



UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

HANDBOOK GOVERNING CURRICULUM APPROVAL

OFFICE FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES AND REGULATIONS

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GLOSSARY AND CONTACT POINTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Academic Board
AC	Academic Council
ACE	Adult Continuing Education
ACE ASB	Adult Continuing Education Academic Standards Board
ADSC	Academic Development and Standards Committee
APAR	Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations
CAO	Central Applications Office
CIT	Cork Institute of Technology
DMIS	Department Mark Entry System
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FPP	Full Programme Proposal
GSO	Graduate Studies Office
IMI	Irish Management Institute
ITS	Student Record System (Integrated Tertiary Software)
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
OPP	Outline Programme Proposal
PAC	Postgraduate Applications Centre
PAP	Programme Approval Panel
SREO	Student Records and Examinations Office
TPI	Turning Point Institute
UCC	University College Cork

FORMS

OPP	Outline Programme Proposal Form
OPP ACE	Outline Programme Proposal Form ACE
FPP	Full Programme Proposal
FPP ACE	Full Programme Proposal ACE
MM1	Major and Minor Changes Form
MM2	Major and Minor Changes ACE
VS1	Modules for Visiting Students
MS1	Changes to Marks and Standards
MS2	Changes to Marks and Standards - ACE
L	Late Change Proposal Form can be obtained by contacting APAR at acadprog@ucc.ie
R1	Retrospective Change Form can be obtained by contacting APAR at acadprog@ucc.ie
TS1	Temporary Cessation of an Academic Programme

CONTACT POINTS

The College Office/ACE Manager is the first point of contact in relation to advice, queries and support for changes to existing programmes/modules, Marks and Standards and details of local deadlines for submission of changes for approval. In the case of new programme development, APAR and the College Office/ACE Manager should be contacted in the first instance. Contact details are available [here](#).

1 INTRODUCTION

This Handbook provides information on the processes governing changes to the curriculum and new programme development. For information on IMI processes, see the [UCC IMI Programme Quality Assurance Handbook](#). For information on joint UCC-CIT or TPI programmes, please see [here](#).

The “*Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes*” is a supporting document and may be found [here](#).

The curriculum data set for each academic year is recorded and published online in the following University publications, which represent the University’s official contract with the student:

- [University Calendar](#) *
- [Book of Modules](#) *
- [Marks and Standards](#)

* **Note:** *Adult Continuing Education (ACE) programmes and module information are recorded separately on the ACE website <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace/>.*

The published curriculum data set underpins the University business process functions, such as:

- student recruitment
- student registration
- lecture and examination timetabling
- examination marks returns
- scheduling and administration of Examination Boards
- calculation of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), which informs resource allocation
- curriculum reporting to internal and external bodies

2 GOVERNANCE

Academic Council is the primary internal authority responsible for academic affairs. The following sections outline the governance arrangements for the University curriculum as approved by Academic Council.

2.1 ROLE OF ACADEMIC BOARD IN CURRICULUM APPROVAL

According to the full Terms of Reference for Academic Board, in relation to curriculum approval, Academic Board, as delegated by Academic Council, is responsible for:

- Strategy and policy relating to education and research, including: academic planning and development; academic cooperation between UCC and another body; the organisation of teaching and examination and the award and revocation of UCC degrees.
- Policies, rules and procedures concerning the approval, periodic review, quality assurance and enhancement of academic programmes and the maintenance of academic standards of UCC awards.
- Policies, rules and procedures for the recruitment, admission, conduct and exclusion of students in accordance with the University's commitment to equality of opportunity and access to education and for the overall quality of the student experience.
- Proposals governing the establishment and conduct of academic partnerships, national and international, and for the assurance of academic standards for taught and research awards delivered in collaboration.
- Recommending and keeping under review the provision of management information as part of the academic data set, including methods of collection and analysis to enhance institutional decision-making on academic matters, to ensure appropriate oversight of academic standards, and to inform strategy for academic development and quality enhancement.
- Approving annually the assessment regulations and examination procedures and their publication, including College derogations where requested. Major policy changes to the assessment regulations and examination procedures shall be recommended to Academic Council after appropriate consultation with Colleges.
- Approving new programmes of study leading to UCC awards and major changes to existing programmes, where appropriate.
- Approving the annual schedule for the periodic review of academic programmes

2.2 ROLE OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE IN CURRICULUM APPROVAL

Academic Development and Standards Committee (ADSC) is a standing committee of Academic Council, which is responsible for bringing forward policy and procedures to enhance the quality and to maintain standards of UCC awards. The Committee advises in relation to UCC's academic framework to ensure internal and institutional compliance with the National Framework of

Qualifications; and also advises Academic Board on the impact of national and international developments on UCC's arrangements underpinning academic standards.

In relation to curriculum approval, ADSC, as delegated by Academic Council, is responsible for:

- Policy and procedures governing programme approval and review including arrangements for the approval and review of taught programmes offered in partnership.
- Proposals for the development of UCC's academic framework ensuring continuing alignment with national and EU developments in higher education and quality assurance and enhancement of UCC's taught provision.
- Proposals to assure institutional oversight of the University's responsibilities relating to Professional and Statutory Bodies (PSBs)
- Receiving annual reports as follows: consolidated report on the outcomes of the approval of new programmes from the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations; programme periodic reviews from the Quality Enhancement Unit; Professional and Statutory Body (PSBs) reports from the College Offices and recommend action to AB or College Councils as appropriate.

2.3 ROLE OF COLLEGES IN CURRICULUM APPROVAL

Colleges act under devolved authority from Academic Board to review and approve specified major curriculum changes (see [here](#)), all minor curriculum changes, new modules, changes to modules, and changes to Marks and Standards in accordance with their own College approved local procedures. Colleges shall also review and recommend new academic programmes for submission to AB.

The relevant **College Office** is responsible for co-ordinating and administering the approval of new programmes/modules and changes in existing programmes/modules, in accordance with University approved policies and schedules.

2.4 ROLE OF ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION ACADEMIC STANDARDS BOARD IN CURRICULUM APPROVAL

In the case of programmes designed and delivered by Adult Continuing Education (ACE), the Adult Continuing Education Academic Standards Board (ACE ASB) acts under devolved authority from Academic Board to review and approve specified major curriculum changes (see [here](#)), all minor curriculum changes, new modules, changes to modules, and changes to Mark and Standards in accordance with its own local procedures. ACE ASB shall also review and recommend new academic programmes for submission to AB.

The **ACE Office** is responsible for co-ordinating and administering the approval of new programmes/modules and changes in existing programmes/modules, in accordance with University approved policies and schedules.

2.5 ROLE OF THE OFFICE FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES AND REGULATIONS (APAR) IN CURRICULUM APPROVAL

The Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations (APAR) is responsible for maintaining the University's Academic Portfolio. APAR validates, implements and publishes the University's approved curriculum. APAR manages, oversees and guides the programme approval process for new academic programmes and changes to existing programmes/modules across the University.

APAR authorises the curriculum for the opening up of recruitment and the opening of registration for new and ongoing students.

2.6 NEW PROGRAMMES

Academic Council agreed revised arrangements for the approval of new programmes on 24-Jun-11 (item 8). Subsequent revisions to these arrangements were endorsed by Academic Board following its consideration of ADSC reports on 21-Nov-12 (item 8a) and 11-Jun-14 (item 6c). The current arrangements are detailed in this Handbook in [Section 5](#).

2.7 MAJOR CHANGES TO EXISTING PROGRAMMES

Academic Board agreed revised procedures for the approval of Major Changes to Existing Programmes (ref: 16-Nov-11 (Item 7a), 18-Jan-12 (Item 1) and 29-Feb-12 (Item 1)). Academic Board agreed that, in keeping with Academic Council's intention to devolve decision-making governing programmes to Colleges/ACE, approval of Major Changes to Existing Programmes (with the exception of changes outlined in the classification see ([here](#)) be devolved to Colleges, and that a Stage 1 (Outline Programme Approval by Academic Board) should no longer apply in the case of Major Changes to Existing Programmes. The changes are designed to assure Academic Board and Academic Council that appropriate academic standards are adhered to whilst also ensuring that the University meets its commitment to delegate activities to Colleges/ACE Board of Studies in keeping with its restructuring aims and objectives. The current procedures are detailed in this Handbook in [Section 6](#).

2.8 CHANGES TO MARKS AND STANDARDS

Marks and Standards are the rules and regulations governing examinations, and are used in the presentation of results to examination boards. Approval and implementation of changes to Marks and Standards, and compilation of Colleges'/ACE composite Marks and Standards for publication, is devolved to Colleges/ACE (in accordance with their own local procedures).

3 CLASSIFICATION OF UCC AWARD TYPES

Each programme of study is positioned on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) according to their award type. The award type is used to inform the University's Academic Board when deciding the programme approval process to be followed for a proposed new programme. The four award types are:

3.1 MAJOR AWARDS

Major Awards include Honours Bachelors Degrees, Higher Diplomas, Postgraduate Diplomas, Masters and Doctoral Degrees.

3.2 MINOR AWARDS

Minor Awards provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a Major award. This recognition will have relevance in its own right for example Diploma in Law is linked to the Major award - BCL; Postgraduate Certificate in X is linked to the Major award MSc in X. The associated learning outcomes of minor awards form a component part of the learning outcomes of a major award.

3.3 SPECIAL PURPOSE AWARDS

Special Purpose Awards are stand-alone awards, made for specific, relatively narrow, purposes.

3.4 SUPPLEMENTAL AWARDS

Supplemental Awards are for learning which is additional to a previous award. These could, for example, relate to updating and refreshing knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development.

Further information on the National Framework of Qualifications may be found [here](#).

4 CLASSIFICATION OF CHANGE TYPES

This section deals with changes to existing programmes. Information on new programmes can be found in [section 5](#).

Changes to programmes are classified according to four change types:

- Major Changes to Existing Programmes ([section 4.1](#))
- Minor Changes to Existing Programmes ([section 4.2](#))
- Changes to Modules ([section 4.3](#))
- Changes to Marks and Standards ([section 4.4](#))

The classification type informs the approval process to be followed for proposed changes.

