



leeds metropolitan university

Academic Principles and Regulations

Section B2: Academic Approval

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SECTION B2: ACADEMIC APPROVAL

B2.1 Academic Approval: General

B2.1.1 University Requirements

The University requires that all Schemes or Courses leading to an award of the University undergo a formal process of academic approval.

B2.1.2 Methods of Approval

The University requires that the process of academic approval follows a prescribed format appropriate to the nature and complexity of the proposal.

B2.1.3 University Regulations

The University requires that all awards of the University are subject to the overarching principles of the University.

B2.1.4 Aim of Academic Approval

The overall aim of academic approval is to secure for students a high quality of educational and academic experience.

B2.1.5 Peer Review

A system of peer review will be applied to the approval of all taught Schemes and Courses leading to awards of the University.

B2.1.6 Approval Panel

Academic approval of proposed Schemes and Courses is undertaken by a panel of peers drawn from:

- the University,
 - other academic institutions
- and
- from external organisations, where relevant

B2.1.7 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

Where a Course is accredited by a professional, statutory or regulatory body, the University, where appropriate, will seek to conduct approval and review on an appropriate joint basis.

B2.1.8 Requirements for Academic Approval

Academic approval must ensure that:

- Schemes and Courses are designed and operated in accordance with the University's Regulations
- the human and physical resources are available and the environment within which the Scheme or Course is offered is satisfactory
- the standards and quality of teaching are appropriate to the award at the relevant level

- Attention is given to relevant external reference points e.g. subject benchmark statements
- there is an agreed route for progression to an honours degree (for foundation degrees only)

B2.1.9 Duration of Approval

A Scheme or Course will be subject to periodic review within a 5 year period from the date of approval.

B2.1.10 Contained Awards: General Provisions

All approved Schemes and Courses leading to a target award will contain a series of contained awards at different levels unless specific provision is made to exclude these awards in the Scheme or Course document and approved by the Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement.

B2.1.11 Contained Awards: Degree with Honours

Where the final award is a Degree with Honours, the approved contained awards are the:

- Degree
 - Diploma of Higher Education
- and
- Certificate of Higher Education

These contained awards are required to have discrete academic coherence.

B2.1.12 Contained Award: Masters Degree

Where the final award is a Masters degree, the approved contained awards are:

- Postgraduate Diploma
- Postgraduate Certificate

These contained awards are required to have discrete academic coherence.

B2.1.13 Other Contained Awards

All other contained awards are subject to academic approval. Contained awards are required to have discrete academic coherence.

B2.1.14 Title of Contained Awards

The title of the contained award(s) will be the same as the title of the target award unless an alternative title is specified in the approved Scheme or Course programme specification.

B2.1.15 Combined Subject Awards

The titles of combined subject awards shall follow the conventions set out in Section A3.3.6

B2.2. Academic Approval: Faculty

B2.2.1 Responsibility for Academic Approval

The responsibility for the academic approval process is delegated to Faculties.

B2.2.2 Notification of Planned Approvals

The Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean must provide the Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement with an annual Schedule of Approval and Review for the entire faculty portfolio for the current academic year by 30 September.

B2.2.3 Schedule of Academic Approval and Review

The Schedule of Academic Approval and Review is derived from the University's corporate student information system(s) and reflects the current operational portfolio.

B2.3 Academic Approval: Initial Stages

B2.3.1 Strategic Planning Approval Required

No arrangements for the formal process of academic approval of a proposal may be made until strategic planning approval has been obtained.

B2.3.2 Initial Stages

The process of academic approval is initiated and the proposed scheme and course initially developed through a Development Team supported by an Advisory Group in accordance with guidance issued by the Registrar and Secretary's Office.

B2.3.3 Development Team and Advisory Group

The development of new academic provision is undertaken by a Development Team and is supported by an Advisory Group, membership of which is approved by the Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean. Detailed work leading to academic approval or establishment of the Advisory Group should not take place until strategic planning approval has been obtained.

B2.3.4 Responsibilities of the Development Team

The Development Team is responsible for:

- the development of the proposal
- the preparation of the documentation for academic approval
- liaison with Quality, Standards Review and Enhancement for guidance on regulations
- liaison with the Library to consider the resource implications of the proposal.

- working to guidance produced by Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement in relation to academic approval
- liaison with the appropriate University faculty (or partner College or other higher education institution, as appropriate) in respect of arrangements for an appropriate progression to an honours degree. This should not exceed 1.3 years of full time equivalent study (for foundation degrees only).

B2.3.5 Role of the Advisory Group

The role of the Advisory Group is developmental, to act as an independent source of criticism and advice during the development process. The Advisory Group should ensure that the Development Team has considered key issues relating to:

- assessment, learning and teaching strategies
- academic infrastructure
- policy issues such as equality and diversity, cross cultural capability
- external reference points e.g. subject benchmark statements
- professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (where relevant).

