DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY LEICESTER

A guide to
Curriculum Modification

This guide is intended to support staff involved in making changes to programmes and modules.

For forms, templates, and further guidance, please contact:

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Or visit the DAQ website

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Introduction

The University is subject to consumer rights legislation in relation to the content and 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 also relates to module content which may impact on information to applicants and students and includes advice about making such information easily accessible and transparent. Please consider seeking early advice from Legal Services, the Department of Academic Quality and refer to the Competition and Markets Authority guidance (CMA) to HE providers on consumer rights legislation for more information if necessary. When changes are made to the curriculum, please remember to cross-check these against published course pages on the DMU website, the prospectus and any other marketing literature to ensure that the university is meeting its CMA obligations. This includes module/programme titles, module/programme descriptions and key assessment information.

DMU academic quality processes (such as; validation, curriculum modification, periodic review, annual monitoring, external examining) ensure that the University's approach to quality management is embedded with the focus on enhancing the learning opportunities made available to all students and assuring quality and standards.

Intrinsic to our academic quality processes is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is an educational framework that guides the design of learning, specifically around curriculum delivery, materials, assessments, policy and practice. The DMU UDL framework is based on a rigorous, research-based foundation; it provides a focussed and student-centred basis for understanding and applying inclusivity within teaching practice. A universal curriculum refers to planning programmes that are barrier-free wherever feasible. If programme content is well designed, delivered and assessed so that students with learning differences and physical disabilities are able to gain access, it will enable them to receive an equivalent learning experience to their peers.

Our approach to teaching, learning, assessment and student support should be capable of anticipating, and adapting to, the differentiated student needs. These can be known and clear, as in the case of many students with disabilities, or subtle and intrinsic, arising from cultural or racial identity, self-expectation, learning 'styles' or other psychological attributes. The value of applying UDL is that if a DMU programme of study is made more accessible and inclusive; it benefits those students identified above but also all other students too.

Contents

Section 1: The Scope of this curriculum modification guidance

Who is this guide for?

This guide has been written for all members of staff involved in the modification of taught provision as detailed on the programme specifications and module specifications. It should be used by academic staff and administrators who have responsibility for curriculum management and quality assurance. It will be of particular use to the following staff:

- Programme and module leaders
- Programme Management Board (PMB) chairs/Heads of School or Department/Subject Academic Committee (SAC)
- Associate Deans (Academic); Associate Professors (Quality)/Head of Quality; Associate Professors (Student Experience);
- Directors of Faculty Operations; Programmes Officer/Admin Manager; Faculty Quality Assurance Administrators; PMB/SAC Administrators

What provision does it cover?

The process of curriculum modification in this guide relates to the modification of both devolved and non-devolved taught provision at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The guide also covers the introduction of new modules to the university via the modifications process, and the withdrawal of modules from the university's module catalogue as a result of making curriculum changes.

All staff need to be mindful of the consumer rights legislation and the CMA guidance when considering, recommending and implementing changes to the curriculum. Consideration should be given to student communication, consultation or whether written consent is required, and in particular the timeliness of changes being proposed.

DMU-delivered programmes and modules

The university devolves the responsibility for the approval of most taught provision to faculties. Specifically, this means that faculties take responsibility for the validation of new programmes and the modification of existing programmes/modules within the procedures defined by the university. DMU-delivered provision usually means provision which is delivered by De Montfort University (DMU) staff at the DMU campus or in a clinical or corporate setting.

Collaborative provision

The university has not devolved to faculties the responsibility for the approval and modification of activities which involve partner institutions delivering or supporting an element of, or an entire, DMU programme.

While the same modification process applies as that for DMU-delivered provision, additional scrutiny may be required by the Department of Academic Quality (DAQ). A slight variation to the curriculum modification process has been agreed for De Montfort University International College (DMUIC) provision and is available separately from Educational Partnerships.

Why do we have a modification process?

The university requires a formal, documented curriculum modification process for a number of reasons. Consumer rights legislation requires us to provide prospective students with information relating to the university generally and the particular programmes that they are interested in. This is so that they can make a fully informed decision on which institution and programme to choose; there needs to be as much transparency as possible about what the prospective student will receive and how they will receive it. Any curriculum modifications being considered will, therefore, go to the root of what the student receives and how they receive it.