Should you require guidance on the classification of your change, contact APAR.

Occasionally, proposed changes may be so substantial that the proposal should be classified and processed as a new programme. Colleges/ACE are asked to consult APAR for guidance in such instances. The Senior Vice-President Academic and Registrar will bring a recommendation to Academic Board for final decision on the classification of the proposal, if necessary.

4.1 MAJOR CHANGES TO EXISTING PROGRAMMES

Figure 1: *Classification of Major Changes*

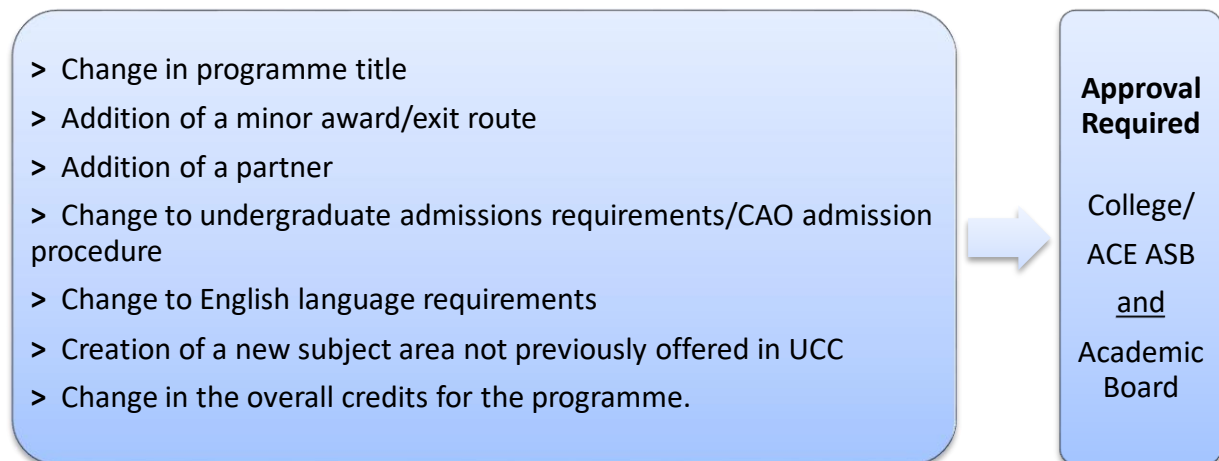
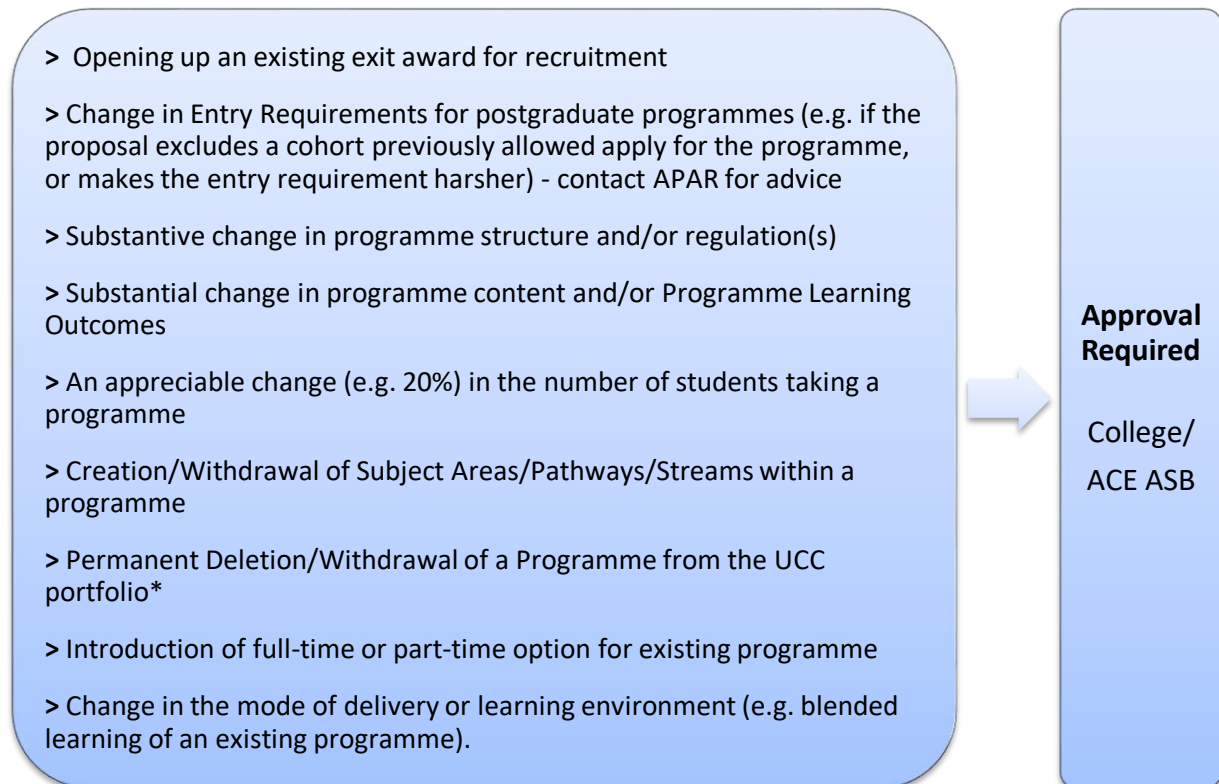


Figure 1 (cont'd): **Classification of Major Changes**



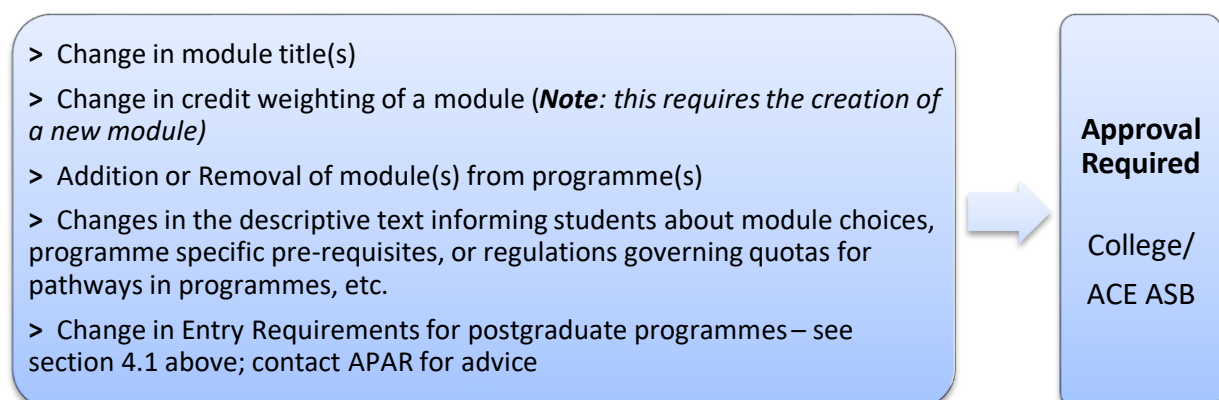
* If the intention is to temporarily suspend an academic programme, refer to the [Policy for the Temporary Cessation of an Academic Programme](#) and complete a [Form TS1](#).

The **process and documentation** for submission and approval of Major Changes can be found in [section 6](#).

4.2 MINOR CHANGES TO EXISTING PROGRAMMES

Minor Changes include any change in programme structure that is not considered Major as defined in [section 4.1](#).

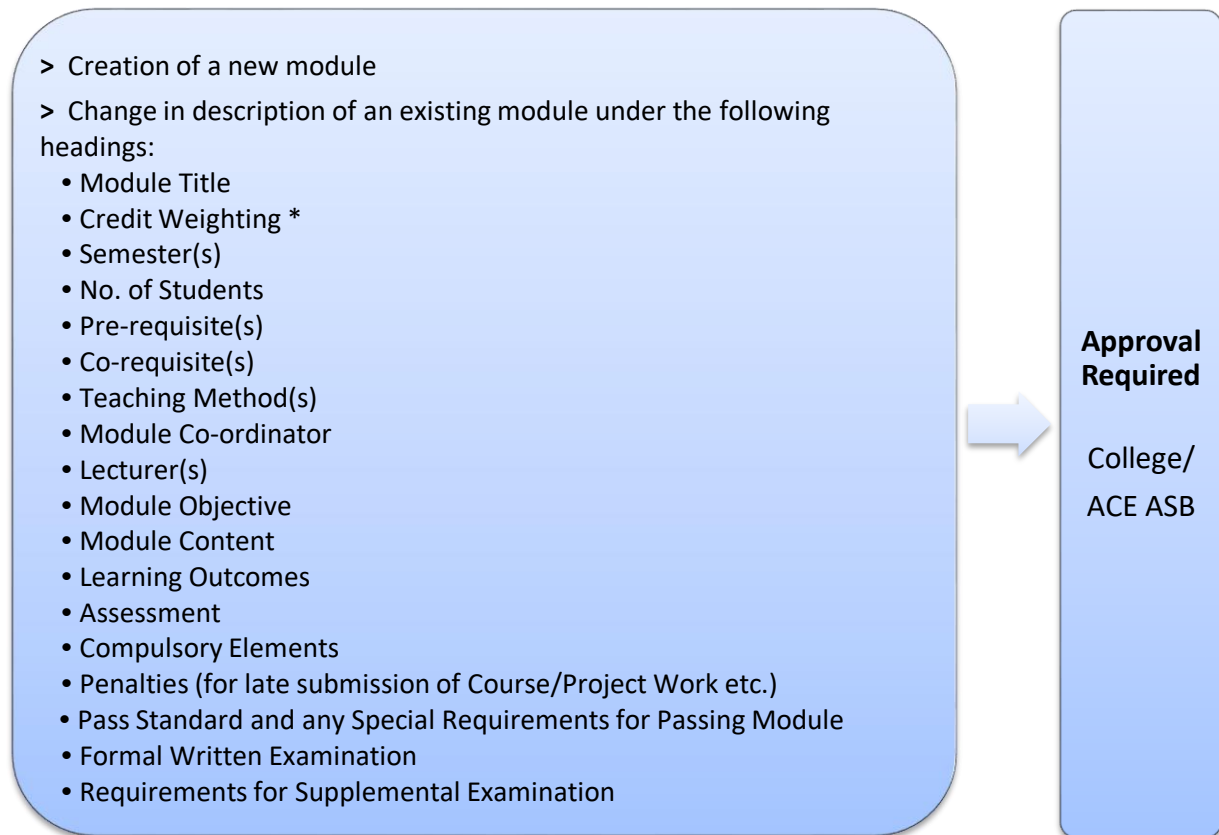
Figure 2: **Classification of Minor Changes:**



The **process and documentation** for submission and approval of Minor Changes can be found in [section 7](#).

