



Department of Academic Quality (DAQ)

Programme Intake Suspension and Closure Guide

5th Edition

Valid from 2019/20

This guide is intended to provide support to all those involved in the suspension or closure of DMU programmes and collaborative provision.

For forms, templates, and further guidance please contact

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De Montfort University Programme Intake Suspension and Programme Closure Procedure

The University is subject to consumer rights legislation in relation to the accuracy of information we provide to applicants and students about their programme, including information about programme content and structure, tuition fees and other costs. This guidance document relates to programme content which may impact on information to applicants and students and includes advice about making such information easily accessible and transparent. Please refer to the Competition and Markets Authority guidance to HE providers on consumer rights legislation (March 2015) for more information if necessary at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers-and-students>

It is highly recommended that anyone involved in making changes to the curriculum completes the online Consumer Rights training – Protecting Students' Consumer Rights (available via My Communities – MyDevelopment - within Blackboard).

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1. Suspension of intake to a programme

A decision to suspend intake to a programme can be taken when for good and sufficient reason it would not be to the advantage of applicants or the University to run the programme. This might be on the grounds of loss of academic expertise and/or on the grounds of insufficient potential student numbers. The decision - making process is described below. The final decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor, advised by Executive Board.

The intake suspension procedure applies to all University taught programmes, wherever offered.

Once intake to a programme has been suspended, it is envisaged that in many cases this action will eventually lead to programme closure. However, it is possible that suspension of intake may be temporary and that the programme will recruit in future sessions (see Section 3 below).

Suspension of intake to a programme which has been advertised and which has ‘live’ applicants must be regarded as exceptional, given the direct adverse effects on individuals, the potential legal (and financial liabilities) and given the possible effects on the University’s good name.

Extreme care should be taken where a programme has live applicants and applicants should be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity. It is advised that programme teams should contact Legal Services in this instance for advice as soon as possible.

Consideration must also be given to progression from partners such as DMU International College (DMUIC) and Leicester College, to ensure the future intake of students has been considered.

COVID-19

If you are closing a programme in response to the COVID-19 situation, please be aware that this may count as a reportable event to the Office for Students. You must confirm if any applicants or offer holders are being offered a place on an alternative DMU.

If you are delaying the start date of a programme, this is not a reportable event, as long as the programme is still going ahead.

Please note the relevant points below:

A provider ceases or suspends delivery of any higher education courses to current students where reasonably equivalent alternative study options are not provided. And in particular where the provider:

- Is no longer delivering higher education to one or more groups of students
- Is ceasing or suspending delivery of one or more modes of study to current students, for example no longer delivering a course on a part-time basis
- Is ceasing or suspending delivery of higher education, in whole or in part, to current international students with a visa issued under a Tier 4 licence
- Is ceasing or suspending delivery of higher education in such a way that current students who expected to complete their course in the 2019-20 academic year are unable to do so
- Has lost accreditation by a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) because of changes to the delivery of higher education made as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

However, it is not a reportable event if the provider has:

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- moved teaching and assessment to an online or other delivery method
- temporarily closed a campus or the provider as a whole, as long as teaching continues to be delivered
- The provider is unable to award qualifications or credit for any unit, module or course

Other reportable events include where:

- The provider is unable to award qualifications or credit for any unit, module or course
- The provider decides to transfer students between its teaching sites
- A provider withdraws offers made to applicants due to start a course in or after April 2020 (and no longer intends to accept an intake where offers have already been made). This aspect is not reportable if the planned start date is simply postponed, or where offers have been transferred to an equivalent course due to start in 2020-21).

The full guidance can be found at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/5b874e9b-5588-4bec-b386-d83d59a20401/covid-19-reportable-events-guidance.pdf>

If you need to discuss your situation, please refer to Strategic Planning Services.

2. Criteria for suspending intake to a programme

Listed below are the criteria for suspending intake to a programme:

Strategic: Suspension of intake must demonstrably align with and contribute to the strategic direction of the Faculty and site concerned. The PVC/Dean must demonstrate this alignment as part of the case for suspension. It is expected that the PVC/Dean will have discussed the suspension with their Faculty Executive and/or Faculty Academic Committee and Strategic Partnership Services¹ in advance of discussions with Executive Board. The benefits of suspension must be identified and recorded.

Academic: If there are academic reasons for suspending intake to a programme these must be identified, substantiated and recorded in the case for suspension. They can include:

- Failure to contribute to the academic direction of the Faculty or subject area
- Long-term failings in quality or standards
- Poor student retention on a long-term basis
- Cohort size not sufficient to sustain the quality of the student experience

Economic: The PVC/Dean must provide Executive Board with a full cost-benefit analysis relating to the programme and its suspension, following consultation with Finance Office management accountants.