It is important to maintain a record of how and when programmes and modules are changed in order that we can be assured that standards are maintained. It is also important that we are clear, and are able to show internal and external stakeholders, why our curriculum is configured the way it is. The university needs to be assured that it responds to new thinking in academic subjects, and to the views of its students and external examiners. Many curriculum modifications arise due to advances in a particular subject area, or because of student or external examiner comments – having a formal modification process ensures that we keep a record of our response to such drivers of change.

The key issue regarding the modification process, above all else, is communication – particularly communication with students and timeliness of changes. It is vital that students are consulted and kept informed about changes, or possible changes if they can be forecast, to their programme and its constituent modules. Communication with students is dealt with later in this guide, but it is worth highlighting at an early stage as failure to communicate changes in a timely and appropriate manner can lead to student dissatisfaction and risks creating a potential claim against the university for a breach of consumer rights legislation.

Section 2: Consultation

What is consultation and when is it needed?

There must be a discussion with students regarding all possible or proposed changes, to make them aware of the changes being recommended. This offers the opportunity for students to provide feedback and feed into the process and also the opportunity for faculties to explain the reasons for the changes, the options (if any) and the benefits.

Any future students who are affected by the proposed changes should be consulted, ideally in a tutorial situation (not as part of a Student Voice Committee, via email or LearningZone). For example, when making changes to a level 5 curriculum, the consultation should be with students currently studying level 4 curriculum, if the change is affecting level 6 study, then both levels 4 and 5 students should be consulted. By implication, this will only apply to changes that the student was aware of when choosing DMU.

If there are live applicants and the proposed change is affecting something that was advertised to the student, applicants should also be contacted by the communication means that they applied to the university.

When communicating with students there shouldn't be an' opt in' or 'opt out' option provided. Consultation is about asking for views and feedback. Written communication should highlight what the proposed change is, what the benefits are and possibly why the change is being suggested (if appropriate). It should be made clear that student views are welcomed and whom feedback should be provided to and by what date. This provides

students with an opportunity to give their views, which can then be considered when looking to make the change.

Consideration also needs to be given to any other programmes that share the same modules including those within other faculties; all students should be provided with the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed changes.

Where the proposed changes are to the type of assessments or optional modules, consultation should also take place with future cohorts of students to ensure that they have the opportunity to provide their feedback. It is useful to seek the views of the students who are currently studying at that level, but the actual consultation should be with the future students e.g. level 4 students should be consulted about level 5 changes. This can be done via level 4/5 module leaders in tutorials, email or through LearningZone. The consultation is to seek views.

As well as allowing students to feed into the decision about a possible change, or the options chosen if appropriate, this engagement should also reduce the risk that the student will consider mounting a challenge under consumer rights legislation.

What changes need consent (agreement) by students?

The Consumer Rights Act refers to anything that is said or written to the consumer, by or on behalf of the trader or the service if:

a) It is taken into account by the consumer when deciding to enter into the contract, or
b) It is taken into account by the consumer when making any decision about the service after entering into the contract.

This is the test we need to apply on whether we need consent by students or applicants.

There are some changes that require consent by students if they are going to affect the current cohort, or if they will affect future students and change information they were previously provided with. These are referred to as '**major changes**'.

Without the consent of students to such a change, if a challenge is made under the Consumer Rights Act, there is a high risk that the challenge will be successful. These include the following changes:

- Changing the programme award title (this should be evidenced through written consent of each individual student of all affected cohorts at all levels of study)
- Changes to core modules (removal or addition)
- Changes to assessment type e.g. changing from 100% coursework to exams/vice versa or splitting assessments into coursework and exams where it was previously 100% exam or coursework
- Where there are significant numbers of changes and a revalidation of the programme has been recommended

It is recommended that written consent is sought from any students affected by the above changes. It is recommended that changes such as those listed above are not made in the current academic year, but where this is necessary, written consent from the current cohort will be required. It will be the responsibility of the programme/module leader to carry out this task and ensure that forms are collected from students and it would be recommended that these are stored within the Faculty office. Where this information is stored is a Faculty decision, but it is highly important that evidence is stored securely and appropriately

because if a challenge is made by a student the Faculty will need to provide evidence of the student consent.

If a student does not wish to agree to the changes, the programme/module leader will need to work with this individual to come to an acceptable arrangement; major changes cannot be approved with a majority vote. Each student has an individual right under the Consumer Rights Act. Where a mutually acceptable arrangement cannot be agreed with the student, the university will offer the student the right to cancel the contract and obtain a refund of any advance payments made by the student. The university will also provide advice, assistance and support to assist the student find an alternative programme provider where necessary.