4.3 MODULE CHANGES

Figure 3: **Module Changes**

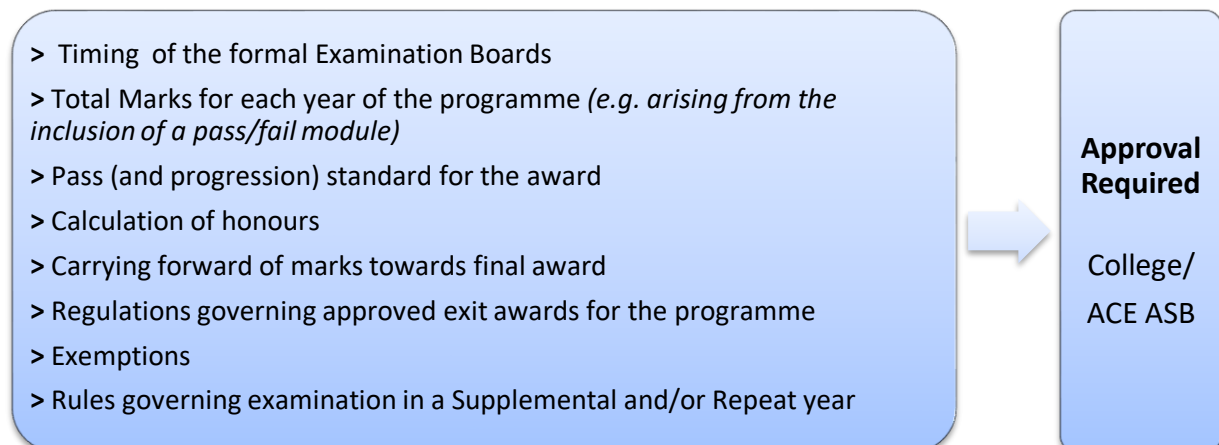


* **Note:** A new module is required where there is a change in credit weighting.

The **process and documentation** for submission and approval of module changes can be found in the [DMIS Guidelines](#).

4.4 CHANGES TO MARKS AND STANDARDS

Figure 4: **Classification of Changes to Marks and Standards**



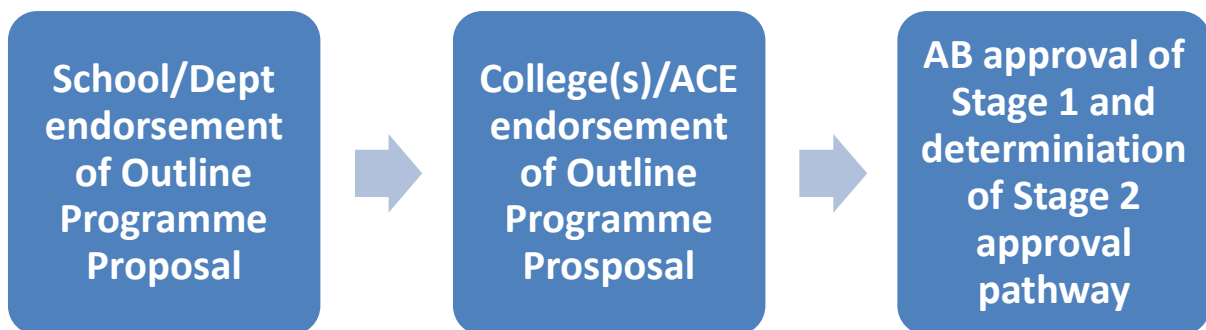
Templates for Marks and Standards can be found [here](#). The **process and documentation** for submission and approval of Marks and Standards can be found in [section 8](#).

5 NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL

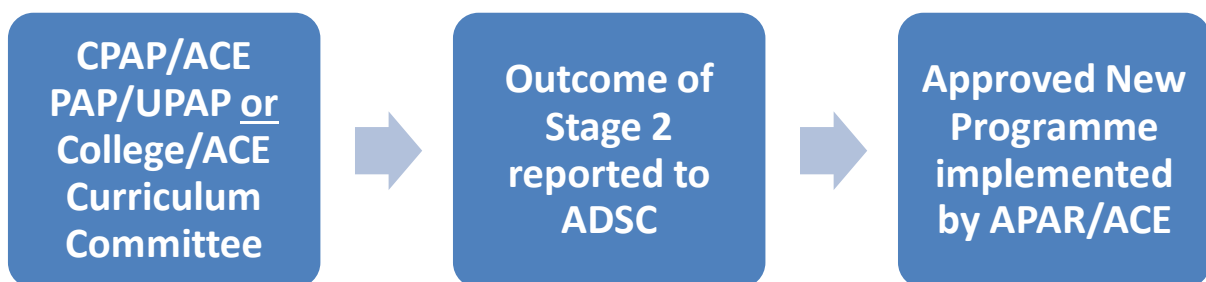
New academic programme approval involves a two-stage process, where Stage 1 (Outline Programme Approval) involves approval of the business case and the new programme title by Academic Board, and Stage 2 (Full Programme Approval) involves consideration of the quality and standards of the proposed programme by a Programme Approval Panel.

5.1 DIAGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW

Stage 1 (Outline Programme Approval)



Stage 2 (Full Programme Approval)



5.2 TIMELINES

New academic programmes (Stage 1 – Outline Programme Approval) may be proposed at any point in the academic year, in accordance with Colleges own local deadlines and the [Academic Board Meeting Schedule](#).

All new programmes must be fully approved (Stage 2 – Full Programme Approval) in sufficient time for optimal recruitment:

- in order to meet CAO deadlines, all proposals for new undergraduate programmes must be approved at least 18 months prior to the proposed start date (i.e. no later than 10th March for entry in September of the following year)
- new postgraduate programmes should be approved in advance of PAC roll-forward (i.e. no later than October for entry in September of the following year)

Approval outside of these timelines may adversely impact on student recruitment, in particular postgraduate and international students.

The approval process for new programmes may take between two to six months and is normally dependent on relevant committee meeting dates and the availability of Programme Approval Panel members.

New programmes can only be advertised, and students recruited, once the full programme proposal has been signed off by a [Programme Approval Panel](#). **Note:** *Following approval and final sign-off of a new postgraduate taught programme, it may take up to one week to finalise set up on ITS and PAC systems.*

5.3 STAGE 1 – OUTLINE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL

Proposals for new programmes will come from a variety of sources both internal and external. Preliminary discussions will normally occur within a School/Department or between groups of Schools/Departments, and should normally involve some external discussion, as well as consultation with internal stakeholders including Colleges/ACE (including Financial Analysts), APAR, relevant Admissions Offices, and Instructional Design Team. Where a proposed programme involves other Colleges, the Lead College must secure sign-off of resources, as appropriate.

Where the subject matter covered by a programme potentially overlaps with a subject taught in another School/Department, the Programme Co-ordinator should consult all relevant Schools/Departments. Consultation should be undertaken as early as possible to avoid delays in the development and approval of the programme. Please refer to Interdisciplinary Policy in relation to the development of new Interdisciplinary Programmes (see [Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes](#)). In relation to the development of new Thematic and Practitioner Doctoral programmes, preliminary discussions should occur with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

5.3.1 OUTLINE PROGRAMME PROPOSAL FORM

The Outline Programme Proposal Form (OPP) can be found on the APAR website ([here](#)). All proposals must be submitted on the correct form. As forms may be updated annually, the form should be

downloaded from the APAR form bank as required. Outdated forms submitted for approval will be returned to the proposer by the School/College/ACE.

The purpose of the OPP is to present a business case and appropriate supporting evidence to the College/ACE, in the first instance, and subsequently Academic Board to inform their consideration of the proposal.

The Programme Co-ordinator, in consultation with the College Manager/ACE Manager shall ensure that all participating Schools/Departments and Colleges/ACE sign the Outline Programme Proposal form (both academic and resource sections) prior to submission to Academic Board for Outline Approval, in accordance with local requirements/procedures.

5.3.1.1 Points to note at OPP Stage

- *Interdisciplinary Programmes (Programmes involving more than one College)*

Where the proposed programme is interdisciplinary and involves more than one College, Heads of College should agree the Lead College (i.e. the College in which the programme is academically anchored). The Lead College shall steer the development of the proposal. The College Manager of the Lead College must ensure that the outline proposal is submitted to all participating Colleges for initial approval and sign-off prior to submission of the proposal to Academic Board.

- *Programmes administered by ACE*

Programmes administered by the ACE are differentiated by level of engagement between the academic School/Department and ACE and are classified into three types:

- Type A: Programmes designed and delivered by ACE;
- Type B: Programmes designed and delivered through ACE in consultation with academic Schools/Departments;
- Type C: Programmes designed and delivered by an academic School/Department and administered by ACE.

The programme type should be clearly indicated on the OPP form and will serve to assist Academic Board in reaching agreement on whether the programme should be approved by the College or ACE.

- *Dual Awards*

Where the proposed programme is jointly developed and delivered, and leads to separate awards for the same programme by UCC and a partner degree-awarding body (dual awards), the nature of the partnership and any due diligence performed to date should be made clear at Stage 1 - Outline Programme Approval.