Market: If the reason for suspension of intake is poor recruitment, either in terms of numbers or standard of applicants, or both, the PVC/Dean must provide Executive Board with clear evidence which will also relate to the strategic and economic criteria detailed above. In most cases the reasons for suspension of intake will be a mixture of the above, and the case for suspension must refer to all relevant criteria.

¹ It is recognised however, that on occasions Chair's action may be taken where timescales do not allow this process to be followed completely. This is especially relevant to taught postgraduate courses.

3. Type of suspension

In taking a decision to suspend intake to a programme, the PVC/Dean should bear in mind the eventual outcome s/he wishes to achieve and the prime reasons for requiring a suspension. The type of suspension should be identified as one of the following:

One intake only

The Faculty may be in a position whereby it needs to suspend intake for one academic session, due, for example, to unusually low applications or short-term staffing issues. In such cases intake to the programme will recommence following the resolution of these issues. Where suspension of intake has been on the grounds of insufficient applications, the Faculty must carefully consider its marketing, recruitment and conversion plan when re-commencing recruitment to the programme.

Indefinite – may run in future

In some cases the Faculty may wish to suspend recruitment indefinitely, but retain the programme for future use. In such cases a time limit should be specified for reaching a decision regarding the future of the programme. This would normally be no longer than two academic sessions. At the expiry of this period the PVC/Dean/Associate Dean (Academic) and the FAC will consider the case for reinstating the programme, highlighting the factors which will ensure the future successful delivery of the programme. It is worth noting that programmes which 'lie fallow' in this manner for two or more academic sessions may have issues of currency upon their recommencement, and will be required to undergo a re-validation event prior to running as outlined in the DAQ Guide to Curriculum Modification.

Indefinite – leading to closure

In many cases the Faculty may take a decision to suspend intake to a programme with the aim of closure once current students have completed. Please see number 5 – Closure of Programmes – for details.

4. Procedure for suspending intake to a programme

The procedure for suspension is outlined below. In initiating the procedure, Faculties (Educational Partnerships division, Department of Academic Quality) in the case of suspension at a partner institution – for all collaborative provision) should complete the pro forma Annex A, which includes the following:

- Criteria for suspension (as detailed in item 2 above)
- Checklist of issues to be addressed when considering suspension of intake
- Details of who must be consulted, and who must approve the suspension
- Responsibilities for communicating suspension
- Action to be taken to close the programme, should this be the ultimate outcome of suspension

Step 1

The proposal to suspend intake will firstly involve discussion at Faculty Executive and/or Faculty Academic Committee and consultation with SPS followed by further consultation between the PVC/Dean of Faculty (or nominee) with Academic Board.

Primary consideration should be given to 'live' applicants and their status. This will establish the formal position and the options relating to applicants. If, after such consultation, the PVC/Dean wishes to proceed then s/he should advise Executive Board. The information provided on the pro forma Annex A will assist in the decision-making process. If a partner institution is affected, for example, where a partner institution runs part or all of the programme to be suspended, the partner institution must be involved in the consultation process; likewise, if the partner institution operates a feeder programme into the programme being suspended. Similarly, if a partner institution wishes to suspend intake to a DMU programme which it delivers, it must give early notice to the appropriate Faculty (Educational Partnerships division, Department of Academic Quality) so that the suspension procedure can be initiated.

It is of the utmost importance that when an intake is suspended the applicants are given as much notice as possible and that where possible and appropriate, applicants are offered alternative routes. For undergraduate programmes recruiting through UCAS or an equivalent clearing house, the normal final deadline for a decision to suspend intake to a programme starting in September/October of any year is the preceding **31 March**. Suspensions of intake requested after this deadline will be considered as exceptional, and will require the PVC/Dean to make a special case to Academic Board. Whilst the admissions processes and start deadlines for postgraduate programmes may vary across the University, decisions to suspend or close a postgraduate programme should be made **no later than the end of July** prior to a September start and the end of November for a January start.

Please note, to fit in with Academic Board meeting times, faculties are encouraged to submit all requests for intake suspension, closures and reinstatements to the October, December or February meeting to fit in with the 31 March deadline.

For collaborative provision, the Educational Partnerships or Global Partnerships Unit Account Manager/ faculty Link Tutor must be consulted to determine when a programme can be suspended

Step 2

Once a decision to suspend an intake has been made, the Programme Leader should **immediately** inform Marketing (if not already informed) for the programme information to be removed from the website and, if appropriate, the PVC/International Office. If the suspension creates any staffing consequences the Director of POD should be informed immediately. If the suspension affects one or more partner institutions, the PVC/Dean or Associate Dean (Academic) should also inform Educational Partnerships division and the Department of Academic Quality.