What do module/programme leaders need to do to communicate changes?

Where a major change to previously advertised information (e.g. programme title changes) is agreed the communication should be wider than the next year's student intake (e.g. level 5 or 6 students) and should include applicants to the programme (please be mindful that it is not recommended to make any major changes affecting the current cohort).

If a change occurs at level 6 study, both the current level 4 and level 5 students should be engaged by consultation as detailed above and be advised of the changes. It is also good practice to advise future cohorts where optional modules have been removed and it is advised that this is completed before students have chosen their modules for the following academic year.

When a change has been agreed via the Development and Review Committee (DARC) or Faculty Academic Committee (FAC) and it changes an element of 'material information' (something students have viewed or received in writing e.g. website/offer letter/prospectus) this should be communicated to any students affected by the changes and applicants. This can be done by the most appropriate method for each individual student, for example via email to update students on any changes that might affect them during their studies. As consultation should have taken place initially, this should confirm the change as good etiquette.

Where assessment weightings are being changed, this needs to be communicated if the students had access to the information before they start the programme. For example, an applicant starting their studies may not be aware of the assessment weightings if it has not been listed on the website/prospectus/offer letters/email communications. However, if a student has chosen their optional modules for the next level or stage of study and they were provided with the module information in advance, including the assessment weightings, they would need to be engaged in consultation as above and advised of the change.

Applicants holding offers should also be written to when a major change has been agreed. Module/programme leaders will need to discuss with the Faculty admissions team how this exercise is carried out, but it will be the responsibility of the module/programme leader instigating the change.

If in doubt…

From time to time a curriculum change may arise which doesn't easily fit within the procedures described in this guide, and which will need to be considered on an individual case basis. If you have any queries about this or any aspect of curriculum modification, please contact DAQ for advice.

Section 3: Types of change

Modifications to taught provision fall into one of two modification categories. The approval process for your modification will differ depending on which category it falls within. A further category of 'housekeeping' changes falls outside of the modification process. The two categories are:

- Revalidation
- Modification

Revalidation

Some changes are so substantive that programme revalidation is required to approve them. Changes which will always trigger a revalidation event are:

- 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 specialism in a programme, leading to a new named award
- Change in mode of a 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
- Change in location of delivery for programmes delivered at partner institutions, either in the UK or overseas
- Re-using or revitalizing a programme that has not been delivered for at least the last two academic years
- For apprenticeship programmes, changes to the apprenticeship standard and/or the End Point Assessment (EPA)

Revalidation of a programme should always include student views and discussion. Students from the current cohort should be invited to attend the revalidation event in order to include the student voice. If a revalidation event will be affecting any future cohorts of students (and not just being introduced to new applicants) a full consultation and consent exercise will need to be undertaken.

* It is not possible or desirable to define universally what a 'significant' number of a programme's modules will mean in every case. This will depend both on the nature of the programme and the nature of the modules being added or removed, and is a matter of academic judgement. Your Faculty's Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality, in discussion with DAQ, will determine for each case whether the proportion of modules being added and/or removed should constitute a revalidation.

Modification

The following are considered as modifications, although in some circumstances revalidation might be more appropriate (see below):

- Change in programme title which does not affect the content or outcomes of the programme and when unaccompanied by any other change to the programme and

its specification (template). 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 (please note this is major change when core modules are affected)
- Changes to a programmes or modules (change in content of modules) affecting one or more of the following: module title, credit value, method of delivery, learning outcomes, assessment methods, assessment volume or assessment weightings (ensure that any recommended changes comply with the university's guidelines on UDL principles)
- 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 (programmes or modules)
- Change to programme-specific regulations (although this must be agreed with your Associate Dean (Academic) and the Quality Manager (Taught Programmes) DAQ).
- Removal of a pathway or specialism in a programme.

Whilst the above are classed as modifications, in some cases they may trigger a revalidation. Factors which would determine whether a revalidation event should be held include:

- Making a number of changes which fall into the category of modifications, but which taken together substantially change a programme
- The proportion of changes to a programme – for example adding one module would be considered as a modification, but adding a number of modules may well require a revalidation
- Experience of the programme team in the relevant area
    - for example, a team experienced in distance learning delivery might change some of a programme's modules to distance learning mode via the modifications process. However, the same request from a programme team with no prior experience of distance learning delivery will trigger a revalidation
- Whether a programme is professionally accredited – it is recognised that a number of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) might require a revalidation to take place for changes which the university might ordinarily handle as modifications. In such cases the revalidation event might be held together with a reaccreditation event.