○ *External Partnership(s)*

For programmes involving an external partner(s), the name(s) and a brief outline of the nature of the partnership should be made clear at Stage 1. The role of the external partner(s) in the development, delivery, teaching and assessment of the programme must be outlined.

Note: *It is advisable to contact the Academic Secretary in advance of the submission of the Outline Programme Proposal Form to Academic Board to determine the suitability of the proposed partner and to allow sufficient time for an agreement to be drafted and agreed in advance of Stage 2.*

5.3.1.2 Nomination of External Assessors

The Programme Co-ordinator is responsible for identifying independent External Assessors in consultation with the programme team, and for obtaining the assessors' preliminary agreement to participate in the Programme Approval process. The criteria for the nomination of external assessors is outlined in the [OPP](#).

5.3.2 OUTLINE PROGRAMME PROPOSAL APPROVAL

5.3.2.1 Consideration at College/ACE level

An Outline Programme Proposal must be considered at School/Departmental level in the first instance. The Programme Co-ordinator must submit the completed Outline Programme Proposal Form ([OPP](#)) to the College Manager/ACE Manager or nominee of each participating College for initial approval in accordance with their own local procedures and deadlines.

Responsibility for approval of resources lies with the Lead College, in accordance with its procedures. Where the programme involves other Colleges, the Lead College must secure sign-off of resources, as appropriate. Any budgetary allocations must be authorised annually by the Head(s) of the relevant College(s); budgetary allocations for all programmes will be decided in the context of total College income and expenditure.

The Programme Co-ordinator in consultation with the College Manager (or the ACE Manager, in the case of ACE programmes), shall ensure that all participating Schools/Departments and Colleges sign the Outline Programme Proposal form (both academic and resource sections).

Following endorsement of the Outline Programme Proposal by participating Colleges, all proposed new programmes must be submitted to Academic Board for initial approval (Stage 1). The College Manager of the Lead College (or ACE Manager, for ACE programmes) shall submit programme documentation to AB for consideration. It is the responsibility of the College Manager/ACE Manager to ensure that all relevant signatures have been obtained in advance of submission to AB. The original

signed copies of the document should be held in the Lead College's Office. In its report to AB, the College should confirm that all required signatures have been obtained (both academic and resources sections). The schedule of AB meetings and the "Cover Sheet for New Programme Proposals Requiring Academic Board Approval" can be found [here](#).

5.3.2.2 Academic Board Approval

Academic Board, as the body with responsibility for the management and oversight of the University's academic portfolio, is the ultimate authority for the approval of outline programme proposals for any new programme, following endorsement by College(s)/ACE.

Academic Board shall adopt a risk-based approach to the delegation of full programme approval (Stage 2) in furtherance of the University's stated strategic aim that decision-making should be devolved, particularly where this will enhance business efficacy. The criteria upon which Academic Board makes these decisions include:

- a) **Designated lower risk programmes**, defined as programmes developed and delivered primarily by the relevant College shall normally be devolved to the Lead College for approval by a College Programme Approval Panel (CPAP). ACE programmes shall normally be devolved to ACE PAPs, unless they are designated higher risk (see (b) below).
- b) **Designated higher risk programmes**, defined as those delivered in partnership, new qualification types, novel programme developments, and interdisciplinary programmes as defined in the Academic Council policy document on Interdisciplinary Programmes (see [Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes for Interdisciplinary Policy](#)), shall normally require approval by a University Programme Approval Panel (UPAP).
- c) **ACE Programmes** - The criteria upon which decisions shall be made include, in particular:
 - ACE Programme Type A - Major/Minor Awards:** it is recommended that programme approval be considered by an ACE PAP.
 - ACE Programme Type A - Supplemental/Special Purpose Awards:** it is recommended that programme approval be considered by the ACE ASB.
 - ACE Programme Type B - Major/Minor Awards:** it is recommended that programme approval be normally considered by an ACE PAP.
 - ACE Programme Type B - Special Purpose/Supplemental Awards:** it is recommended that programme approval be considered by the ACE ASB.
 - ACE Programme Type C - Major/Minor Awards:** it is recommended that programme approval be considered by a College PAP.
 - ACE Programme Type C - Special Purpose/Supplemental Awards:** it is recommended that programme approval be considered by the relevant College Curriculum Committee.

Note: *In the case of Special Purpose/Supplemental Awards, Colleges/ACE may recommend to AB that the Full Programme Proposal be considered by a PAP rather than by the relevant College Curriculum Committee/ACE ASB.*

Academic Board has authority to:

- Approve the proposed award title and award type.
- Approve the proposal, subject to the fulfilment of conditions and/or requirements and recommendations.
- Withhold approval of the proposal pending further development.
- decide whether Stage 2 (Full Programme Approval) will be delegated to a CPAP/ACE PAP, UPAP, or Doctoral PAP for Major/Minor Awards.
- Decide whether Stage 2 (Full Programme Approval) will be delegated to the Curriculum Committee of the relevant College/ACE Academic Standards Board or to a Programme Approval Panel, for Special Purpose/Supplemental Awards.
- Approve External Assessor nominations.

5.3.3 COMMUNICATION OF ACADEMIC BOARD DECISION

The decisions of Academic Board regarding each Outline Programme Proposal will be circulated by the Academic Secretariat to Heads of Colleges and College Managers/ACE Manager, Head of APAR and other University Officers as appropriate.

The College Manager/ACE Manager is required to communicate AB's decision and any recommendations/observations internally within their College/ACE, to the Programme Co-ordinator and other staff, as appropriate.

The College Manager/ACE Manager is required to ensure that recommendations/observations of AB are addressed in the Full Programme Proposal Form.

5.4 STAGE 2 – FULL PROGRAMME APPROVAL

Stage 2 is designed to enable the delegation of authority for full programme approval to Colleges/ACE Programme Approval Panels (PAPs), while retaining University level approval for programmes that are deemed 'high risk' (UPAPs). It assures Academic Board and Academic Council that proposed programmes are of an appropriate academic standard and adhere to institutional policies and procedures, whilst enabling the University to meet its commitment to delegate activities to Colleges in keeping with its restructuring aims and objectives.

Stage 2 of the approval process provides appropriate opportunity for formally constituted PAPs (College PAP - CPAP, ACE PAP, University PAP - UPAP, Doctoral PAP - DPAP), to undertake detailed scrutiny of proposed curricula and learning, teaching and assessment strategies. PAP membership is designed to retain University oversight over the programme approval process, as well as enabling external subject expertise and student representation to meet [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance](#).

Stage 2 has been specifically configured to enable:

- (a) Employer and peer review by external subject experts' involvement in the programme approval process to ensure an enhancement-led approach to curriculum development and design. This also provides greater confidence that the programme design meets academic, student and employer requirements.
- (b) Student involvement to ensure appropriate input from potential applicants and to meet standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education area (see [Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes](#)).
- (c) Programme Team engagement with external peers to promote good practice from elsewhere in the higher education sector nationally and internationally.
- (d) Reduces the burden of post-approval administration and expedites the opening up of programmes for recruitment.

5.4.1 FULL PROGRAMME PROPOSAL FORM

The Full Programme Proposal Form (FPP) can be found on the APAR website ([here](#)). All proposals must be submitted on the correct form. As forms may be updated annually, the form should be downloaded from the APAR form bank as required. Outdated forms submitted for approval will be returned to the proposer by the School/College/ACE.

The purpose of the FPP is to provide information on the rationale, the curriculum and associated teaching, delivery and assessment methods, the marketing and recruitment strategies, etc. for the consideration of the PAP. The information provided in the FPP will directly inform student recruitment, registration and examination. Ref to providing resources

The Programme Co-ordinator is responsible for completing the FPP, including the Academic Statement (Part A) and the Resources Statement (Part B), in line with the University's processes as set out in this Handbook and the [Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes](#), and in consultation with the College Manager/ACE Manager. In drawing up the detailed proposal, the Programme Co-ordinator will consult with cognate Schools/Departments, external examiners or other sources of academic expertise, potential employers, relevant professional bodies as well as students and recent graduates of related programmes.

The Programme Co-ordinator in consultation with the College Manager of the Lead College shall ensure that all Head(s) of participating School(s)/Department(s) and the Head(s) of participating College(s) sign the FPP Form.*

The College Manager of the Lead College is responsible for submitting the final version of the FPP to the Curriculum Committee of the Lead College for review and endorsement in accordance with their local procedures and deadlines. Each College/ACE will determine the level of review and/or endorsement required, prior to submission of the FPP to the PAP.

*** Note:** For interdisciplinary programmes, the College Manager of the Lead College must ensure that the fully developed FPP is submitted to the College Manager of all participating Colleges for consideration and sign-off in accordance with their local procedures. (The policy governing interdisciplinary programmes can be found [here](#).)

5.4.1.1 Points to note at FPP Stage

- *Dual Award*

The Programme Co-ordinator must conduct due diligence of the participating institution's curriculum and submit the evidence of due diligence with the FPP to the College Manager. The Programme Co-ordinator, in consultation with the College Manager of the Lead College, must contact the Academic Secretary with regard to preparation of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or other appropriate agreement, which must be available for information at the PAP.

- *External Partnership(s)*

The Programme Co-ordinator, in consultation with the College Manager of the Lead College, must contact the Academic Secretary with regard to preparation of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or other appropriate agreement, which must be available for information at the PAP.

5.5 PROGRAMME APPROVAL PANELS (PAPs)

The approval process provides appropriate opportunity for formally constituted Programme Approval Panels (PAPs) (College PAP - CPAP, ACE PAP, University PAP - UPAP, Doctoral PAP - DPAP), to undertake detailed review of proposed curricula and learning, teaching and assessment strategies. PAP membership is designed to retain University oversight over the programme approval process, as well as enabling external subject expertise and student representation to meet [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance](#). A Programme Approval Panel may be established for individual or cognate groups of programmes.