The PVC/Dean or Associate Dean (Academic) (or Educational Partnerships division, Department of Academic Quality, in the case of suspension at a partner institution) should:

- Forward the completed (and agreed) Annex A to Taught Programmes Management Committee (TPMC) if the programme is delivered at DMU and to the University Collaborative Provision Committee (UCPC) if the programme is delivered at a partner institution.
- inform TPMC/UCPC, as appropriate, of re-instated programmes following suspension
- ensure that De Montfort Students' Union is aware of the suspension/re-instatement

Step 3

Communication with Students

All programme intake suspensions will be notified to the De Montfort Students' Union by the Faculty as outlined in Step 2 above. It should be noted that the suspension of intake to a programme may, depending on the nature of the intake suspension, adversely affect the confidence of continuing students in the subject area. Where this is a possibility the Faculty Associate Dean (Academic) should liaise with the De Montfort Students' Union and programme student representatives to put into place an appropriate communication plan to reassure continuing students.

Where the intake suspension will ultimately lead to the closure of the programme it is particularly important that these communication and support strategies are in place and that the De Montfort Students' Union is involved from an early stage.

Existing students should not be affected by the closure of a programme and the programme should be 'taught out'. Where this is not possible, Legal Services should be consulted and provision should be made available to provide a suitable alternative, within the institution where possible. If this is not possible support should be provided to the students to find an alternative suitable provider and/or a partial refund of student fees may need to be offered. Prior to an offer of a refund being made, Legal Services should be engaged, with an expectation that the final decision on a refund is taken by the Chief Operating Officer.

Step 4

Following the decision to suspend an intake, the PVC/Dean and Associate Dean (Academic) will draw up an implementation plan (Annex B) agreed by and monitored through the Faculty Academic Committee.

5. Suspension

Where a programme has been suspended indefinitely, the 'end date' will be specified in the Annex B form. Any programmes suspended for more than two academic sessions will be required to undergo a re-validation event prior to running as outlined in the DAQ Guide to Curriculum Modification.

Suspension or closure at the request of a partner institution

Where the request for suspension of intake or programme closure comes from a partner institution, the following process shall apply:

- The Principal of the partner institution shall in the first instance notify the Partnerships Manager (within Educational Partnerships) who will initially seek the agreement of the appropriate PVC/Dean of Faculty.
- If the PVC/Dean agrees with the suspension or closure, the Director of Global Partnerships or Partnership Manager shall complete the form Annex A, and shall notify Executive Board.
- Educational Partnerships will ensure that the wider Department of Academic Quality team are notified early in the process, in order that the appropriate central departments can be given advanced warning.
- Students and applicants should be given as much notice of the decision as possible.