B2.3.6 Limits on the Role of the Advisory Group

The Advisory Group does not have the authority to:

- impose conditions on the Development Team
- or
- prevent the submission of documentation for academic approval.

B2.3.7 Membership of the Advisory Group

The Advisory Group will include:

- Senior Academic Member of Staff from the University but beyond the Faculty developing the provision (Chair)
- Academic Member of Staff from the Faculty but beyond the Scheme or Course under development
- Member(s) of Support Staff from the Faculty developing the provision. Where an advisory group has been established the Chair will be a member of the approval panel.

B2.4 Academic Approval: Faculty Consideration

B2.4.1 Initial Consideration of the Proposal

The Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean is responsible for the initial consideration of the academic approval proposal.

B2.4.2 Submission for Academic Approval Documentation

After scrutinising the approval documentation against the above criteria, the Dean or Associate Dean is responsible for submitting the approval documentation to the Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement at least eight weeks prior to the approval event.

B2.4.3 Feedback from the Registrar and Secretary

The Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement will feedback to the Dean or Associate Dean within two weeks of receipt of the documentation about further progress of academic approval. This outcome must be reported to Faculty Board or its committees for information and appropriate action.

B2.4.4 Feedback Outcomes

The Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement will make one of the following decisions in relation to whether the proposal has sufficient and clear documentation for full consideration by the Approval Panel:

- To recommend the proposal continues to an academic approval event
- To recommend the proposal continues to an academic approval event subject to changes to the documentation (these will be detailed in the feedback to the Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean)
- to recommend that the proposal does not continue to an academic approval event and is re-presented to the Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean pending further preparation of documentation. The approval event will need to be re-scheduled and documentation re-submitted in accordance with the timescales outlined above.

B2.5 Academic Approval: Panel, Documentation and Outcomes

B2.5.1 Composition of an Approval Panel

The Chair must be selected from an approved list of academic staff who has attended relevant staff development. The approved list is available from the Registrar and Secretary's Office.

B2.5.2 Membership of an Approval Panel

The Membership of an approval panel will be appropriate to the quality assurance requirements of the programme(s) under consideration in accordance with guidance issued by the Registrar and Secretary's office.

The following members are common to all panels:

- A Member of academic staff from the University but not from the Faculty responsible for the proposal who has attended relevant staff development(Chair)
- A Member of Academic Staff external to the University from the subject area related to the proposal (External Academic Panel Member)
- Other members will be required and assigned as appropriate to provision under consideration

B2.5.3 Documentation

The Panel will be provided with adequate documentation to support their consideration. This will include, as a minimum:

- Briefing Statement
- Scheme Document, if applicable
- Course Document
- Programme Specification
- Mapping of subject benchmark statements
- Module Specifications
- Admissions profile
- Staff CVs
- Statement of Resources
- Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body Requirements, if applicable

B2.5.4 Approval Panel Decisions

The Approval Panel can make one of the following decisions:

- to approve the proposal
- to approve the proposal but with specified conditions and/or recommendations
- not to approve the proposal.

B2.5.5 Approval without Conditions: Information to Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement

On approval without conditions the Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement must receive a Final Approval Form in order that the provision may be entered on the appropriate University database which allows students to be registered. The following documentation must be provided:

- Final Approval Form
- Scheme Document, if applicable
- Course Document
- Programme Specification
- Module Specifications
- Admissions Profile
- Confirmed JACS code
- Confirmed event report

B2.5.6 Approval with Conditions

The Approval Panel is responsible for ensuring that any conditions for approval have been met and for establishing the deadline for meeting conditions. Students may not be registered until conditions to approval have been met.

B2.5.7 Information to the Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement

The Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean is responsible for informing the Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement that the conditions have been met, in order that the provision may be entered on the appropriate University database and allow students to be registered. Documentation detailed in B2.5.5, Approval without Conditions: Information to Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement, must be provided.

B2.5.8 Approval with Recommendations

The Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean must ensure that due consideration is given to any recommendations from the Approval Panel within six months of commencement of the Scheme or Course. The Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement must receive a copy of the six month report and extract of corresponding minutes of Faculty Board or its committees where the six month report was considered.

B2.6 Criteria for Academic Approval

B2.6.1 Standard of University Awards

The University is responsible for the articulation, maintenance and assessment of the standard of its awards and the quality of learning opportunities. It aims to fulfil these responsibilities by appropriate quality control and assurance methods at all stages of the approval process.

B2.6.2 Approval Panel Consideration

The primary objective of academic approval [see Section B2. 1.8] is to establish that the proposed Scheme or Course:

- is of a standard appropriate to the award(s) offered
 - will be delivered to a standard appropriate to the award(s) offered
- and
- that the students will receive a worthwhile and relevant education.

