



# **HE Academic Regulations**

## **2019**

### **Section B:**

### **Assurance of Academic Standards**

### **Approval, Monitoring and Review**



# **NCG Academic Regulations 2019**

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#### **B1 Approval of awards**

##### **B1.1 General**

- B1.1.1 A formal process for approval is required for all programmes. All programmes offered are approved through the Approval and Validation Process approved by HE Academic Board. The principles and procedures for the design and development of programmes, which include those for design and development of programmes in approval, are detailed in the HE Quality Reference Manual and must be followed.
- B1.1.2 The design and approval of new programmes and the review/revalidation of existing programmes will include assessment of the extent to which the programme is inclusive of students with disabilities and other protected characteristics.
- B1.1.3 A programme approved in one college must be validated for deliver in another college or collaborative partner.
- B1.1.4 To assure quality and standards, academic approval of all programmes is taken through a system of peer review.
- B1.1.5 Continued approval is determined through Periodic Review which takes place for all programmes every five years. This period may be extended by up to two years where the HE Academic Board is convinced that this is necessary and that there are no issues relating to the on-going delivery of the programme affecting academic standards or the student experience.

##### **B1.2 Programmes**

- B1.2.1 The aims of programmes must include the development, to the level required for the award, of a coherent body of knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to the field of study and reflecting academic developments in that field.
- B1.2.2 The aims of programmes will specify in more detail the knowledge, skills and competencies to be developed in the programme and evaluated in the assessments.

#### **B2 Strategic Planning Approval**



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- B2.1 The institution requires that all proposed academic provision is subject to Strategic Planning Approval by the HE Academic Board before it can be included within the relevant College or collaborative partners' portfolio. This includes:
- New awards
  - New forms of delivery
- B2.2 All strategic planning approval will be conducted according to the agreed procedures, which are reviewed annually, published in the HE Quality Reference Manual and approved by HE Academic Board.
- B2.3 Documentation for strategic planning approval must, as a minimum, include the following information:
- The proposed title and the target award
  - The proposed structure of the award (e.g. College, programme modules)
  - The proposed mode(s) of delivery (e.g. full-time, part-time, sandwich, distance, etc.)
  - The proposed start date for the first cohort
  - The location of the proposed award within the existing portfolio of provision
  - Its congruence with the strategic direction of academic provision within NCG
  - The marketing rationale and market demand
  - Employer contribution and involvement
  - The minimum and maximum number of anticipated students
  - Broad feasibility and costings projections, including requirements for academic and support staffing
  - A progression route to an honours degree (if the proposed award is a foundation degree), agreed in principle, with supporting documentary evidence of curriculum-mapping having taken place.
- B2.4 Outcome of Strategic Planning Approval
- Strategic planning approval is the formal agreement by the institution of the following, in respect of the proposed provision:
- The proposed title of the award
  - The proposed structure of the award
  - The planned start date of the first cohort



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- The proposed provision may proceed to Academic Approval.

#### **B3 Programme development**

- B3.1 The development of new academic provision is undertaken by a Programme Development Team and is supported, where appropriate, by an Advisory Group drawn from outside the development team. Detailed work leading to academic approval or establishment of the Advisory Group should not normally take place until strategic planning approval has been obtained.
- B3.2 The Programme Development Team is responsible for:
- The development of the proposal
  - The preparation of the documentation for academic approval
  - Liaison with HE Registry for guidance on regulations
  - Working to guidance produced by HE Registry in relation to academic approval.
- B3.3 Programmes with registered student must be approved and validated.
- B3.4 New programmes that have received strategic planning approval but have not yet been approved and validated may be marketed and promoted provided such activity clearly specifies that the programmes are 'subject to validation'.

#### **B4 Programme Academic Approval**

##### **B4.1 General**

- B4.1.1 Approval of a programme is subject to strategic planning approval and academic approval.
- B4.1.2 The primary objective of academic approval is to establish that the proposed programme is of a standard appropriate to the award(s) offered, will be delivered to a standard appropriate to the awards(s) offered and that the students will receive a worthwhile and relevant education.
- B4.1.3 Programme approval may be given:
- Without time limit up to the next Periodic Review date



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- For a specified period
- With academic or administrative conditions
- With recommendations.

