

## Programme and Module Modification Procedure

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The College's modifications procedure enables changes to be made to an approved module, short course or programme of study. Modifications may result from developments within the academic discipline, feedback from students or from external examiners, outcomes of quality assurance processes including annual monitoring and periodic review, changes in Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, and/or the identification of opportunities to enhance the delivery of teaching or assessment.
- 1.2. The modification procedure has been designed to support the College to maintain the academic quality and standards of its awards whilst supporting the continuous enhancement of the student learning experience. The procedure has taken account of external reference points and was designed in the context of clear external expectations regarding the level of information which the College must make available to applicants and current students as well as how any changes to taught provision are communicated to these groups. As such, this procedure has been developed to take account of the following external reference points:
  - Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018), particularly the Advice and Guidance on course design and development (Quality Assurance Agency)
  - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015), Standard 1.9 On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes (European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process)
  - UK Higher Education Providers – [Advice on Consumer Protection Law](#) (2015) (Consumer Competition and Markets Authority (CMA))
- 1.3. Programme design and modification will also take account of College and/or Faculty strategies, with particular reference to the [Learning and Teaching Strategy](#).
- 1.4. It is recognised that there is a balance between the need to make accurate information available to applicants, offer-holders and students and the need for the College's curriculum, teaching and assessment of programmes to be continuously improved. Where possible, and where the benefit to students of any proposed modification has been clearly demonstrated, a pragmatic approach will be taken in the application of this procedure.
- 1.5. This procedure is managed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team in the Registry. The Programmes Committee has responsibility for the oversight of the procedure and for the approval of major modifications. Departmental Teaching Committees and/or Faculty Education Committees<sup>1</sup> are responsible for the approval of minor modifications. An annual audit of minor modifications will be presented to the Programmes Committee and issues arising from the consideration of the annual audit will be referred to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. Minor modifications can be approved throughout the year (and then included in the annual audit), these should only be effective for the next academic year.
- 1.6. This procedure applies to the following types of provision:
  - Undergraduate programmes
  - Taught postgraduate programmes (including MRes programmes)

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<sup>1</sup> Where a local Departmental Teaching Committee is not present, the Faculty Education Committee (or equivalent) should take precedence, minor modifications should be collated and reported to the Faculty Education Committee.

- Undergraduate and taught postgraduate modules (including BPES, Horizons, I-Explore, Centre for Academic English, credit bearing short courses and non-credit bearing modules)
- Taught material which forms part of a postgraduate research programme (including MPhil, PhD, EngD and MD(Res) programmes)
- Collaborative programmes and modules

1.7. These procedures do not cover the following types of proposals:

- Proposals to offer a new short course, including proposals to offer an existing module as a short course (Please refer to the [Programme design and modification](#) webpages)
- Proposals to introduce a new programme or to introduce an award not currently listed in [OrdinanceB1](#)

## 2. Types of Modification

2.1. Modifications are categorised as either 'minor' or 'major'. The impact and significance of a modification can vary depending on the specific context of the proposed change.

- Minor modifications are part of a programme's inherent flexibility and would not be expected to have an impact on the overall programme aims or learning outcomes. Minor modifications usually affect a single module or small number of linked modules; the programme as a whole should not be significantly different as a result of the change.
- Major modifications are more extensive changes and go to the heart of the educational experience. Major modifications generally affect the overall programme aims and learning outcomes or numerous modules across the programme.
- Late modifications are changes proposed to the current or subsequent academic year which are submitted after the relevant deadline. Proposals for late modifications should only be proposed where it is clearly demonstrable that students would be negatively impacted if the changes were not made. Late modifications will always require approval by the Programmes Committee and may require additional communications with applicants, offer-holders and/or students to provide clarity. Where specific departments or programmes regularly have cause to submit late modifications, a review of their practice in relation to programme design and delivery may be undertaken.

2.2. Operational reasons which make it difficult to deliver the programme or module as originally intended such as the availability of key members of staff, facilities or other resources, will only be considered where the Department is able to demonstrate that it has exhausted all other options to deliver the module or programme as published. Consideration of the risk in being able to deliver the programme or module as originally intended should take account of the [College's Student Protection Plan](#).

2.3. Major modifications will not normally be approved after the major modifications deadline. Minor modifications submitted after the final minor modifications deadline will be considered as major modifications under the late modification process.

2.4. Where a change to a programme title is approved, offer holders and/or current students who are affected by the change must be given the option to graduate with either the original or amended programme title.