6. Closure

Closure of programme

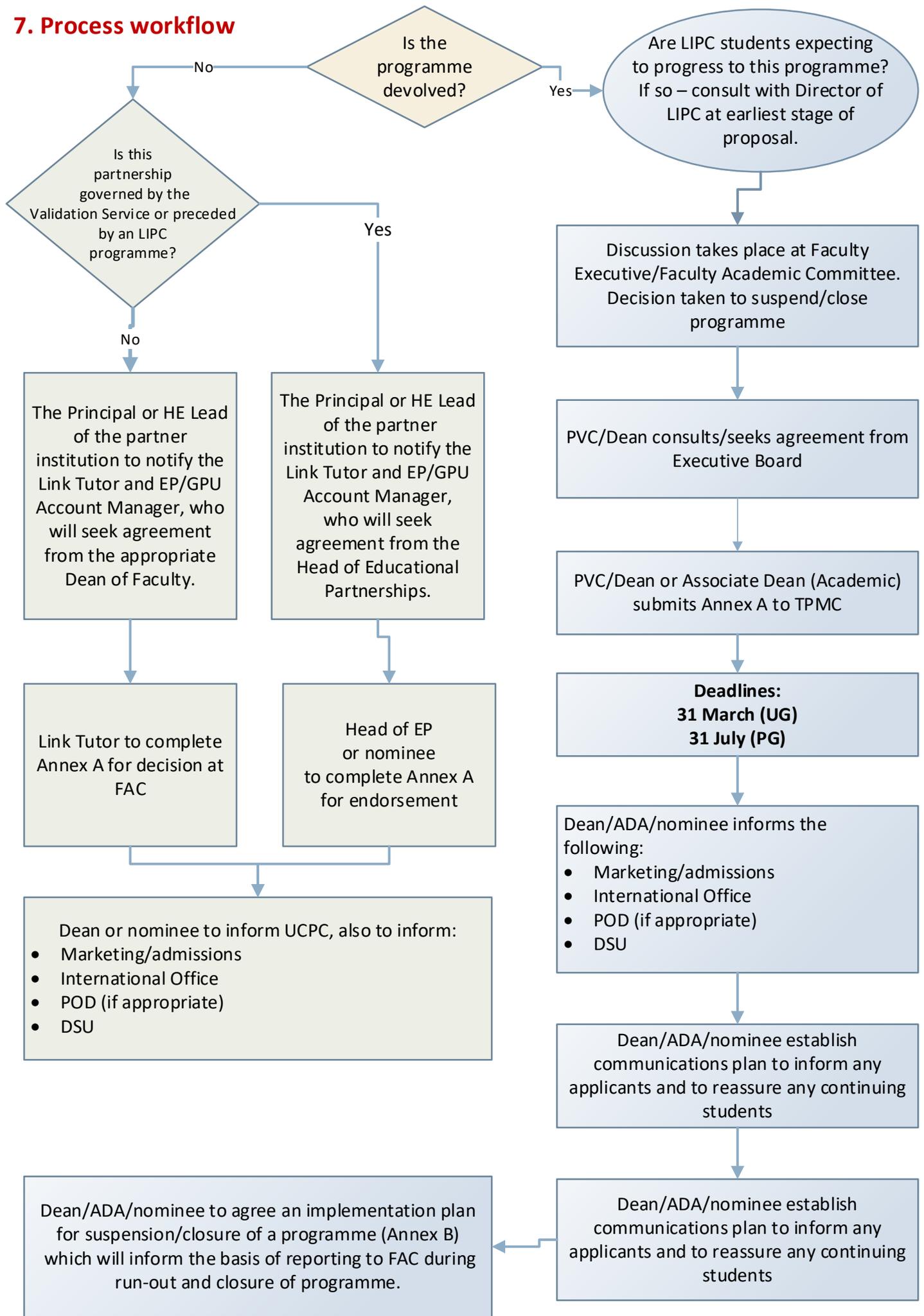
Where the decision to suspend intake to a programme is taken with the aim of closure, the programme may be closed when there are no further students enrolled.

7. Re-instatement of a programme

There may be occasions where the decision to suspend intake or close a programme is taken, but the faculty later decide to re-instate the programme. In this instance, the decision to re-instate the programme needs to be agreed and signed off by the Faculty Executive Committee and section 4 of the Implementation Plan (Annex B) needs to be completed.

Programme teams should note that if the programme has been fallow for two academic sessions or more, they will be required to complete a re-validation of the programme before students can be taught on the programme. Where there are continuing students still studying on the programme, the programme may be re-instated with immediate effect, but programme teams are strongly recommended to review the curriculum to ensure currency of learning.

7. Process workflow



8. Programme Intake Suspension and Programme Closure – Quick Start Guide

Why Suspend Intake?

When for good and sufficient reason it would not be to the advantage of applicants or the University to run the programme. Eg:

- Loss of academic expertise
- Insufficient potential student numbers.

The final decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor, advised by Executive Board.

Types of Suspension

One Intake Only - unusually low intake or short term staffing issues require the faculty to suspend intake for one academic session.

Indefinite: May run in future – programme is suspended but retained for future use. Normally no longer than two academic sessions.

Indefinite: Leading to closure - Faculty may take a decision to suspend intake to a programme with the aim of closure once current students have completed.

Criteria for Suspension

1. **Strategic** - decision must align with faculty strategic direction and benefits must be outlined.
2. **Academic** – long term failings in quality or standards; failure to contribute to academic direction of faculty or subject area; poor student retention; poor student experience due to low cohort size.
3. **Economic** – cost/benefit analysis should be provided, following consultation with the Finance Office.
4. **Market** – poor recruitment in terms of student numbers or standard of applicants.