**B4.1.4** A programme will be subject to periodic review within a five year period from the date of the approval.

**B4.1.5** All approved programmes 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 programme document.

#### **B4.2 Requirements for Academic Approval**

**B4.2.1** Academic approval must ensure that:

- Programmes are designed and operated in accordance with HE Academic Regulations
- The standards of the institution's awards are maintained
- The human and physical resources are available and the environment within which the programme is offered is satisfactory
- The standards and quality of teaching are maintained, and, where possible, enhanced
- Attention is given to the relevant external reference points, e.g. subject and qualification benchmark statements
- There is an agreed route for progression to an honours degree (for foundation degrees only).

#### **B4.3 Requirements for Assessment for Approval of an Award**

**B4.3.1** The assessment for a programme must state the basis on which the students will be assessed of an award. The assessment will be related to:

- The general educational aims of the programme
- The programme specific aims
- The level of the award.

**B4.3.2** Assessment regulations for an award must:

- Identify all the modules that will be assessed, including any assessed supervised work experience



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- Specify how each of these modules shall be assessed
- Specify the arrangements for progression
- Specify the threshold pass for module
- Specify the credit weighting and standard (level) carried by each module
- Specify the penalties for late submission of assessed programme work
- State the criteria for the recommendation of each award or level of award, including honours classification, and criteria for distinction or merit (where applicable)
- Set out the composition and terms of reference of the Board of Examiners and Examination Committees.

**B4.3.3** Award regulations may be permitted to vary from the HE Academic Board Regulations only if the variation is formally approved and minuted through the agreed process.

**B4.3.4** For awards accredited by profession, statutory or regulatory bodies, students must fulfil the requirements of section B4.3.6 and fulfil any further requirements for accreditation specified by the professional or statutory body.

**B4.3.5** For awards accredited by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies, both staff and students must be made aware of the specific assessment and progression requirements to be fulfilled in order to obtain the accredited award.

**B4.3.6** Students must fulfil the specified requirements for progression and conferment of an award.

**B4.3.7** Students failing to achieve the specific assessment requirements for awards accredited by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies will be advised of alternative programmes of student available with the College.

## **B5 Approval Panel**

### **B5.1 General**

**B5.1.1** A recommendation to HE Academic Board on whether or not a programme meets the requirements of the institution must be made by a group of responsible and experienced people who are convened as an Approval Panel.





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B5.1.2 Academic approval must be in accordance with the following principles:

The composition of the group must be drawn from:

- Inside and outside the field of study concerned
- Insider and outside the institution providing the programme
- Employers.

B5.1.3 The panel will be provided with adequate documentation to support their consideration. This will include, as a minimum:

- Programme Specification
- Programme Handbook
- Modules Specifications and Module Delivery Details
- Staff CVs
- Statement of Resources
- Professional, Statutory or Regulatory body of requirements, if applicable.

B5.1.4 Decisions of the panel. 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.

## **B5.2 Membership of Approval Panel**

B5.2.1 The Approval Panel membership must:

- Be able to make impartial judgements on the comparability of a programme, in terms of standard and content, with similar programmes of student offered elsewhere in higher education
- Include members familiar with current developments in the field of study
- Include at least one member with relevant experience of industry, commerce, public service or the professions
- Include members with an understanding of current practice and developments in teaching, learning and assessment in higher education
- Be aware of the institution's requirements for the award.

B2.2.2 The membership of an Approval Panel will be:



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- Chair from the College or collaborative partner
- HE Registry representative
- Internal Curriculum Area representative
- College or collaborative partner representative external to the curriculum area
- College or collaborative partner Higher Education representative (Ex Officio)
- External Academic representative
- Employer representative
- NCG Student representative

#### **B5.3 Recommendations of the Approval Panel**

- B5.3.1 The period for which the provision is accredited will be informed by institution guidance.
- B5.3.2 Programme Leaders, or equivalent, will ensure that Library Services receive copies of reading lists in advance of the programme starting.
- B5.3.3 A central register of all proposals which have received approval will be maintained within the HE Registry.