### 3. Process and Deadlines

- 3.1. Modifications for the **following** academic year must be approved by the appropriate Committee by the following deadlines:
- 31 March for major modifications (to Programmes Committee; for reporting on to the next Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee)
  - 31 July [TBC] for minor modifications (to Departmental Teaching Committees<sup>2</sup>; for reporting on to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team under the annual minor modifications audit).
- 3.2. Modification deadlines for programmes with entry points which do not follow the normal academic cycle will be agreed separately on a case-by-case basis. Deadlines will be set based on the principle that major modifications must be approved six months prior to the start of the programme and minor modifications must be approved two months prior to the start of the programme.
- 3.3. Each application for a modification will need to address the areas set out in the following sections of this procedure. All relevant affected programme documentation (namely, the Programme Specification and/or module specification) must be submitted with the modification form.
- 3.4. The modifications table at the end of this procedure indicates the information and level of approval required for minor, major and late modifications. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team will advise on the appropriate level of approval required for modifications which are not listed.

### 4. Preparing a modification proposal

- 4.1. A modification form must be completed for each proposed modification. This ensures that the necessary information is available to the relevant committee to consider and that it is recorded for future reference.
- 4.2. For certain proposals it is necessary to provide supporting information to help the Committee to make an informed decision. This may include:
- Comments from a relevant external examiner
  - Feedback from students (please see section 5 for more details on student consultation)
  - A review of the proposal by academic and industry experts co-ordinated by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team
  - Advice from relevant professional service departments
- 4.3. Proposals to change the title of a programme or stream should be discussed with the Student Recruitment Team in the Student Recruitment and Outreach Division.
- 4.4. Proposals to amend a collaborative module or programme should be discussed with the collaborative partner(s). In some instances, approval may need to be sought from all partner institutions. Where a proposal affects the memorandum of agreement, teams must liaise with the Assistant Registrar (Partnerships, Monitoring and Evaluation) in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team.
- 4.5. Proposals to suspend or withdraw a programme are considered major modifications. Details on the information needed to support a suspension or withdrawal modification are available in the Policy on Programme Suspension and Withdrawal ([www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/programme-design/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/programme-design/)). Departments should be aware that suspending

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<sup>2</sup> Where a local Departmental Teaching Committee is not present, the Faculty Education Committee (or equivalent) should take precedence, minor modifications should be collated and reported to the Faculty Education Committee.

or withdrawing a programme could affect modules shared with other programmes within the College and are expected to make clear in the modification paperwork how any impact will be managed.

- 4.6. Details of which modifications require supporting information can be found in the modifications criteria table.

## **5. Consulting with Stakeholders**

- 5.1. As part of the approval of any modification proposal, evidence of consultation with stakeholders must be provided. Consultation should take place as early in the process as possible to allow feedback from stakeholders to be incorporated into the final proposal.

- 5.2. Students are the main stakeholders and must therefore be consulted about all proposed modifications. Departments may decide the most appropriate way to consult with students, taking into consideration both the scale and impact of the proposal.

### **When to seek student consultation**

- 5.3. For Major Modifications the minimum requirement is to seek student consultation before a proposal to modify a programme or module is made for the following academic year. It is encouraged that the proposed changes are presented to students, highlighting the rationale and benefits of the changes. Students should be invited to comment and any concerns raised should be documented. The department should consider adjusting their proposals in response to issues raised by students before submitting to the relevant committee.

Examples of student consultation:

- Organising a presentation for the affected cohort explaining the rationale of the proposed changes and inviting students to provide feedback;
- Emailing the affected cohort explaining the rationale of the proposed changes and inviting students for feedback;
- Liaising with the student representative of the affected cohort who can then meet with the students to gather feedback regarding the proposed changes.

- 5.4. External Examiners should be consulted on all proposals for major modifications. It is good practice to consult other stakeholders as well; these may include accrediting bodies, industry experts, graduate employers and alumni.

- 5.5. There may be occasions when feedback from students or other stakeholders does not support a proposal however this does not automatically prevent the proposal from being considered for approval.

- 5.6. There may be occasions when academic judgement will take precedence over feedback received from students. Programmes Committee will consider the academic rationale in these circumstances.

- 5.7. For minor modifications, it is best practice for departments to consult changes with students.

## **6. Seeking the relevant approval**

- 6.1. All modifications must be approved by the relevant Departmental Teaching Committee and/or the Faculty Education Committee.