The College Manager/ACE Manager, in ensuring appropriate discharge of administrative arrangements for the PAP meeting (see also [Administration of the PAP](#) below), shall ensure timely nomination of all members of the PAP following Outline Approval by Academic Board. APAR will undertake this role in the case of University/Doctoral Programme Approval Panels.

5.5.1 PROGRAMME APPROVAL PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Member	CPAP	ACE PAP	UPAP	Doctoral PAP
Chair	<p>Chair of relevant College Curriculum Committee, or an alternate as approved by the College Council</p> <p><i>Where the programme is anchored in the School of the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee, an alternate Chair shall be appointed by the Head of College.</i></p>	<p>ACE Academic Standards Board member from the relevant College, <u>or</u> Chair of the relevant College Curriculum Committee, <u>or</u> other member of the relevant College nominated by the Head of that College.</p> <p><i>The Chair of the ACE PAP should not be from the School/ Department sponsoring the programme</i></p>	<p>Chair of the ADSC (or Deputy Chair);</p> <p><i>Where the programme is anchored in the School/Department of the Chair of the UPAP, the UPAP shall be chaired by a nominee of the Senior Vice-President Academic and Registrar.</i></p>	Dean of Graduate Studies
College Members	<p>Up to 2 members of the College Curriculum Committee(s) as approved by College Council.</p> <p><i>College Members should not be members of programme team proposing the programme and should normally not be from the School/Department in which the programme is anchored.</i></p> <p>The College Manager may attend, or may be invited to attend, by the Chair.</p>	<p>Up to 2 members of the College Curriculum Committee(s) as nominated by the Head of the relevant College (or nominee)</p> <p><i>College members on the ACE PAP should not be members of the programme team proposing the programme and should normally not be from the School/Department in which the programme is anchored.</i></p>	<p>At least 1 member of each participating College Curriculum Committee, up to a maximum of 3, as approved by College Council.</p> <p><i>Colleges Members on the UPAP should not be members of programme team proposing the programme and should normally not be from the School/Department in which the programme is anchored.</i></p> <p>The College Manager of the Lead College (and College Managers of participating Colleges) may attend, or may be invited to attend, by the Chair).</p>	—

AC / AB / ADSC Members	1 member from AC/AB/ADSC <i>Contact APAR for list of eligible members</i>	1 member from AC/AB/ADSC <i>Contact APAR for list of eligible members</i>	2 members from AC/AB/ADSC <i>Contact APAR for list of eligible members</i>	1 member from AC/AB/ADSC <i>Contact APAR for list of eligible members</i>
ACE Member	—	Director, Adult Continuing Education (or nominee)	—	—
External Assessors	2 independent External Assessors nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator and approved by Academic Board. <i>It is preferable to have both Assessors attend in person.</i> <i>Where one or more programmes of study are under consideration the number of external assessors shall reflect the range of disciplines in the cognate area, as appropriate</i>	2 independent External Assessors nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator (in consultation with ACE Academic Director) and approved by Academic Board <i>It is preferable to have both Assessors attend in person.</i> <i>Where one or more programmes of study are under consideration the number of external assessors shall reflect the range of disciplines in the cognate area, as appropriate</i>	2 independent External Assessors nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator and approved by Academic Board. <i>It is preferable to have both Assessors attend in person.</i> <i>Where one or more programmes of study are under consideration the number of external assessors shall reflect the range of disciplines in the cognate area, as appropriate</i>	1 independent External Assessor nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator and approved by Academic Board
Employer Representative(s)	<u>At least</u> 1 Employer Representative, nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator and approved by College Council to attend in person or alternatively via video conferencing	<u>At least</u> 1 Employer Representative, nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator and approved by College Council to attend in person or alternatively via video conferencing	<u>At least</u> 1 Employer Representative, nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator and approved by College Council of the Lead College (in attendance in person or via video conferencing).	—
Graduate School Representatives	—	—	—	Head of Graduate School(s) of College(s) from which proposal originates AND Head of another Graduate School
Office for Academic Affairs	—	—	Academic Secretary or nominee	Academic Secretary (or nominee)
Office for Academic	Head of APAR (or nominee)	Head of APAR (or nominee)	Head of APAR (or nominee)	Head of APAR (or nominee)

Programmes and Regulations				
Student Representative(s)	<u>At least 1</u> student from the School/Department in which the programme is anchored	<u>At least 1</u> student from the School/Department in which the programme is anchored	<u>At least 1</u> student from the School/Department in which the programme is anchored	<u>At least 1</u> student from the School/Department in which the programme is anchored
Partner Institution(s)	—	—	For collaborative programmes involving an external partner(s) institution, the Chair may invite a senior representative of the partner institution(s) to participate on the Panel	—
Programme Team	A representative group of the Programme Team <i>Note: the Programme Team are not members of the CPAP.</i>	A representative group of the Programme Team <i>Note: the Programme Team are not members of the ACE PAP</i>	A representative group of the Programme Team <i>Note: the Programme Team are not members of the UPAP</i>	A representative group of the Programme Team <i>Note: the Programme Team are not members of the DPAP</i>
Programmes with Online or Blended Learning Component	Relevant expert(s) (pedagogical and technical) should be invited to attend (contact Instructional Design Team for further information)	Relevant expert(s) (pedagogical and technical) be invited to attend (contact Instructional Design Team for further information)	Relevant expert(s) (pedagogical and technical) be invited to attend (contact Instructional Design Team for further information)	Relevant expert(s) (pedagogical and technical) be invited to attend (contact Instructional Design Team for further information)
Secretary	Provided by the College	ACE Manager (or nominee)	Provided by APAR	Provided by APAR
In Attendance	Other relevant persons may be invited to attend by the Chair or Head of APAR but will not form part of the panel membership	Other relevant persons may be invited to attend by the Chair or Head of APAR but will not form part of the panel membership	Other relevant persons may be invited to attend by the Chair or Head of APAR but will not form part of the panel membership	—

5.5.2 REMIT AND AUTHORITY OF THE PROGRAMME APPROVAL PANEL

Programme Approval Panels (PAPs) operate under delegated authority from Academic Board, and are required to ensure that:

- Programmes are designed in accordance with the University's Policies and Procedures as set down in the [Policies, Regulations and Guidelines governing academic programme](#) document.
- Aims and learning outcomes are clear and coherent and the proposed NFQ level of the award is in accordance with national standards.
- Curricula, teaching, learning and assessment methods enable students to reach the appropriate standard to achieve the award. In the case of dual awards particular attention must be paid to the portion of the curriculum delivered by the partner institution and adequate due diligence must have been performed ([see here](#)).
- Student support arrangements are appropriate and sufficient to enable the student to achieve their award aim.
- There are sufficient resources – such as human, financial and physical - to support proposed programme aims and objectives.
- There are adequate arrangements to support the student experience and monitor student performance, particularly with respect to programmes offered through online/blended learning.
- Programmes take appropriate account of relevant external discipline benchmarks and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements.

5.5.2.1 Role of the Programme Team

A representative group from the Programme Team (including the Programme Co-ordinator) is required to attend the PAP. The Programme Co-ordinator should ensure that the Programme Team consists of members with the appropriate expertise to speak to each area of the programme. The Team will be invited to make a short presentation to the Panel outlining the aims, rationale, target market, programme management and assessment strategy (including an overview of how assessments map to Programme Learning Outcomes) for the Programme. The Panel members will consider the documentation and pose questions, as appropriate, based on the documentation and presentation. The Programme Team will withdraw from the meeting at the end of the discussion to enable Panel members deliberate in private and reach a decision on approval or otherwise, of the programme. It is at the discretion of the Chair to invite the Programme Team to remain throughout this part of the process.

It is important to note that the Programme Team are not members of the PAP.

5.5.2.2 Role of the External Assessors

The primary role of the External Assessors is to act as independent discipline experts. The Assessors may comment on any aspect of the proposal or other relevant topic. In particular, they may be invited to consider:

- Admissions criteria and the targeted student market.
- The suitability of programme content having regard to the stated aims and objectives.
- Appropriateness of the programme title.
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies (including alignment of module and programme learning outcomes with assessment methods), and workload balance/assessment load.
- Whether the proposed programme meets the academic quality and standards of similar programmes offered by other institutions.
- The Recruitment Statement and whether it adequately promotes the programme.

It is preferable to have both External Assessors present in person at the PAP. If this is not possible, at least one External Assessor is required to be present in person, while the second may participate *via* phone conference call/video conference. In exceptional circumstances, where an External Assessor cannot be present or participate *via* phone/video link, they are required to present a written report. In this instance, the programme cannot be approved until that report is considered by the Chair of the PAP.

5.5.2.3 Role of the Employer Representative

At least one employer representative, nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator, should be nominated to the PAP, and should attend in person. The Employer Representative may comment on any aspect of the proposal or other relevant topic.

5.5.3 ADMINISTRATION OF THE PAP

In the case of CPAP/ACE PAP, the College Manager/ACE Manager shall ensure the appropriate discharge of administrative arrangements, and is responsible for ensuring appropriate administrative/secretariat support for the PAP meeting. He/she shall also ensure that all programme documentation is of the appropriate quality for review, and has been circulated to the PAP at least 10 working days prior to the meeting. He/she will ensure that the minute of the relevant Academic Board meeting(s) and the OPP are available to the Secretary and Chair of the PAP, if required for reference during panel discussion. The OPP will not be circulated to the panel in advance of the meeting. APAR will undertake this function in the case of UPAP/DPAP.

The College Manager shall ensure that due process has been completed and that the documentation is acceptable on administrative grounds to proceed to the PAP for consideration, including sign-off by

all relevant parties. Resource sign-off should be confirmed by the College Manager of the Lead College in advance of the PAP; hard copy signatures retained by College Office.

In the case of a UPAP/DPAP, APAR shall ensure that the documentation is acceptable on administrative grounds to proceed to the PAP for consideration.

In the case of ACE PAPs, the ACE Manager, in conjunction with the Programme Co-ordinator, is responsible for ensuring that due process has been completed and that the documentation is acceptable on administrative grounds to proceed to the PAP for consideration, including sign-off by all relevant parties. Resource sign-off should be confirmed by the ACE Manager in advance of the PAP.