#### **B5.4 Academic Approval of new modules**

- B5.4.1 New modules must be formally approved through the Academic Approval process as determined in the procedures agreed by HE Academic Board.
- B5.4.2 Where the proposal is for the introduction of a new module to programme, the criteria for approval includes the following:
- **Intellectual Challenge:** the module provides an intellectual challenge at a level consistent with the levels as indicated and described in the programme approval documentation.
  - **Coherent Learning Experience:** the module provides a coherent and signification learning experience in its own right, which is demonstrably appropriate to the programme aims, objects and philosophy.
  - **Learning Outcomes:** the module is specified in sufficient detail in order to allow consideration of consistency of learning outcomes, syllabus content, teaching and learning methods, assessment tasks and criteria.



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- **Assessment:** the assessment tasks, methods and criteria are consistent with the learning outcomes and the teaching and learning methods, and are specified part of the module.
- **Level Consistency:** the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria are consistent with the proposed duration and level of the module.
- **Integration into the Programme:** there is a clear indication of the way in which the module relates to other existing modules and how it integrates within the programme leading to an award.
- **Resources:** the resources required for effective delivery of the module are clearly stated and realistically available.
- **Congruence** with institutional vision and values.

B5.4.3 Where an award is recognised by and subject to the regulations of a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) and there is a conflict between these regulations and those of the PSRB, then the regulation of the PSRB shall have precedence.

#### **B5.5 Off Campus Learning**

B5.5.1 Strategic planning approval is required for proposals involving delivery off campus learning even if there is already a programme in full approval and validation, in accordance with the HE Academic Regulations and procedures.

B5.5.2 Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- The background profile of participants on the external provision
- The broad aims and detailed learning outcomes for the study programme
- The teaching and learning methods and syllabus content
- The estimated student workload
- The form(s) of assessment and how these are designed to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes
- Approvals arrangements for the management of provision
- A description of how equivalence of standard between all participants is guaranteed
- The parity of student experience
- Arrangements for external moderation
- An indication of how the modules of student are monitored and reviewed
- Judgement of the value and level of specific credit against (a) named award(s).



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#### **B6**

#### **Periodic Review**

##### **B6.1 General**

- B6.1.1 Periodic review is the process whereby the progress of an approved programme is critically appraised at intervals by a Review Panel include external peers.
- B6.1.2 All programmes must be periodically reviewed within a 5 year period. The HE Registry will provide the HE Academic Board with an annual schedule of periodic review for the entire institutional portfolio for the current academic year by 30 September including details of Periodic Review.
- B6.1.3 Periodic review is undertaken in order to confirm that:
- A programme retains continued validity, academic relevance and currency
  - It continues to meet the requirement for an award of the level concerned
  - It is aligned with the broader vocational and industry needs.
- B6.1.4 A decision to undertake a periodic review earlier than 5 years may occur as a result of consideration of relevant evidence. Such consideration would include annual review outcomes, major and minor modifications, management information, e.g. National Student Survey, External Examiner reports, Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements and the schedule of approval and review.

##### **B6.2 Periodic Review Process**

- B6.2.1 The process will enable:
- Identification of the strengths and weaknesses within the provision
  - Development of enhancements to the programme/group of programmes
  - Preparation of external quality assessment.
- B6.2.2 The periodic review shall be conducted in the wider context of institutional requirements, external developments and issues relating to a wider subject area including the need to:

- Build directly on a critical appraisal of the evidence provided by the continuous annual review and evaluation of the programme/group of programmes
- Register examples of good practice
- Make an evaluation of modifications to the programme/group of programmes
- Register examples of good practice
- Make an evaluation of modification to the programme/group of programmes
- Consider External Examiner reports and other external reference points, e.g. QAA Quality Code
- Consider module evaluations
- Consider management information, e.g. non-completion, cohort statistics, NSS, survey data, etc.
- Consider research within the subject area in relation to programme content.

**B6.2.3** A Programme team must be convened with appropriate leadership. The Programme team is responsible for:

- Review of provision
- Preparation of documentation for the Periodic Review event
- Liaison with HE Registry on regulatory matters
- Liaison with College Learning Support Services to consider resources for the on-going delivery of the programme.

**B6.2.4** The HE Registry will nominate a Chair of the Periodic Review Panel. The Chair will be internal to the relevant College or collaborative partner, but not from the curriculum area responsible for the periodic review. The Chair must be selected from an approved list of academic staff who have attended relevant staff development.