To enable the Panel to consider the proposed provision the following information should be provided:

(A) Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the proposed Scheme or Course in relation to currency, comparability, national standards (including benchmark statements), professional standards (if applicable), general educational objectives, anticipated student outcomes and the specific programme rationale.

(B) Learning Outcomes

The relationship and consistency between anticipated learning outcomes and evidence of achievement (assessment outcomes) and the validity of the teaching and learning methods by which these will be achieved.

(C) Structure and Content of the Scheme or Course

The structure of the programme in relation to the given aims and objectives and anticipated learning outcomes.

The distinctions between any different awards that may be offered; the sequencing and level of content; and the provisions for any supervised work experience or placement learning should also be considered.

Particular attention may focus on the inter-relations between subject areas; core/optional modules and the academic rationale for pre-requisite modules.

(D) Learning Support and Resources

The adequacy of the learning support mechanism to enable the students to achieve the anticipated learning outcomes; and that the level of resources is sufficient to deliver the programme as described.

(E) Regulations for Assessment

These will be those of the University, and, where relevant, those of any Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body in question. Any additional requirements should be clearly identified, their rationale explained, and specific approval be given to them. Where there are proposed variations to the University Regulations they should be presented to the Registrar and Secretary via the Head of Quality, Standards, Review and Enhancement for approval in accordance with B2.4.2.

(F) Admissions

These will be in accordance with University requirements and processes. Any specific requirements or provisions should be clearly identified and specific approval be given to them. All admissions profiles must be presented to the Registrar and Secretary via the Head of

Admissions at least eight weeks prior to an approval event for scrutiny and approval.

The Head of Admissions will inform the Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean of the outcome of the scrutiny within 2 weeks of receipt of any admissions profiles. This outcome must be reported to Faculty Board or its committees for information and appropriate action.

(G) Programme Evaluation and Enhancement

These will be in accordance with University requirements and processes for Annual Review and Periodic Review. Any specific requirements or provisions should be clearly identified and specific approval be given to them e.g. Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements.

B2.7 Academic Approval of Individual Programmes of Study

B2.7.1 Individual Programmes of Study

The University has regulations which allow students to follow an individual programme of study leading to one of its awards.

B2.7.2 Approval

The framework for the provision of individual programmes of study within Schemes or Courses and the awards to which they lead are subject to both strategic planning approval and academic approval.

B2.7.3 Purpose of Approval

Individual programmes of study are subject to scrutiny and academic approval by an appropriately constituted approvals board to ensure the coherence of the proposed learning and assessment programme appropriate to award outcomes.

B2.7.4 Responsibility for Approval of Individual Programmes of Study

Responsibility for the approval of individual programmes of study lies at Faculty level.

B2.7.5 Responsibility for Quality Assurance of Individual Programmes of Study

Quality assurance responsibilities for individual programmes of study lie with the Faculty concerned.

B2.7.6 Approvals Board

The Faculty responsibilities identified above are fulfilled through appropriate membership, functions and operational criteria of an Approvals Board.

B2.7.7 Role of the Approvals Board

The role of the Approvals Board is to:

(A) Student Programmes

Receive, examine and, where appropriate, approve student programmes in relation to the award in accordance with the general criteria set out in Section B2.7.10.

(B) Accreditation of Prior or Concurrent Learning (AP(E)L)

Receive, examine and make decisions upon proposals for the accreditation of prior or concurrent learning undertaken or being undertaken, subject to University parameters.

(C) Review

Keep under review the above functions and to report annually to the Faculty Board or its committees on their operation.

B2.7.8 Student Submissions

Students constructing an individual programme of study are required to complete a documented statement, normally as an outcome of completing a programme planning module.

B2.7.9 Examination for Approval

This statement, known as the Proposal of Study Programme for (award), along with any supporting evidence, is examined for approval by the Approvals Board.

B2.7.10 General Criteria for Approval

The Proposal of Study Programme will be considered for approval against the following general criteria:

(A) Regulations for the Award

The proposed programme must fulfil the University Regulations for the award.

(B) Learning Objectives

The proposal must include a statement of learning objectives which may have arisen from any programme planning module or other academic counselling process.

(C) Diet of Modules

The proposal must set out the diet of modules proposed in order to demonstrate coherence in relation to (A) and (B) above.

(D) Rationale: Sequence and Progression

The proposal must set out the rationale for the sequence of modules to demonstrate progression in relation to (A) and (B) above.

(E) Accreditation of Prior or Concurrent Learning
Where the proposal includes a request for the accreditation of prior or concurrent learning, the Approvals Board must be satisfied that this is in accordance with the University parameters.