Process – Non-Devolved

1. Notify the Link Tutor and Account Manager, who will seek agreement from Head of EP or Dean of Faculty as appropriate
2. Annex A form is completed for endorsement/decision at FAC as appropriate
3. Dean or nominee to inform UCPC and:
 - Marketing/admissions
 - International Office
 - POD (if appropriate)
 - DSU

Process – Devolved

1. Discussion and decision at FAC/FE. Agreement sought at EB
2. PVC/Dean or ADA submits Annex A to TPMC
3. Stakeholders informed (as with non-devolved)
4. Communication plan established, to inform applicants and students
5. Dean/ADA/nominee to agree an implementation plan (Annex B)

Useful resources

- Consumer Rights Training Within [Blackboard](#)
- [DAQ guidance and proforma](#)
- [Competition and Markets Agency guidance – Consumer Law Advice](#)

ANNEX A

Information in support of suspension of intake

1. Basic programme details	
Programme Title:	Programme Code:
Type of programme: <i>(undergraduate, postgraduate, single honours, joint honours)</i>	Location(s) of delivery:
Owning Faculty:	Owning Board:

2. Details of suspension of intake		
Date intake suspended from:		
Type of suspension: <i>(please tick)</i>	One intake only	
	Indefinite, may run in future	
	Indefinite, leading to closure	
Notes:		

3. Supporting information	
Applicants to programme: <i>Consideration needs to be made to the Competition and Markets Authority guidance and the students' consumer rights</i>	
If the programme has applicants please indicate numbers of:	
Offers made:	Offers accepted:
Applicants on other programmes: <i>Please indicate if applicants on other programmes will be affected (for example by withdrawal of modules on the suspended programme) and how this will be handled.</i> <i>Guidance available from SPS and DAQ on identification of alternative arrangements.</i> <i>Where module choices are affected it is important that student communication and consultation happens early and you may wish to seek advice from Legal Services.</i>	
DMU International College (DMUIC) If the programme you are suspending intake to or closing is one which forms part of an integrated programme with the provision at DMUIC (i.e. DMUIC students are expecting to progress to the DMU part of their programme) please consult with the Director of DMUIC at the earliest stage of the proposal.	
Other institutions <i>Please indicate if other institutions such as partner institutions are affected, and how this will be handled. Guidance available from Educational Partnerships Unit on approaching the partner institution(s).</i>	

Human Resources
Provide details of any staffing issues: <i>Consultation required at an early stage with Director of POD and appropriate Trade Unions if there are staffing issues.</i>
What arrangements will be made to resolve these issues?
Students' Union <i>Please provide details of consultation with members of the Students' Union, if the suspension/closure will affect existing students.</i>
Finances/Resources <i>What are the costs/benefits attributable to suspension of intake? Please give consideration to the following: Income; staffing; estate and space; energy; consumables; equipment, library, ITMS, other as appropriate to the programme.</i> <i>Guidance available from Faculty Management Accountant and SPS</i>

4. Endorsement			
Signature of PVC/Dean of Faculty (for programmes delivered on-site at DMU)			
Name:			
Signature:		Date:	
Signature of Director of Global Partnership or Partnership Manager for Educational Partnerships and Head of Academic Quality (for programmes delivered at partner institutions)			
Name:			
Signature:		Date:	

5. Responsibilities for communicating suspension of intake	
Stakeholder	To be informed by
Faculty staff	PVC/Dean of Faculty and POD (if appropriate)
Current students	Dean of Faculty/Associate Dean (Academic)
Applicants	Associate Dean (Academic)/Marketing/Faculty admissions staff
Marketing/Admissions	Programme Leader
UCAS/other clearing house	Marketing/Faculty admissions staff
Partner institutions	Educational Partnerships Unit
Department of Academic Quality	Associate Dean (Academic)
Timetabling	Associate Dean (Academic)
Students' Union	Associate Dean (Academic)

ANNEX B

Implementation Plan

1. Basic details	
Programme Title:	Programme Code:
Type of programme: <i>(UG,PG, single hon, joint hon)</i>	Location(s) of delivery:
Owning Faculty:	Owning Board:
Type of suspension: One intake only <input type="checkbox"/> Indefinite, may run in future <input type="checkbox"/> Indefinite, leading to closure <input type="checkbox"/>	

2. Endorsement			
Dean of Faculty			
Name:		Signature:	
Date endorsed by FAC/DARC:			
Date communicated to EP/GPU (as appropriate)			

3. Implementation Plan				
Stakeholder	Faculty Action	Timescale/Dates	Responsibility	Progress
Faculty Staff				
Applicants				
Current students				
Partner institution/s				
Other				

4. Re-instatement of programme			
Signature of PVC/Dean of Faculty via Faculty Executive Committee (for programmes delivered on-site at DMU)			
Signature:		Date:	
Signature of Director of Global Partnership or Partnership Manager for Educational Partnerships and Head of Academic Quality (for programmes delivered at partner institutions)			
Name:			
Signature:		Date:	
Signature:		Date:	

Following the reinstatement of a programme by Faculty Executive Committee, notification should be sent to Faculty Academic Committee/Programme Management Boards/Development and Review Committee/TPMC for information.