### **B6.3 Panel, documentation and outcomes**

**B6.3.1** The membership of a Periodic Review Panel will be:

- Chair from the College or collaborative partner
- HE Registry representative
- Internal Curriculum area representative
- College or collaborative partner representative external to the curriculum area
- College or collaborative partner Higher Education representative (Ex Officio)
- External Academic representative



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- Employer representative
  - NCG Student representative
- B6.3.2 The panel will be provided with adequate documentation to support their consideration. This will include, as a minimum:
- Critical appraisal and supporting evidence file
  - Programme Specification
  - Programme Handbook
  - Module Specifications and Module Delivery details
  - Staff CVs
  - Statement of Resources
  - Professional, Statutory or Regulatory body requirement, if applicable.
- B6.3.3 Documentation for periodic review must be submitted for consideration at least two weeks prior to the event and in accordance with the Periodic Review Guidelines located on the HE Registry website.
- B6.3.4 Documentation will be considered in relation to whether the proposal has sufficient and clear documentation for full consideration by the Periodic Review Panel. Outcomes of the consideration will be one of the following:
- To recommend the proposal continues to a Periodic Review event
  - To recommend the proposal continues to a Periodic Review event subject to changes to the documentation (these will be detailed in the feedback to the College or collaborative partner).
  - To recommend that the proposal does not continue to a Periodic Review event and is re-presented to the College or collaborative partner pending further preparation of documentation. The event will need to be rescheduled and documentation resubmitted in accordance with the timescales outlined above.
- B6.3.5 The Periodic Review Panel can make one of the following decisions:
- The programme remains in approval
  - The programme remains in approval subject to specified conditions and/or recommendations
  - The programme is withdrawn.



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- B6.3.7 The Approval Panel is responsible for ensuring that any conditions for approval have been met and for establish the deadline for the meeting conditions.
- B6.3.8 The College or collaborative partner must ensure that due consideration is given to any recommendation for the Periodic Review Panel within six months of commencement of the programme.
- B6.3.9 The outcome of the event will be reported to HE Academic Board or its committees and the minutes will be copied to the HE Registry.

#### **B6.4 Withdrawal of Approval**

- B6.4.1 Following a recommendation that the programmes does not remain in approval, an appropriate senior staff member will determine whether the programme should be redeveloped. Where the decision is taken to do this, the following apply:
- In respect of the redevelopment of the programme in question, the process is that followed for academic approval, commencing with strategic planning approval
  - In respect of the existing programme, the provision will be subject to the HE Academic Board Regulations for the withdrawal of provision.

## **B7 Management of Awards**

### **B7.1 General**

- B7.1.1 All awards of the institution shall be managed and operation in accordance with HE Academic Regulations.
- B7.1.2 Each HE programme or grouping of programmes shall have the following:
- Programme Leader
  - Programme Management Team
  - Programme Team
  - College and Programme Annual Review
- B7.1.3 Students will be provided with opportunities for contributing to their programme according to the policies, procedures and regulations. See section B7.4.





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#### **B7.2 Reporting Mechanisms**

B7.2.1 Reporting mechanisms shall be established to ensure that issues identified as requiring action are brought to the attention of the appropriate persons or body.

B7.2.2 The following parties shall be assured of the health, quality and standard of all the programmes development delivered by the College or collaborative partner:

- HE Registry
- The HE Academic Board and its sub-committees

#### **B7.3 General Responsibilities**

B7.3.1 The HE Registry provide an infrastructure for all higher education provision developed and delivery. The HE Registry is accountable to the Group Executive Team and the Corporation. It is responsible for:

- Reporting HE matters to the Corporation
- Maintain a strategic overview of higher education and supporting the Group Executive Team and the Corporation in determining the strategic direction of higher education
- Management and coordinating the HE deliberative structures including HE Academic, HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment and HE Quality and Standards sub committees.
- Overarching management of higher education policies, procedures and practice across all the colleges and collaborative partners of the Corporation including the audit function.
- Approval, monitoring and review of higher education
- The regulations relating to higher education through HE Academic Board and in partnership with the HE Quality and Standards sub committee
- Management of assessment processes including Examination Boards
- Monitoring of consistence and comparability in terms of the student learning experience and academic standards
- Management of relationships with award bodies
- Responsibility for external returns.

B7.3.2 The Head of HE, or equivalent, acting on behalf of the College or collaborative partner, retains formal responsibility for all the validated





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programmes and the execution of all matters contained within these regulations.