The responsibility for deciding whether a request to change the curriculum should be handled as a revalidation or modification is exercised by the Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality, who should be your first point of contact for any queries of this nature. They will make decisions in consultation with DAQ as required.

'Housekeeping' changes

Some minor modifications are designated as 'housekeeping' changes to programmes or modules, and can be handled outside of the formal modification process. Whilst outside of the formal modification process, the principles of engagement by consultation and early confirmation to students still apply and should be considered. Where there is no engagement or confirmation, the programme leader should record their reasons for this decision.

Programme-level housekeeping changes:

- Change in programme leader and/or contact details
- Changes in wording on the specification which update and/or improve the clarity of the specification, but do not change the content or outcomes. These include such instances as replacing references to obsolete/outdated software with references to their replacements
- Change in ownership of the programme from one programme management board, subject area or Faculty to another
- Change to or addition to references to sector-recognised standards in England, for example, QAA subject benchmark statements
- Correction of typographical errors and omissions

Module-level housekeeping changes:

- Change in module leader and/or contact details
- Changes in wording on the specification which updates/improves the clarity of the specification but does not change the content or outcomes.
- Change in ownership of the module from one programme board to another
- Changes to module codes for administrative reasons
- Corrections or typographical errors and omissions

Such changes can be made by the programme/module leader with the agreement of the parent PMB/SAC. It is important, however, to ensure that the following people are aware of any changes made:

- Your Faculty's Programmes Manager, QA Administrator or equivalent. This is to ensure that the specification (template) for the programme/module you are changing is updated on SAP
- Any member of academic or administrative staff who will need to know about the change
- Students – they will need to know, for example, if a programme or module has a change in leadership

Section 4: The Modification process

The start of the process

Curriculum modifications are normally initiated by the programme or module leader.

Changes may be made for a variety of reasons, for example:
- In response to student or external examiner feedback
- In response to developments in the subject area
- In response to practical issues, such as staff changes within the university or changes to student numbers

Appropriate consultation must take place throughout the process, including current and future students affected by the change. External Examiners should also be consulted on proposed changes and where approval is required, evidence must be shown of their agreement. Section 5 contains more information on External Examiner approval requirements. Consultation must also take place with any programme within any faculties that share the same module.

Key documents required

Module or Programme Specification form
It is essential that proposed changes are articulated using the current module/programme specification document. If you have not downloaded the document directly from the DMUHub Reporting Tile yourself, check with your Faculty office to ensure you have the most recent version.

Curriculum modification form
Guidance on completion is provided at the bottom of the Curriculum Modification form; Section 4 must be completed in full.

Process in brief
1. Use 'track changes' to edit current module/programme specification document with proposed changes
2. Complete Curriculum Modification form ensuring all consultation has been undertaken and referenced in Section 4
3. Submit the above documents to the Programme Management Board or Subject Academic Committee for approval
4. Once approved, submit the above two forms (and any supporting documents) for approval at the Development and Review Committee

For Faculty-specific guidance on the submission process for committee papers, please contact your Faculty Quality Administrator/Quality Coordinator/Quality Officer.

This process must be adhered to for all curriculum modifications - more detailed information is listed below the flowchart.

Requirement for change

Module or programme leader is responsible for the consultation with relevant stakeholders and ensuring that changes go through the correct process

Consultation with relevant stakeholders eg students, external examiners, other faculties etc

Complete Curriculum Modification Form to be received by PMB/SAC

PMB/SAC Chairs are responsible for reviewing suggested changes and approving to go forward to the DARC/FAC meeting

Changes signed off at Programme Management Boards (PMB)/Subject Academic Committee (SAC)

Housekeeping changes are approved at this stage and do not require a full curriculum modification

Curriculum Modification Form sent to DARC Servicing Officer and Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality – including any changes required by PMB/SAC

The Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality and Servicing Officer collate all modifications in preparation for the DARC/FAC meetings

Change is presented at Development and Review Committee (DARC)/ Faculty Academic Committee(FAC)

The DARC/FAC constitution are responsible for approving or rejecting the proposals

Approved

Changes can take place

Approved, subject to... Require slight amendments before changes occur

Rejected

With invitation to review and resubmit

Revalidation required

Discuss with Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality to prepare for an event

Servicing Officer to update Programme Leader with outcome

Amend Curriculum Modification form with requested changes and re-submit for the next DARC/FAC

Where further work is required, Programme Leader to complete work and confirm with Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality for sign off by Chair's action/FAC Chair's action

Programme Leader to ensure that Faculty Marketing teams are told to update any material information on the web, to contact Admissions if applicants require updates and to store any evidence as per faculty process.