The following documentation should be circulated to PAP members and attendees at least 10 working days prior to the meeting:

- Panel Membership, Remit and Authority
- Draft Agenda
- Full Programme Proposal including DMIS report of modules and MOA/other relevant agreement(s)
- Due diligence documentation (if appropriate)
- Additional supporting documentation.

5.5.3.1 Model Agenda for the PAP

The Secretary to the PAP, in liaison with the Chair, shall prepare the Draft Agenda for the meeting, which shall normally take the following form:

- Private meeting of the panel to familiarise panel members with the programme approval process (stages 1 and 2), finalise the agenda and identify any issues for discussion. The Chair may refer to the relevant Academic Board minute if appropriate.
- Introduction of the Programme Team and brief introduction to the programme by the Programme Co-ordinator.
- Panel and Programme Team discuss the programme in detail, using the following headings as a guide:
 - **General overview and rationale:** Confirmation that any issues/considerations from Academic Board have been addressed; Rationale for the programme; Alignment of programme with industry needs/norms.
 - **Academic issues:** Appropriateness of title; Clarity of programme aims and objectives; Programme content and structure; Teaching, learning and assessment strategies, including alignment of module and programme learning outcomes with assessment methods, with particular emphasis on due diligence in the case of dual awards; Workload balance/assessment load.
 - **Student-centred aspects of the programme:** Admissions/entry criteria and target student market; Student recruitment and advertising strategy; Internationalisation (does the programme structure allow international students to fully participate in an inclusive way?); Work placement (are international students also able to access work

placement options e.g. visa requirements/additional supports); Student academic and pastoral support.

- **Resources and facilities:** Overall resourcing required for the programme including human, financial and physical; Facilities available to the programme.
- **Documentation:** Confirmation of sign-off by relevant participating Schools/Departments/Colleges and Financial Analysts (hard copies to be retained by College Office/ACE/APAR, as appropriate).
- Private meeting of the Panel to discuss conditions/recommendations and conclusions.
- The Chair presents conditions/recommendations and conclusions to the programme team (including identification of examples of good practice).

5.5.4 DECISIONS OF THE PAP

The PAP has the authority to:

- a) Approve a programme.
- b) Approve a programme subject to minor amendments/editorial changes to be completed as soon as possible and suggested recommendations for improvement, which may be considered by the Programme Team at their discretion.
- c) Approve a programme subject to the fulfilment of conditions. Conditions are requirements which must be met prior to opening a programme up for recruitment or prior to the start of the programme, as appropriate.
- d) Withhold approval of a programme pending further development.

5.5.4.1 The PAP Report

The Report should be written to cover the range of topics discussed and should be structured in accordance with agenda headings. The intention is to reflect the robust discussion, noting any issues of concern or precedent, as these reports will be used to inform the University's annual monitoring and periodic review of programmes. The Report should present conditions/recommendations, agreed by the PAP, in table format. The Report shall conclude with a clear agreed statement of the approval outcomes as defined above.

The PAP should routinely identify examples of good practice and commend these to the College Council (or relevant ACE Committee) in the PAP Report. Issues requiring the attention, and/or consideration, of AB or other relevant committee should also be noted in the PAP report.

The Chair reviews the Draft Report prior to circulation to all members of the panel for comment and sign-off. The finalised Report is then issued to the Programme Team for action and follow-up.

The Programme Team shall respond to the PAP by completing the table in the PAP Report demonstrating how conditions/recommendations have been addressed; and by revising and updating

the FPP and all associated documentation. The Team's response to the PAP and revised documentation must be submitted to the Chair and Secretary of the PAP for review and sign-off.

Where a change in title of the programme is a condition of approval, the change in title must be reported back to AB via the Secretary, for noting.

Where the proposed English language requirements deviate from the approved College requirements, the proposed requirements must be submitted to AB via the Secretary, for approval.

The Secretary will forward the finalised CPAP/ACE PAP Report and finalised programme documentation to APAR for implementation *, and to the College Manager of the Lead College/ACE for their record (* *responsibility for implementation of the new ACE programme will lie with ACE*).

APAR will forward finalised UPAP Report and finalised programme documentation to the College Manager of the Lead College/ACE for their record.

The College Manager/ACE Manager will submit the PAP Report to the College Council/ACE Academic Standards Board for noting and to take forward any relevant actions as specified by the PAP. Having received and considered the report, the College/ACE ASB shall include a summary of any action agreed in the College/ACE report to Academic Board for information.

All PAP Reports shall be submitted by the Secretary of the PAP to the Academic Development and Standards Committee to enable it to discharge its responsibilities with respect to the quality and standards of UCC programmes. ADSC will bring issues to the attention of, and recommend action, to the relevant Board/Committee as appropriate.

All finalised PAP reports and finalised programme documentation will be held on file by APAR in its role as the central repository for all programme approval documentation.

An annual report of all new programme approvals and associated timelines is compiled by APAR and submitted to ADSC and AB for noting.

5.6 PROGRAMMES APPROVED BY COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE/ACE ACADEMIC STANDARDS BOARD

In the case of Special Purpose/Supplemental Awards, Colleges/ACE may recommend to Academic Board that a programme be considered by a full PAP rather than by the relevant College Curriculum Committee/ACE ASB.

Where AB delegates full programme approval to either the College Curriculum Committee or the ACE ASB, written input from the current subject external examiner and participation of a representative from APAR, will be required at the relevant approval meeting. The Programme Co-ordinator/Programme Team should make a presentation at the College Curriculum Committee/ACE ASB approval meeting.

5.6.1 ADMINISTRATION OF THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE /ACE ACADEMIC STANDARDS BOARD APPROVAL MEETING

The College Manager/ACE Manager shall ensure the appropriate discharge of administrative arrangements, and is responsible for ensuring secretariat support for the approval meeting. He/she will ensure that the minute of the relevant Academic Board meeting(s) and the Outline Programme Proposal are available to the committee, if required for reference during discussion.

The College Manager/ACE Manager shall ensure that due process has been completed and that the documentation is acceptable on administrative grounds to proceed to the approval meeting for consideration, including sign-off by all relevant parties. Resource sign-off should be confirmed by the College Manager/ACE Manager in advance of the meeting.

The following documentation should be circulated to committee members and attendees, at least 10 working days in advance of the meeting:

- Agenda
- Full Programme Proposal including DMIS report of modules
- Report from the Subject Extern
- Additional supporting documentation (if relevant).

5.6.2 ROLE OF THE SUBJECT EXTERN

The Subject Extern shall act as an independent discipline expert. The Extern will be asked to provide written comments to the College Curriculum Committee/ACE Academic Standards Board addressing the areas specified below. The College Curriculum Committee/ACE Board of Studies may also wish to engage with the subject external examiner via phone conference, if required. While the Subject Extern may comment on any aspect of the proposal, he/she should address the following areas in particular when reviewing the programme:

- Admission criteria and the target student market.
- The suitability of the programme content having regard to the stated aims and objectives.
- Appropriateness of the programme title.
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies (including alignment of module and programme learning outcomes with assessment methods), and workload balance/assessment load.
- Whether the proposed programme meets the academic quality and standards of similar programmes offered by other institutions.
- The Recruitment Statement and whether it adequately promotes the programme.

The Full Programme Proposal (including Programme Learning Outcomes, Entry Requirements, Structure and Content, Marks and Standards, Module descriptions and the Recruitment Statement) should be sent to the Subject Extern, at least 10 working days before the approval meeting.

The Subject Extern is required to submit a written report to the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee/ACE ASB in advance of the relevant meeting. On consideration of the Extern's report, the Chair **may** invite the Extern to participate at the approval meeting *via* phone/video conference.

Note: *Programme approval cannot be finalised until extern comments have been received and considered by the College Curriculum Committee/ACE ASB and appropriate modifications agreed.*

5.6.3 DECISION OF THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE/ACE ACADEMIC STANDARDS BOARD

A report should be written to cover the range of topics discussed and may be structured in accordance with agenda headings. The intention is to reflect the discussions, noting any issues of concern or precedent, as these reports will be used to inform the University's annual monitoring and periodic review of programmes. The report should present conditions/recommendations, agreed at the approval meeting, in table format, for completion by the Programme Team, demonstrating how conditions/recommendations have been addressed. The report shall conclude with a clear agreed statement of the approval outcomes as defined above.

The College/ACE Manager shall submit the report and finalised programme documentation to APAR for file and implementation* purposes (** responsibility for implementation of the new ACE programme will lie with ACE*).

In addition, the College Manager/ACE Manager will submit the report to the College Council/ACE ASB for noting and to take forward any relevant actions as specified by the Committee.

All finalised Reports and finalised programme documentation will be held on file by APAR in its role as the central repository for all programme approval documentation.

An annual report of all new programme approvals and associated timelines is compiled by APAR and submitted to ADSC and Academic Board for noting.

5.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APPROVED NEW PROGRAMME

The Chair, with the support of the Secretary to the PAP/Programme Approval Meeting, is responsible for ensuring that all programme documentation has been revised by the Programme Team in accordance with the Report. The finalised Report and programme documentation (including any amendments resulting from the approval meeting) shall be submitted to APAR to implement and facilitate opening up of the programme for recruitment and publication of the curriculum.

In the case of programmes administered by ACE, the Manager will arrange for the programme to be opened up for recruitment and for publication of the curriculum.

No programme may register students or commence until final sign-off by the relevant PAP Chair (or Chair of the relevant Committee in the case of Special Purpose/Supplemental Awards).

The approved curriculum data set for each new programme is recorded and published online in the following University publications, which represent the University's official contract with the student:

- [University Calendar](#) *
- [Book of Modules](#) *
- [Marks and Standards](#)

* **Note:** ACE programmes and module information are recorded separately on the ACE website <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace/>.