- B7.3.3 The Head of HE, or equivalent, shall be an ex officio member of all Programme Quality Review meetings and shall receive the minutes and all other papers relating to Quality Review meetings.
- B7.3.4 The Head of HE, or equivalent, shall exercise the right of intervention if the health of a programme is cause for concern.
- B7.3.5 The Head of HE, or equivalent, must ensure that all staff teaching facilitating learning and assessing students on higher education programmes are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities. All staff should be qualified at, or working towards, one level above the level they are teaching.
- B7.3.6 The Programme Leader, or equivalent, specific day-to-day duties shall be in accordance with the policies, principles and HE Academic Regulations of the institution, and, where appropriate, the regulations of any relevant external validating bodies.
- B7.3.7 The Programme Leader, or equivalent, is responsible for ensuring that the day-to-day duties for which they are responsible are carried out efficiently by the individuals and groups to whom such duties are delegated and that any concerns are reported to the Head of HE, or equivalent.
- B7.3.8 The Programme Leader, or equivalent, may be assisted by other tutors, each with defined responsibilities. These responsibilities may include, for example: admissions, oversight of a cohort of students, action on students giving rise to concern, placements, projects, etc.
- B7.3.9 The Programme Leader, or equivalent, should ensure the following provision is made for students. Each student should:
- Have a clearly identified member of staff to whom they can turn for advice and help with academic or personal matters.
  - Each student undertaken a placement should be informed of:
    - Their responsibilities and rights in respect of the placement
    - The assessment provision associated with the placement
    - Any specific legal or ethical requirements
    - The student support obtainable from the college or collaborative partner during the placement



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- Each student should be made aware of other sources of advice and help which are available in the College and Students' Union and the means of access to such sources
- All students could be given access to a Programme Handbook, Programme Specification and Module Guide for the current academic year.

**B7.3.10** The Programme Leader must ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for gaining student feedback throughout the student life cycle including:

- The development of a student
- Analysis and evaluation of student surveys
- Module evaluations
- Inclusion of students in membership of committees
- Consultation on programme design and management.

**B7.3.11** The Programme Management Team is the group of staff, headed by the Programme Leader, or equivalent, responsible for the day-to-day operation of the provision.

**B7.3.12** The Programme Leader, or equivalent, and the Programme Management Team will meet regularly. A record of the meetings must be retained to reflect any action taken in respect of programme monitoring and management.

**B7.3.13** All members of the Programme Management Team are required to maintain such records of student attendance, submission of work, academic progress to make it possible for them to report on student general and academic progress as required by the Programme Leader, or equivalent.

#### **B7.4 Communication with students on programme**

**B7.4.1** Student Focus Groups or equivalent must be established to ensure appropriate student contribution to discussions on the operation and development of programmes. Each programme or designated grouping of programmes should decide how best to establish these.

**B7.4.2** Students shall be kept regularly informed of their academic progress and have the opportunity to discuss their work with staff. Appropriate arrangements should be in place to review the progress of students and identify those students whose progress is cause for



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concern. The Programme Leader, or equivalent, should take appropriate action in respect of such students.

- B7.4.3 Assessment programme work shall normally be returned, with appropriate feedback, within 20 working days of its submission.
- B7.4.4 Arrangements should be made to inform, counsel and advise students following the decisions of the Board of Examiners.
- B7.4.5 Arrangements should be made to inform, counsel and advise student on foundation degrees of the route(s) (as agreed at academic approval) available to them for progression to an honours degree.
- B7.4.6 Students are responsible to act in accordance with the principles, policies, procedures and regulations of the institution and abide by the HE Student Agreement.
- B7.4.7 All teaching staff, facilitating learning and assessing students must be approved and suitably experienced and qualified to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

## **B8 Review and Enhancement of Awards in Approval**

### **B8.1 General**

- B8.1.1 The institution requires that all academic provision be kept under continuous review in order to ensure that both its quality and standards are operating as intended and that programmes of quality enhancement are developed, implemented and evaluated.
- B8.1.2 The components of review comprise of:
  - An annual cycle of monitoring and action planning, which also facilitates on-going consideration of subject area issues (Programme Management Team meetings, Quality Review meetings and audit)
  - Student contribution in discussions on the operation and development of programmes (Focus Groups).
- B8.1.3 Programmes within the College or collaborative partner are reviewed in order to:



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- Ensure that the programmes remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the area and the practice of its application
- Evaluation the breadth and depth of student achievement, the overall student learning experience and the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are being attained by students
- Evaluate the continued effectiveness of the curriculum and assessment practices in relation to the intended learning outcomes and in line with the provision of sections C5 and C6: Management of Assessment
- Ensure that appropriate action be taken to address issues of quality, standards and enhancement
- Consider the level of on-going external involvement, and relevant external issues.

