

Curriculum modification – an overview

Quick start guide

What is Curriculum Modification?

Curriculum modification is the process by which changes can be made to existing modules or programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level study.

The process applies to both devolved (faculty based) and non-devolved (collaborative provision) programmes.

What are the different types of changes?

Not all changes can be made via curriculum modification and module and programme leaders will be given direction by their Head of Quality to determine the type of change that applies. The different types are:

- Curriculum modification
- Revalidation
- Housekeeping changes (approval through the Programme Management Board)

Why do we have a process?

Standards

It is important that the university has a record of how and when changes have taken place to ensure that quality standards are maintained. It is documented to show what the driver of change was and how this affects the curriculum.

External influence

Curriculum changes are often made as a result of suggestions by external examiners, or a change in policy (eg Universal Design for Learning (UDL)) and the process provides a record to show the response.

Students

Modifications are often in response to student views and it is important that the student voice has been acknowledged.

Enhancement

Modifications are about enhancing the curriculum and the programme and often in response to a change in academic thinking of a new area of

What changes are curriculum modifications?

- Change in programme title which does not affect the content or outcomes of the programme. Usually this will be in circumstances where the programme title has been revised for marketing and recruitment purposes
- Addition or removal of core or optional modules to a programme
- Changes to a programme's modules (change in content of modules) affecting one or more of the following: module title, credit value, location of delivery, method of delivery, learning outcomes, assessment methods, assessment volume or assessment weightings
- Change in mode of some of a programme's modules from taught to distance learning mode or vice versa
- Change or addition of mode, for example adding part-time mode to an existing full-time programme
- Change in delivery patterns

When is it a revalidation?

- Changes to the outcomes of a programme
- Change in programme title, except where the change is purely for marketing reasons and does not affect the content of the programme in any way. If a change in title reflects changes to the programme's content or outcomes a revalidation must be held
- Addition or removal of a significant number of a programme's modules
- Creation of a new pathway or 'stream' in a programme, leading to a new named award
- Change in mode of study for an entire programme from full or part-time to distance learning, or from distance learning to full or part-time, except where the programme team can demonstrate a significant track record for the development and delivery of distance learning provision

Considerations

- Not all changes will fit into the descriptions for curriculum modification or revalidation – discussions should take place with the [faculty Head of Quality/Quality Officer, Taught Programmes](#) to seek the appropriate route

Communication is key

Stakeholders to consult

- Students – see CMA
- External examiners – must be consulted for all changes to ensure that standards are maintained
- Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) – these must be consulted when a programme is accredited
- Timetable office – to be aware of module additions/deletions
- Partner institutions – if anything affects the programmes they run
- Other faculties/staff – who run modules/programmes affected by the change or have students affected

CMA

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) issued guidance to universities in October 2015. Information provided to students needs to be clear and fair. Any changes must be clearly communicated and not have a negative effect on the outcome of their programme or choices they have.

When making changes – ask the question

Do I need to consult my students?



Useful external resources

Publication	Web link
Victoria Pooley – Quality Officer (Taught Programmes)	victoria.pooley@dmu.ac.uk
DAQ guide to Modification	dmu.ac.uk/programme-modification
QAA Quality Code	Quality Code (qaa.ac.uk)
CMA guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers-and-students

The process