- 6.2. Following approval by the Departmental Teaching Committee and/or Faculty Education Committee, major modifications and late modifications must also be considered by the Programmes Committee. Proposals should be submitted via the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team. Submission

deadlines for the Programmes Committee can be found on the academic calendar and academic governance webpages

[www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/)

- 6.3. Recommendations made by the Programmes Committee must be approved by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. A report will be provided from the Programmes Committee to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee requesting approval for the endorsed modifications.
- 6.4. When considering a proposal for approval the relevant committee should consider:
- Whether the grounds for making the change are academically sound and clearly enhance the students' learning opportunities.
  - Whether the extent of the consultation with stakeholders was appropriate given the scale and impact of the proposal.
  - Where feedback from stakeholders does not support the proposal, whether the grounds for making the change are sufficiently robust.
  - Where a proposal affects current students, whether the grounds for making the change are sufficiently urgent to warrant immediate implementation or whether the change could reasonably be postponed.
  - Whether the proposal is in line with relevant College and/or Faculty strategies, with particular reference to the Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- 6.5. For minor modifications the relevant committee may make the following decisions in respect of a proposal:
- To approve the proposal
  - To approve the proposal subject to conditions
  - To reject the proposal
- 6.6. For major modifications and late modifications the relevant committee may make the following decisions in respect of a proposal:
- To recommend the proposal for approval
  - To recommend the proposal for approval subject to conditions
  - To reject the proposal

## **7. Recording and communicating the outcome**

- 7.1. Departments are responsible for keeping an audit trail of all the modifications made to a programme. This should include:
- The completed modification form
  - Details of any supporting information submitted as part of the proposal (including a programme specification and module specifications)

Departments are responsible for informing the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team of approved minor modifications, and must provide an updated version of the programme specification and/or module specification for the relevant cohort(s).

- 7.2. Departments are also responsible for updating any additional sources of information including the departmental website, virtual learning environment and programme handbook.
- 7.3. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team are responsible for providing the updated programme information to the relevant teams. In particular the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team are responsible for alerting the Student Recruitment Marketing Team to the updated programme specification in order that the study webpages can be updated.
- 7.4. Once a modification is approved Departments should inform affected students that a change to the programme has been made. Communication templates and guidance are available from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team.
- 7.5. Where a modification affects offer holders this will be communicated as part of the admissions process.

Approved by QAEC  
June 2020

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<b>Cross References:</b>	Modification Form Modification Communication Template - TBC		
<b>Notes and latest changes:</b>			

# Minor Modifications

Details of the level of approval and supporting information required for the most common minor modifications can be found in the table below. Please contact the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team for advice on the level of approval required for any modifications which are not included in this list.

		Before 31 <sup>st</sup> July	After 31 <sup>st</sup> July
<b>Type of Change</b>		The approval from the following should be sought:	
<b>Elective modules</b>	Add an elective module (existing/new) on a programme	1. Departmental Teaching Committee <sup>1</sup>	1. External examiner input 2. Industry input 3. Student Consultation 4. Departmental Teaching Committee 5. Faculty Education Committee 6. Programmes Committee
	Change the learning outcomes of an elective module		
<b>Assessment of a module (core, compulsory or elective)</b>	Remove an assessment from a module and change the weighting of remaining assessments		
	Introduce a new assessment to a module and change the weighting of existing assessments		
	Change the weighting of assessments within a module (without changing the assessment)		
	Remove one assessment and replace it with another (without changing the assessment weighting)		
	Change to the 'must pass' assessment rule		
<b>Main details of a module (core, compulsory or elective)</b>	Change the title of a module		
	Change the content of a module (without changing the learning outcomes)		
	Change the allocation of study hours within a module (without changing the credit value). For example, reducing contact hours and reallocating hours towards independent study.		

<sup>1</sup> Where a local Departmental Teaching Committee is not present, the Faculty Education Committee (or equivalent) should take precedence, minor modifications should be collated and reported to the Faculty Education Committee.

# Major Modifications

Details of the level of approval and supporting information required for the most common major modifications can be found in the table below. Please contact the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team for advice on the level of approval required for any modifications which are not included in this list.

Type of Change		Before 31 <sup>st</sup> March	After 31 <sup>st</sup> March
		The approval from the following must be sought:	
<b>Core and compulsory modules</b>	Add a module (new or existing) as a core/compulsory module on a programme	1. External examiner input 2. Industry input 3. Departmental Teaching Committee 4. Faculty Education Committee 5. Programmes Committee 6. Student Consultation	1. External examiner input 2. Industry input 3. Student Consultation 4. Departmental Teaching Committee 5. Faculty Education Committee 6. Programmes Committee
	Remove a core/compulsory module from a programme		
	Change the learning outcomes of a core/compulsory module		
	Change the designation of a module from core/compulsory to elective/compulsory (or vice versa)		
<b>Elective Modules</b>	Remove an elective/compulsory module from a programme <sup>2</sup>		
	Change the designation of a module from elective to core/compulsory		
<b>Programme Structure</b>	Change the overall study hours and the credit value of a module		
	Change the rules by which students choose their elective modules		
	Change the assessment structure for the programme (including module weightings)		
	Change the prerequisite/corequisite rules of modules within a programme		
<b>Main details of a programme</b>	Change the title of a programme		
	Change the learning outcomes of a programme		
	Change the learning and teaching strategy of a programme		
	Change the assessment strategy of a programme		
	Change the length of a programme		
	Change to non-standard start dates of a programme		
	Change the main campus of where a programme is taught		
	Change the department of a programme		
	To add a programme specific regulation		
	Introduce intermediate/exit awards to an existing programme		
	Create a new programme stream based on an existing programme		