#### **B8.2 Programme Annual Review**

B8.2.1 The purpose of Annual Review is to ensure that the programme or designated grouping of programmes are operating to accepted level of quality and standards and facilitate the development, operation and monitoring of a programme of quality enhancement in relation to the programme or designated grouping of programmes.

B8.2.2 It is the responsibility of HE Registry to provide data for use during the programme of the academic year. The information provided will include:

- National Student Survey
- Cohort statistics
- Non-completions
- External Examiner reports

B8.2.3 All annual review processes and procedures will be fully documented and use the standard pro-forma provide by HE Registry.

B8.2.4 Established meetings shall ensure that each programme in each college or collaborative partner is appropriately considered twice each year with appropriate input from essential staff and students.

#### **B8.3 HE Registry Quality Review Meetings**

B8.3.1 The major emphasis of the HE Registry Quality Review meetings should be future oriented and concentrate on the development and enhancement of the provision.



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- B8.3.2 The HE Registry Quality Review provide a system to monitor and review higher education provision. It examines the overall effectiveness of operations within a college or collaborative partner delivering higher education against key performance indicators promoting an institutional approach to the continual development of high quality and standards.
- B8.3.3 All colleges and collaborative partners delivering high education within the institution are subject to HE Registry Quality Review.
- B8.3.4 Members of the HE Registry Quality Review meetings should include a wide membership such as:
- Academic Registrar
  - Assistant Director Quality and Standards
  - Assistant Director HE Data and Compliance
  - College or collaborative partner Director of Higher Education or Head of HE or equivalent
  - College or collaborative partner Manager responsible for HE quality
- B8.3.5 HE Registry Quality Review meetings are responsible for:
- Consideration of matters relating to academic provision and recommendations for action
  - Consideration of matters relating to the quality of student experience and student outcomes and recommendations for action.
- B8.3.6 The HE Registry Quality Review meetings are responsible for considering the following aspects of academic provision, and for making any recommendations arising from this consideration:
- External Examiner reports: when external examiner reports are considered, these should be seen in full, and not in edited form.
  - Learning, teaching and assessment
  - External Reference Points: where appropriate, relevant external reference points may be considered by the HE Registry Quality Review meetings
  - Management Information including continuation and achievement
  - Reports on student experience: receive and consider reports on other elements of student experience and outcomes, and make recommendation accordingly



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- Survey data.

B8.3.7 Action resulting from the HE Registry Quality Review meetings are reviewed and updated at the next HE Registry Quality Review meeting.

#### **B8.4 Annual Review**

B8.4.1 The HE Registry is responsible for producing an institutional HE Annual Review Report by drawing upon the College and Collaborative Partner Annual Review Reports.

B8.4.2 The institutional HE Annual Review Report will be considered by the HE Quality and Standards Committee. The minutes of the HE Quality and Standards Committee, and any recommendations arising, will be forwarded to HE Academic Board. The final report will be presented to Corporation.

#### **B8.5 Evaluation of Student Feedback**

B8.5.1 Student Focus Groups or equivalent must be established to ensure appropriate student contribution to discussion on the operation and development of programmes. Each programme or designated grouping of programmes should decide how best to establish these.

B8.5.2 Student Focus Groups are intended to provide a flexible forum in which students can raise issues which are of current concerns and discuss them with staff.

B8.5.3 As appropriate, concerns, views and suggestions may be fed into the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. All action taken in respect of feedback arising from the Student Focus Groups must be reported to the HE Registry Quality Review meeting to record resolution of student issues.

### **B9 Modification to Awards in Approval**

#### **B9.1 General**

B9.1.1 During the period of approval it may be necessary to make changes to the programme. Regulations and procedures for the approval of changes will depend upon the scale of the modification(s) proposed. Changes will either be minor or major modification(s).