All curriculum changes must have the support of the PMB/SAC which owns the programme/modules(s) affected, prior to the proposal being submitted for wider Faculty consideration. This includes presenting housekeeping changes, for information purposes.

The Curriculum Modification Form should be completed and presented to PMB/SAC and this support should be recorded in the PMB/SAC minutes.

Once the proposal has PMB approval, it should be submitted to the Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality, to be presented, reviewed and approved by the Faculty Development and Review Committee (DARC).

When suggesting a curriculum modification, you should take the following questions into consideration:

- Is the change being suggested a major change?
- Have you discussed the proposed changes with students and future cohorts to seek feedback?
- Does your change require written consent by students?
- Do you need to notify applicants and future cohorts of the approved change? (this applies to major change)
- Are you changing assessments? Have you considered the UDL principles in the recommended change?
- Have you included the learning hours within your module specification (template) to comply with UDL guidelines?

New or withdrawn modules

If the changes involve the introduction of an entirely new module(s) into the university, where the module has not been previously approved as part of a programme validation, Section 3 of the Curriculum Modification Form should be completed to gain approval of the new module. Likewise, if your modification involves the withdrawal of a module(s) from use within the university, Section 3 should be completed to register the removal of the module(s).

Faculty approval

All changes should have been approved via the relevant PMB/SAC, if there is no PMB/SAC prior to the DARC/FAC, the module/programme leader should contact the PMB/SAC chair for advice. The Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)Head of Quality, taking advice from DAQ as appropriate, will determine whether the changes will require a revalidation or whether they should be handled as a modification. The Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality will note this decision on the Curriculum Modification Form and will communicate it to the staff concerned.

If a revalidation is required, the event should be convened by the Faculty on behalf of the Development and Review Committee (DARC)/FAC as outlined in the DAQ Guide to Validation. In cases where the modifications relate to provision delivered at a partner institution, whether in the UK or overseas, the Educational Partnerships Unit will convene the revalidation event.

If the changes are to be treated as modifications, they should be considered and approved by the DARC/FAC. A record of modifications, approved or otherwise, should be maintained in the DARC/FAC minutes.

The outcome of the revalidation or DARC/FAC consideration is noted on the Curriculum Modification Form by the Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality, who will then pass the completed form to the appropriate Faculty professional services staff to action on the university student records system.

University approval

Modifications do not require central university approval. Once curriculum changes have been approved by the Faculty via revalidation or as modifications, they can be actioned within university systems as appropriate. DAQ will receive a copy of the completed Curriculum Modification Form for each change made and reserves the right to challenge modifications which contravene university policy or regulations.

A curriculum modification form is required for all non-housekeeping change requests and must go through the DARC/FAC process for approval. It is highly important that all module and programme changes are reflected on the specifications within the Academic Database and the website. The Consumer Rights Act requires accurate information to be available to students and that can only be done when the required process is followed to ensure university systems are kept up to date. **Local copies of specifications (template) should never be used as a master copy.**

Curriculum modification key dates and management timings

Key dates

Academic session 2023/24 – changes ready for 2024/25

	October – December	January – July	August - September
Curriculum Modifications	Any changes that will affect the 2024/25 curriculum to December DARC*	Changes on SAP before Timetabling January deadline. Any further changes must follow the exceptions process	No changes for the 2025/25 session, unless critical

*All Items for curriculum modification to be received at the December DARC. If you miss the December meeting the change cannot be implemented for the next academic year, therefore the change will be processed as a change for the following academic year

Curriculum modification management timings

- Note - any changes can take place for following academic session up to the January deadline.
- Where change says 'yes' this can go through the DARC process within the required timescales
- Any other change has to go through the exceptions process