<sup>2</sup> Removal of an elective module is designated a major modification. However, if an elective *does not run* in a given year, due to low numbers for example or a module leader taking a sabbatical, this will not be deemed a modification.



<b>Withdrawal of a programme</b>	To request the withdrawal of a programme(s) (including a named pathway/stream with award title)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. External examiner input</li> <li>2. Industry input</li> <li>3. Departmental Teaching Committee</li> <li>4. Faculty Education Committee</li> <li>5. Programmes Committee</li> <li>6. Student Consultation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. External examiner input</li> <li>2. Industry input</li> <li>3. Student Consultation</li> <li>4. Departmental Teaching Committee</li> <li>5. Faculty Education Committee</li> <li>6. Programmes Committee</li> </ol>
<b>Suspension of a programme</b>	To request the suspension of a programme (including a named pathway/stream with award title) (up to a maximum period of 3 years)		
<b>Collaborative modules and programmes</b>	To request a major modification (within the criteria listed above) for collaborative modules and programmes		

Modifications for the following 2020-21 academic year and onwards must be approved by the appropriate Committee and have been reported to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team by the following deadlines:

- **31 March for Major Modifications**
- **31 July [TBC] for Minor Modifications**

Modification deadlines for programmes with entry points which do not follow the normal academic cycle will be agreed separately on a case-by-case basis. Deadlines will be set based on the principle that major modifications must be approved six months prior to the start of the programme and minor modifications must be approved two months prior to the start of the programme.

**An updated version of the programme specification and/or module specification must be provided indicating the proposed modification using tracked changes.**

Programme/Module Details			
Programme Title	e.g. MSc Finance and Accounting	Prog. Code(s)	e.g. N302
Module Title	e.g. Stochastic Differential Equations	Module Code(s)	e.g. M5MR11
Primary Department	---	Year of Prog.	e.g. Year 2

Modification Details			
Type of Modification		Retrospective/Late	
Collaborative		Affected cohort	e.g. Year 2 from October 2020
Number of years suspended	A maximum of 3 academic years	Curriculum Reviewed version?	
Description	<p>Brief description of the proposed modification.</p> <p>An updated version of the programme specification and/or module specification must also be provided using tracked changes.</p>		
Rationale	<p>Brief description of reason for proposed modification including the consequences of not making the modification and (where relevant) an explanation of why it is necessary to make this change retrospectively.</p>		
Consultation	<p>Details of stakeholders who have been consulted during the development of the proposal and the outcomes of this consultation. Stakeholders may include students, student reps, external examiners, industry etc.</p> <p>Student consultation should be sought for all retrospective/late modifications and where a change to a programme title is proposed</p>		
Arrangements for any affected students	<p>If a programme is being withdrawn or suspended, please note whether modules belonging to the programme should also be suspended or withdrawn- Departments should be aware that this will affect modules shared across programmes.</p> <p>If approved, what arrangements will be made for any interrupted, deferred or re-sitting students.</p>		
Name of proposer		Date	

**Departmental Approval**

The Head of Department or relevant Director of Studies should confirm that:

<input type="checkbox"/>	The modification, including the provision of any relevant resource has been agreed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Where the agreement of the external examiner is required that the external examiner has been consulted and supports the proposal (please attach evidence).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Where a module is delivered on a programme outside the primary department that the additional departments have been informed of the proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Where the proposal affects a collaborative programme and/or module that the collaborative partner has been consulted and supports the proposal (please attach evidence).
Head of Department or Director of Studies	Name		
Committee(s)	e.g. Teaching Committee and/or Faculty Education Committee	Date(s)	DD/MM/YYYY

Please include the number of affected students

Cohort	# Enrolled	# Interrupted	# Resitting
October 2017 entry	136	5	5
October 2018 entry	136	5	5
October 2019 entry	151	2	7
October 2020 entry	153	0	0