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#### **B9.2 Minor Modifications**

- B9.2.1 A minor modification is one which does not affect the overall aims, objectives, philosophy and balance of the programme but may involve changes.
- B9.2.2 Changes which constitute a minor modification are, for example;
- Change of module title
  - Changes in assessment methods and weightings at module level
  - Syllabus and curriculum updating at module level
  - The addition or deletion of modules where the effect of this is not to alter the overall aims and learning outcomes of a programme.
- B9.2.3 Minor modifications are effected by consideration programme level during Annual Planning event and are subject to approval by HE Registry so that documents can be updated.
- B9.2.4 Where the programme is a precursor to an honours degree consideration must be given as to whether the progression route remains appropriate in light of any minor modifications.

#### **B9.3 Major Modification**

- B9.3.1 A major modification is one which may involve changes to a programme in one or more of the following aspects of the delivery.
- Title of the programme and/or the award to which it leads
  - Overall aims and learning outcomes
  - Planned length and mode(s) of study
  - Regulations for the admission of students
  - Regulations for the assessment of students
  - The addition of a new module or deletion of existing module(s) programme
  - A significant addition to the resources required.

Major modifications are presented to the Strategic Planning and Major Modification Committee for approval of modification or referral to award validation panel.

This list is not exhaustive and other requirements may be specified by HE Registry. HE Registry will provide advice and guidance where necessary.





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B9.3.2 Requests for approval of major modifications to a programme must be made in accordance with the current procedures for major modifications, be formally approved and be reported to HE Academic Board and its sub committees.

B9.3.3 External Examiners must be consulted and must be informed in relation to any proposed major modification.

B9.3.4 Where there is a precursor to an honours degree consideration must be given as to whether the progression route remains appropriate in light of any major modifications.

#### **B9.4 Modifications leading to new modules**

B9.4.1 Where the proposed major modification involves the approval of new modules, the criteria identified in section B9 must be used.

#### **B9.5 Limits to Modification**

B9.5.1 Proposed modifications of a substantial nature should be regarded as being beyond the scope of the regulations in this section and so the normal Academic Approval process is required.

B9.5.2 Modifications of a substantial nature are normally where cumulative changes of 30% or more of the credit points required for the award over the life of the programme are involved.

- Major modifications where the changes are more than 30% credit points require approval events
- If the change affects mode of delivery then the Approval Panel must only consider the change of mode and the impact this has on the programme.

B9.5.3 Modifications to programmes must be reported to HE Registry to monitor the cumulative effect of changes to programmes. Action must be taken to initiate a formal review where programmes are deemed to have exceeded the limits of modification.

### **B10 Withdrawal of Academic Approval**

B10.1 HE Academic Board shall withdraw Academic Approval of a programme offered by the college or by an associated institution if the college or collaborative partner has evidence that the programme





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is no longer meeting minimum acceptable standards or where recruitment levels are no longer viable.

- B10.2 Withdrawal of academic approval, or a decision not to renew academic approval, may occur at any time.
- B10.3 No decision to withdraw academic approval of programmes or not to review academic approval will be taken without due consultation with the college or collaborative partner and the HE Registry.
- B10.4 Where a programme is closed to further recruitment for any reason include B10.1 above, the Chair of HE Academic Board will require the College and collaborative partner or associated institutions to take appropriate action to ensure that adequate standards and the learning experience are maintained for any students remaining on the programme, or that students are enabled to transfer to a suitable alternative programme.
- B10.5 Decisions not to recruit students to awards in academic approval may be made from time to time as a result of the College's or collaborative partner's review of its academic portfolio.

## **B 11 Partnerships**

### **B11.1 Franchise partnerships**

11.1.1 Franchise partnerships may be developed in accordance with the process approved by HE Academic Board. Franchise partnerships will be subject to Strategic Planning Approval, a process of due diligence followed by an institutional recognition event and approval event.

11.1.2 Franchised programmes will follow the NCG HE Academic Regulations in full.

### **B11.2 Validation partnerships**

11.2.1 Validation partnerships may be developed in accordance with the process approved by HE Academic Board. Validation partnerships will be subject to Strategic Planning Approval, a process of due diligence followed by an institutional recognition event and approval event.



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11.2.2 Programmes validated by partner organisations will follow the NCG HE Academic Regulations in full.