Type of change	Before January	January – end of July	July - October
Programme title (due to content changes)	Yes		
New specialisation within programme	Yes		
Remove Specialism	Yes	Yes	Yes – suspension and closure process, would not take immediate effect
Programme title (marketing reasons only)	Yes		
Module title	Yes	Yes – if core would still need to write to applicants/affected students	
Module Credit value	Yes		
Assessment methods (minor change)	Yes		
Assessment methods (major change)	Yes		
Assessment volume	Yes		
Assessment weightings	Yes		
Anonymous marking change	Yes	Yes	Yes – Anonymous marking reported to first PMB
Module Reassessment change (not just rewording/clarifying)	Yes	Yes – may be influenced by programme specific regs (possible PSRB changes)	
Programme outcomes	Yes		
Award	Yes		

Addition of module	Yes		

Type of change	Before January	January – end of July	July - October
Removal of core module	Yes – CMA applies		
Removal of optional module			Yes
Mode of delivery (on-site) addition or removal	Yes		
Mode of delivery to include distance learning	Yes – if revalidation		
Location of delivery	Yes		
Module outcomes (not just housekeeping)	Yes		
Module level of study	Yes		
Change in status of module (e.g. core to optional)	Yes		
Module T&L hours	Yes		Yes – if housekeeping only
Programme-specific regulation changes	Yes	Yes – programme specific regs may influence this	
Correction/addition of semester/block to module	Yes		

Section 5: Consultation and communication of changes

It is important that the appropriate staff and other stakeholders are consulted when you are making changes to the curriculum, this is particularly important to any students potentially affected by the changes. It is also vital that the changes are communicated to everyone they will have impact upon.

Consultation

The following people should be consulted when making changes to programmes and modules. There is a section in the Curriculum Modification Form which will prompt you to do this.

- External Examiner(s)
- Students – including current and any affected cohort such as level 4 and 5 students
- PSRBs/Professional Bodies
- Timetable Office

- Partner institutions affected by the change
- Other staff within Faculty/other faculties who share the module
- Educational Partnerships (EP) for programmes delivered at partner institutions within the UK, or where the programme receives students through the Leicester International Pathway College.
- Central Apprenticeships Team

External Examiner(s)

It is important that the appropriate external examiner(s) is informed of the intended changes, and their views sought. They may have useful suggestions which can be incorporated into the changes.

External examiners should be consulted on all significant changes which might lead to a programme 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 or removal of a new pathway or 'stream' in a programme, leading to a new named award
- Re-using or revitalizing a programme that has not been delivered for at least the last two academic years.

It is recommended that consultation take place by email. Changes can be made without external examiner input, should they not respond, and can be made against external examiner advice if this can be justified. It is important to give examiners the opportunity to comment on curriculum modifications, but the process should not be delayed due to late or non-response.

External examiner consultation is required for the following changes:

Programme	Module
Change in programme title which does not affect the content or outcomes	Module credit value or level
Addition or removal of core or optional modules to a programme	Change in learning outcomes
Change in programme outcomes	Assessment methods/volume/weightings/thresholds etc.
Change to an award (e.g. BA to BSc; BSc to BEng etc.)	Significant changes to content, e.g. embedding #DMUglobal
Significant changes to characteristics, aims or learning and teaching strategies	

External examiner consultation is not usually required for the following changes:

Programme	Module
Location of delivery (sits outside curriculum modification process – see DAQ Guide to Collaborative Provision, section 3)	Module title
Mode of delivery change or addition	Mode of delivery change or addition
Change in delivery patterns	Change in delivery patterns
Programme-specific regulations (approved outside of curriculum modification process by the university Quality Sub-Committee)	Method of delivery
Change to entry requirements	Module prerequisites
	Maximum student numbers on module (as only relevant for collaborative provision and there is a separate process for approving increases in numbers at partners
	Changes to whether assessment marked anonymously
	Changes to assessment notes and reassessment information
	Change in PSRB information

In the case of partner institutions, it is also recommended to consult with the External Subject Adviser (ESA).

Students

It is particularly important when making changes to a programme which affects students (both prospective and those already pre-/enrolled on the programme) to remember the University's responsibilities in relation to Consumer Rights Legislation. Any changes which might impact on students should be highlighted and consulted in a timely and sensitive manner and evidence should be kept where consultation and consent has taken place with students. Please seek early advice from within the Faculty, the Department of Academic Quality and/or Legal Services in relation to any measures which could be put in place to minimise the impact of these changes, the risks of a challenge being made and, if such a challenge is made, the risks of that challenge being successful.