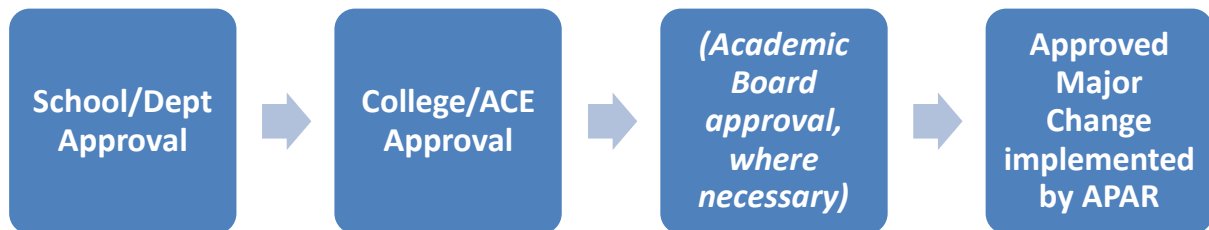
The published curriculum data set underpins the University business process functions, such as:

- student recruitment
- student registration
- lecture and examination timetabling
- examination marks returns
- scheduling and administration of Examination Boards
- calculation of FTEs, which informs resource allocation
- curriculum reporting to internal and external bodies.

6 MAJOR CHANGES TO EXISTING PROGRAMMES

Changes classified as Major can be found in [section 4.1](#). Proposed changes to the University Curriculum must be processed in accordance with the University approved procedures outlined in this Handbook and the associated [Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes](#).

6.1 DIAGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW



6.2 TIMELINES

The [Schedule Governing Approval, Validation and Configuration of the University Curriculum](#) sets out the timetable for changes to all mainstream, ACE and International Education programmes and modules.

Each College/ACE will have its own local procedures and deadlines to facilitate the processing and approval of major changes to existing programmes, in order to meet the university schedule.

6.3 DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION STAGE

Proposals for curriculum changes will come from a variety of sources both internal and external. Preliminary discussions will normally occur within a School/Department or between groups of Schools/Departments. Where External Examiner(s) have made any suggestions/comments regarding an existing programme, these should be considered when proposing changes to that programme.

In the case of all Major Changes, all affected School/Departments/Colleges must be consulted as early as possible in the process. The onus is on the proposer of the change to ensure that the Programme Co-ordinator/Director of any affected programme has been consulted and will undertake to submit any consequential changes to his/her programme to the relevant School/College/ACE for approval.

The MM1 form will prompt and guide you on the relevant consultations and the signatories required.

If the proposed Major Change affects students taking the programme, the School/Department should consult with the students; the change cannot proceed without the written agreement of all students.

6.3.1 POINTS TO NOTE AT DEVELOPMENT STAGE

○ *Interdisciplinary Programmes*

Where changes are proposed to an existing interdisciplinary programme, consultation with all participating Schools/Departments/Colleges should be undertaken as early as possible, to avoid delays in the development and approval of the proposal. Reference should be made to the Academic Council Policy Governing Interdisciplinary programmes (see [Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes](#)).

○ *Online and Blended Learning Programmes*

Where the proposed Major Change involves an online or blended learning programme or component, advice should be sought from the Instructional Design Team.

6.4 MM1/MM2 MAJOR AND MINOR CHANGES FORMS

Proposal forms for changes to existing programmes can be found on the APAR website. All proposals for Major Changes must be submitted on the correct form ([MM1](#) or [MM2](#) for ACE Programmes); and must be completed by the Programme Co-ordinator and submitted to the School Administrator/College/ACE Manager for approval, in accordance with local procedures and deadlines. As forms may be updated annually, the form should be downloaded from the APAR form bank as required; outdated forms submitted for approval may be returned to the proposer by the School/College/ACE.

In the case of interdisciplinary programmes, the College Manager of the Lead College shall liaise with the College Managers of all participating Colleges and ensure that documentation is submitted for sign-off to all participating Colleges in accordance with local procedures and deadlines in each College.

6.5 ROLE OF THE APPROVAL BODY IN CONSIDERING MAJOR CHANGES

It is recommended that a representative(s) from the Programme Team (including the Programme Co-ordinator) be invited to attend the meeting considering the proposed Major Change.

In reviewing the Major Change, the Committee should consider the following:

- Classification of change: the Committee has primary responsibility for a critical examination of the proposals presented, and for correctly classifying changes as Major or Minor (see [here](#) for University's classification of Major and Minor Changes).
- Has all relevant paperwork and supporting documentation been submitted to inform the review of the proposed change?
- Is the NFQ level and the award title, as originally, approved still appropriate?

- Are the proposed changes in accordance with the University’s Policies and Procedures?
- Where a new exit award is being introduced, are the aims and learning outcomes clear and coherent and is the proposed NFQ level of the award in accordance with national standards?
- Review associated DMIS Module Report for new modules/module changes where appropriate.
- Do the curricula, teaching, learning and assessment methods in the revised programme enable students to reach the appropriate standard to achieve the award?
- The alignment of assessment to module learning outcomes, and in turn the alignment of module learning outcomes to the programme learning outcomes.
- Existing cohorts of students are not materially disadvantaged by the proposed change. If the proposed Major Change affects students currently taking the programme, the School/Department should consult with the students; the change cannot proceed without the written agreement of all affected students.
- Where the proposed change involves the introduction (or change) of an online or blended learning component a member of the Instructional Design Team should be invited to the meeting.
- Colleges/ACE are required to liaise with the relevant offices in Academic Affairs to ensure there are no adverse operational/implementation issues arising from any proposed Major Change prior to final approval. Feedback from this consultation should be notified by the College Manager/ACE Manager to the relevant College Committee/ACE Academic Standards Board.
- Occasionally, proposed changes may be so substantial that the proposal should be classified and processed as a new programme. Colleges/ACE may consult APAR for guidance in such instances. The Senior Vice-President Academic and Registrar will bring a recommendation to Academic Board for final decision on the classification of the proposal, if necessary.
- Impact of the change on other sections of the University Calendar other than the programme description (e.g. General Regulations sections, Scholarships & Prizes, etc.); these changes must also be included in the Change Form.

6.6 APPROVAL OF MAJOR CHANGES

6.6.1 MAJOR CHANGES REQUIRING APPROVAL AT COLLEGE/ACE ACADEMIC STANDARDS BOARD LEVEL

The College/ACE ASB (operating under delegated authority from Academic Board) has the authority to:

- Approve a Major Change.
- Approve a Major Change subject to minor amendments/editorial changes.
- Reject a Major Change.
- Endorse certain Major Changes for approval at AB (see classification in [section 4.1](#))

For each Major Change considered by a College/ACE, it is recommended that the minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting/ACE ASB record the range of issues discussed, and the final decision.

6.6.2 MAJOR CHANGES REQUIRING APPROVAL BY ACADEMIC BOARD

Following endorsement by College(s)/ACE, certain Major Changes must be submitted by the College Manager/ACE Manager to AB as a separate Agenda item, for final approval (see Classification of Changes [here](#)). The schedule of AB meetings and the “Major Changes to Existing Programmes Coversheet” can be found [here](#).

Following each AB meeting, the minute regarding Major Change Proposals will be circulated by the Academic Secretariat to Heads of Colleges College Managers/ACE Manager, APAR and other University Officers, as appropriate.

6.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR CHANGE

Following approval by the College, the finalised programme documentation, incorporating any changes requested at the meeting, along with confirmation that all signatures have been obtained as required, shall be submitted by the relevant College Manager to APAR in a composite report for implementation (including consultation with the relevant recruitment offices) and publication.

In the case of ACE programmes, following approval by the ACE Academic Standards Board, the finalised programme documentation, incorporating any changes requested at the meeting, along with confirmation that all signatures have been obtained as required, shall be submitted by the Programme Co-ordinator to the ACE Manager for implementation and publication.

In the case of changes requiring approval by AB, the documentation as endorsed by College/ACE ASB and approved by AB shall be used by APAR/ACE for implementation.

6.8 COMMUNICATION

6.8.1 NOTIFICATION OF FINAL APPROVAL WITHIN THE COLLEGE/ACE

The College/ACE Manager is required to communicate the College’s/ACE ASB’s or Academic Board’s decision internally within their College/ACE to the Programme Co-ordinator and other staff within the College/ACE as appropriate.

6.8.2 NOTIFICATION TO ADMISSIONS OFFICE(S)

Following approval, updated recruitment/promotional material should be submitted by the Programme Co-ordinator to the relevant Admissions Office(s), if appropriate.

7 MINOR CHANGES TO EXISTING PROGRAMMES AND CHANGES TO MODULES

Changes classified as Minor can be found in [section 4.2](#). Proposed changes to the University Curriculum must be processed in accordance with the University approved procedures outlined in this Handbook and the associated [Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes](#).

7.1 DIAGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW



7.2 TIMELINES

The [Schedule Governing Approval, Validation and Configuration of the University Curriculum](#) sets out the timetable for changes to all mainstream, ACE and International Education programmes and modules.

Each College/ACE will have its own local procedures and deadlines to facilitate the processing and approval of minor changes to existing programmes, in order to meet the university schedule.

7.3 DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION STAGE

Proposals for curriculum changes will come from a variety of sources both internal and external. Where External Examiner(s) have made any suggestions/comments regarding an existing programme, these should be considered when proposing changes to that programme.

In the case of all Minor Changes, all affected School/Departments/Colleges must be consulted as early as possible in the process. The onus is on the proposer of the change to ensure that the Programme Co-ordinator/Director of any affected programme has been consulted and will undertake to submit any consequential changes to his/her programme to the relevant School/College/ACE for approval.

The MM1 form will prompt and guide you on the relevant consultations and the signatories required.

7.4 MM1/MM2 MAJOR AND MINOR CHANGES FORMS

Proposal forms for changes to existing programmes can be found on the APAR website. All proposals for Minor Changes must be submitted on the correct form ([MM1](#) or [MM2](#) for ACE Programmes); and must be completed by the Programme Co-ordinator and submitted to the School Administrator/College/ACE Manager for approval, in accordance with local procedures and deadlines. As forms may be updated annually, the form should be downloaded from the APAR form bank as required; outdated forms submitted for approval may be returned to the proposer by the School/College/ACE.

