a University led validation event organised by Quality upon notification of approval to proceed from the Portfolio Management Group (PMG). PMG will be notified of all forthcoming approval events for major programme modifications.

Procedure for Completing Changes to Validated Programmes/Subjects

Module housekeeping

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

Minor Modification requiring approval

10. At the start of the process of planning any changes that would result in changes in module or programme specifications, academic staff should contact Quality, who will send the relevant specification to the academic staff electronically or otherwise allow the use of an electronic copy of the document. Any changes must be made in tracked changes in the electronic copy.
11. The proposed change(s) must be submitted on the appropriate pro-forma to the relevant School Board for approval. The minutes of the School Board must clearly indicate that the nature of the change(s) (from/to) and the rationale for each change has been discussed and approved by the Board.
12. The agreement of both the External Examiner and relevant students must be sought for the change and written confirmation in the form of letter or e-mail must be appended to the pro-forma.
13. Where the proposed changes affect one or more joint programmes the agreement of the relevant Programme Leaders must be sought for the change and written confirmation in the form of a letter or e-mail must be appended to the pro-forma.
14. The Head of School will notify the Academic Quality Manager of the change(s), attaching a copy of the relevant minute of the School Board, evidence of external examiner, student and, where necessary, joint Programme Leader approval together with any necessary supporting documentation including the module/programme specification with clearly tracked changes.
15. The Academic Quality Manager will present the proposed changes to the relevant subcommittee of Senate and will notify all relevant departments following its approval.
16. A copy of any changed specification will be sent to any collaborative partner approved to deliver the programme as appropriate.

Major Modification resulting in Review/Re-validation

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

16. The process for the approval of major modifications follows that required for the validation of new programmes. However, there are a number of differences which are set out below:

16.1 The programme viability document presented to PMG is different from that required for the validation of a new programme and must contain the following:

- a reflective and evidenced account of the operation of the programme(s) since initial validation or the last review. This document should draw on such sources as; annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports, Programme Board minutes and where appropriate, PSRB or other external reports. At the pre-meeting for the review event, it will be agreed which of these source documents will be circulated to the panel and which will be made available to the panel at the review meeting;
- a summary of any changes made to the programme since it was first validated or last re-validated. These are the minor incremental changes that are approved through QAC; and
- an explanation of the reasons for the review/re-validation and the rationale for any proposed changes to the programme(s) which the panel is being asked to consider as part of the review/re-validation event.

16.2 The template for the review/revalidation viability document can be found on SharePoint.

Amount and Timing of Changes to Validated Programmes

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



provided by the University also goes for current students, who have made their choice of university and programme based on information provided to them before their being admitted as students or before their making a choice of a module. Because of quality-related and legal implications, major changes in particular should not normally be made late in the academic cycle immediately preceding the delivery of a course, or of a module. Quality can advise on appropriate timescales for making changes to validated provision. In certain cases, Quality and/or a suitable Senate committee may refuse a change that could have substantial quality-related or legal implications.

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

Collaborative Provision

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