Changes to modules/creation of new modules are submitted for approval to the relevant Department/School/College/ACE via the DMIS Online Book of Modules (see [here](#) for guidelines), in accordance with local procedures and deadlines.

7.5 ROLE OF THE APPROVAL BODY IN CONSIDERING MINOR CHANGES AND CHANGES TO MODULES

In reviewing the Minor Change, the Committee should consider the following:

- Classification of change: the Committee has primary responsibility for a critical examination of the proposals presented, and for correctly classifying changes as Major or Minor (see [here](#) for University's classification of Major and Minor Changes).
- Has all relevant paperwork and supporting documentation been submitted to inform the review of the proposed change?
- Are the proposed changes in accordance with the University's Policies and Procedures?
- Do the curricula, teaching, learning and assessment methods in the revised programme enable students to reach the appropriate standard to achieve the award?
- Knock-on effects for the programme description in the University Calendar, the module description in the Book of Modules and/or the programme Marks and Standards.
- The alignment of assessment to module learning outcomes, and in turn the alignment of module learning outcomes to the programme learning outcomes.
- Existing cohorts of students are not materially disadvantaged by the proposed change.
- Where the proposed change involves the introduction (or change) of an online or blended learning component has the Instructional Design Team been consulted?
- Review the Module Change Report for new modules/module changes.
- Impact of the change on other sections of the University Calendar other than the programme description (e.g. General Regulations sections, Scholarships & Prizes, etc.); these changes must also be included in the Change Form.
- Consider the impact of any Minor Change on the overall integrity of the programme as originally approved, especially where minor changes are introduced to a programme over a number of years consecutively.

7.6 APPROVAL OF MINOR CHANGES

Proposed Minor Changes must be submitted to College/ACE in accordance with the College/ACE approved local procedures and deadlines. Proposed changes will only be considered if submitted on the correct forms (available [here](#)).

Changes will normally be considered by a Curriculum Committee/ACE Academic Standards Board, which will recommend approval or otherwise to the College/ACE. A record of such decisions should be retained at College level.

In the case of interdisciplinary programmes, the Lead College will approve Minor Changes, in accordance with local procedures and deadlines.

Issues, if any, arising from consideration of Minor Changes will be forwarded to Academic Board for consideration, in consultation with APAR.

7.6.1 OUTCOMES OF APPROVAL PROCESS

The College/ACE ASB (operating under delegated authority from AB) has the authority to:

- Approve a Minor Change
- Approve a Minor Change subject to amendments/editorial changes
- Reject a Minor Change
- Reclassify the change as Major.

7.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHANGE

Following approval by the College, the finalised MM1 Form, incorporating any changes requested at the meeting shall be submitted by the relevant College Manager to APAR in a composite report for implementation and publication.

In the case of ACE programmes, following approval by the ACE ASB, the finalised MM2 Form, incorporating any changes requested at the meeting shall be submitted by the Programme Co-ordinator to the ACE Manager for implementation and publication.

Following College approval, all new/revised modules will be published by APAR in the Book of Modules. Following approval by the ACE ASB, the ACE Manager will arrange for implementation and publication.

7.8 COMMUNICATION

7.8.1 NOTIFICATION OF FINAL APPROVAL WITHIN THE COLLEGE/ACE

The College/ACE Manager is required to communicate the College's/ACE ASB's decision internally within their College/ACE to the Programme Co-ordinator and other staff within the College/ACE as appropriate.

7.8.2 NOTIFICATION TO ADMISSIONS OFFICE(S)

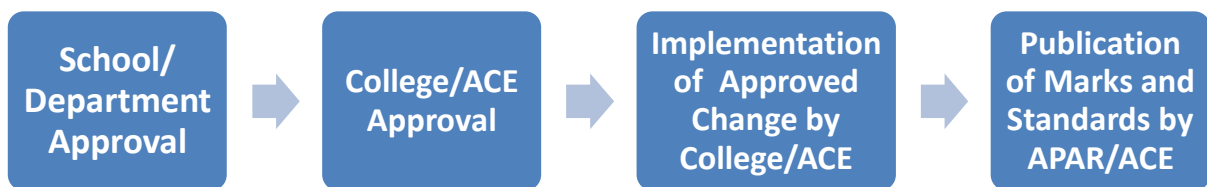
Following approval, updated recruitment/promotional material should be submitted by the Programme Co-ordinator to the relevant Admissions Office(s), if appropriate.

8 CHANGES TO MARKS AND STANDARDS

Changes to Marks and Standards, including changes arising as a result of changes to programme structure/modules (e.g. introduction of an exit award, change to pass/fail etc.) are submitted for approval by the School/Department to the relevant College/ACE, in accordance with their approved local procedures and deadlines. The Examinations and Records Officer (Dr Siobhán Cusack (Ext. 2405/s.cusack@ucc.ie)) must be consulted when proposing changes to Marks and Standards.

Where relevant, arrangements for the phasing out of existing programme requirements, as well as repeat arrangements for students failing the existing programme, must be included in the revised entry.

8.1 DIAGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW



8.2 TIMELINES

The Schedule Governing Approval, Validation and Configuration of the University Calendar may be found [here](#); the Schedule governs changes to all mainstream, ACE and International Education programmes and modules. Each College will have its own local procedures and deadlines governing the consideration and approval of Changes to Marks and Standards, in order to meet the University schedule. Proposed changes to the University Curriculum must be processed in accordance with the University approved procedures outlined in this Handbook; associated Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes may found [here](#).

8.3 CHANGES TO MARKS AND STANDARDS FORM

Proposal forms for Changes to Marks and Standards can be found on the APAR website [here](#). If the proposed change(s) to Marks and Standards has knock-on implications for the University Calendar, the change should be processed as part of a [Major](#) or [Minor](#) Change using the [MM1 Major and Minor Changes Form](#); changes that only affect the programme Marks and Standards entry should be processed via an MS1/MS2 Form; contact APAR for advice if required.

*** Note:** As forms may be updated annually the form should be downloaded from the APAR form bank as required; outdated forms submitted for approval may be returned to the proposer by the College/ACE.)

8.4 APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO MARKS AND STANDARDS

Proposed changes will normally be considered by a Curriculum Committee/ACE ASB, which will recommend approval or otherwise to the College/ACE. Issues, if any, arising from Colleges /ACE's consideration of changes will be forwarded to Academic Board for consideration, in consultation with APAR/Student Records and Examinations Office.

8.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES TO MARKS AND STANDARDS

Following Colleges' approval of Changes to Marks and Standards, each College is responsible for compiling the Marks and Standards for its programmes, and forwarding the finalised document to APAR for publication on the web at the commencement of the academic year.

Following ACE ASB approval of Changes to Marks and Standards, the ACE Manager is responsible for compiling the Marks and Standards for its programmes and for publication on the web at the commencement of the academic year.

9 TEMPORARY CESSATION OF AN ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

9.1 POLICY

The “Policy for the Temporary Cessation of an Academic Programme” (approved by Academic Board 04-Mar-16) clarifies the conditions under which an academic programme can be “parked” temporarily. A programme may be temporarily suspended for up to three years, following which it will either be (a) removed permanently from the list of programmes on offer by the university, (b) held in abeyance for longer with the approval of the College Executive or (c) re-introduced. Following the three-year suspension period, the College/ACE should advise APAR of the status of the programme going forward in accordance with the process outlined in the Policy. The full Policy for the Temporary Cessation of an Academic Programme may be found [here](#).

9.2 TEMPORARY CESSATION OF AN ACADEMIC PROGRAMME FORM

Form TS1 (Request for the Temporary Cessation of an Academic Programme) can be found on the APAR website ([here](#)). All proposals must be submitted on the correct form. As forms may be updated annually, the form should be downloaded from the APAR form bank as required; outdated forms submitted for approval may be returned to the proposer by the School/College/ACE.

9.3 TIMELINES

The College/ACE is the ultimate approval authority for the temporary suspension of an academic programme and will have its own local procedures and deadlines for the review and approval of the proposed cessation.

The request to temporarily suspend a postgraduate programme should normally be fully approved before PAC roll-forward (i.e. no later than October for entry in September of the following year); information on approval outside this timeline is available in the Policy document.

The request to temporarily suspend a non-CAO, locally recruited programme should normally be fully approved in advance of publication of the prospectus i.e. at least 18 months in advance of student intake).

The temporary cessation and re-activation of ACE programmes will be administered by ACE in accordance with this policy.

10 LATE CHANGES

A Late Change is a change to the *provisional* Calendar and Book of Modules/ACE section of the study@ucc website.

The publication of the *provisional* Calendar and Book of Modules (normally in July) drives student registration, as they directly inform the module choices and progression pathways presented to a student at the point of registration; incomplete or inaccurate information leads to confusion and delays in registration processes, with knock-on effects for the related business processes. In a twelve-week semester, any delay to registration can prevent a student from accessing laboratories, the Library, Blackboard etc.

A Late Change proposal will therefore only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Form L (Late Change Proposal Form) must be used when proposing a late change. Late Changes require approval by the relevant School/Department and College/ACE, in accordance with their own local procedures. Following approval, the Late Change Form and supporting documentation will be submitted by the College/ACE to APAR for implementation. Form L can be obtained by contacting APAR at acadprog@ucc.ie.

11 RETROSPECTIVE CHANGES

A Retrospective Change is a change to the *finalised* Calendar and Book of Modules/ACE section of the study@ucc website for the current academic year. The *finalised* Calendar and Book of Modules are made available on the first day of the new academic year, and represent the University's formal contract with the student.

A Retrospective Changes will therefore only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and must be agreed by all affected students.

Form R1 (Retrospective Change form) must be used if proposing a retrospective change. Retrospective changes require approval by the relevant School/Department and College/ACE, in accordance with their own local procedures. Following approval, the retrospective change form and supporting documentation should be submitted by the College/ACE to APAR for implementation. Form R1 can be obtained by contacting APAR at acadprog@ucc.ie.