If changes are planned and made well in advance of delivery of the revised programme/module(s) or with a shorter lead in time, student consultation will be required. Changing a student's programme of study – for example changing the programme title and hence the award – may well change the 'contract' between the university and the students. It would be necessary to consult with students in such cases and it would also be necessary to gain the written consent of students enrolled upon the programme to gain consent.

Each student has an individual right as a consumer and it may be necessary to work with individual students to find a way forward if they do not agree to a change. The University may have to offer the student the right to cancel the contract and obtain a refund of any

advance payments made by the student. The University may also provide advice, assistance and support to assist the student find an alternative course provider where necessary.

Making changes to modules on which students are already enrolled, or making modifications which change published information to students (on which they may have based their pre-enrolment choices) or applicants, should be handled with great care and avoided if possible. In such cases it would normally be necessary to gain the written consent of all students enrolled upon or pre-enrolled upon the module. Making changes to the assessment regime of a module whilst students are enrolled upon it, or have received information about it to aid pre-enrolment decisions, is strongly discouraged by the university. However, if it is necessary to change a module's methods of assessment at such a late stage, the written consent of students must be sought.

Changes requiring written consent are as follows:

- Changing the programme award title (this should be evidenced through written consent of each individual student of all affected cohorts)
- Changes to core modules (removal or addition)
- Changes to assessment type e.g. changing from 100% coursework to exams/vice versus or splitting assessments into coursework and exams where it was previously 100%

In all of the above cases, it is highly recommended that future cohorts affected by the change are consulted and written to. Any applicants, who may have made choices based on previous options available, must also be contacted and engaged.

When making changes to optional modules, it is also recommended to communicate those changes to future cohorts and applicants. You may not need consent (depending on all the circumstances), but it is a legal obligation that accurate information about choices should be made available to students.

For more information, see the above section ‘What changes need consent (agreement) by students?’

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

If your programme/module(s) is professionally accredited, please ensure that the relevant PSRB is fully consulted about the changes you intend to make.

Timetable Office

Details of all modifications to modules delivered at DMU campuses are required by the Timetable Office, in order to ensure the integrity of timetable solutions.

It is important that there is advance consultation in the case of module modifications to the following so that the feasibility of implementation can be assessed:
- Delivery: the number of student contact hours; length, type and/or teaching week pattern of activities; location
- Credit level and value
- Status; ‘must take’ or option
- Specialist resources required
- Constraints on student availability – e.g. regular visits, placement, off-site teaching

Partner Institutions

If one or more of the University's partner institutions delivers part or all of the programme/module(s) you are making changes to, they must be involved in the consultation process. These students should also be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the change, if appropriate.

Apprenticeships colleagues

If the module or programme is currently used within an apprenticeship programme, the Central Apprenticeships Team must be involved in the consultation process and apprentices and employers should also be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the change, if applicable.

Other staff/other Faculties

Other staff within your Faculty, or other faculties, will need to consulted and kept informed if the changes you are making have an impact upon programmes and/or modules which they are involved in delivering, or which are delivered to their students. Students from other programmes/Faculties should also be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed change.

Communication

Once your changes to the curriculum have been approved, there are a number of people who will need to know about them. In addition to those listed above, Faculty administrative staff will need to be informed – for example the Faculty QA Administrator/programme administrator, who will ensure that the specifications are updated to reflect the changes, and that the changes are made on the student record system. The Faculty marketing team should also be updated where website information needs to be updated.

Key individuals and central departments

Programme/Module Leader

The Programme/Module Leader (PL/ML) will usually have the responsibility for initiating changes, and ensuring that they are brought to the attention of the PMB/SAC and the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality. Once a decision is made regarding the change, the PL/ML will either need to update the proposal and re-present to DARC/FAC or in the case of the change being accepted the PL/ML will be responsible for the following actions:

- Update Programme Administrators (to make relevant changes to SAP)
- Update Faculty Marketing team (to update website with relevant information)
- Contact Admissions to ensure that applicants are advised, in writing, of any changes that have been made prior to them starting the programme (this will include major changes and anything that has been advertised in a prospectus/website, such as module name changes has been approved
- Future cohorts of students who have been consulted with and where it affects the level of study they are due to start (as per applicants)
- Current students (if applicable)

Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality

The Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality is the first contact point for advice about the curriculum modification process. It is the responsibility of the Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality to determine whether a change constitutes a revalidation or a

modification in liaison with DAQ. They are also responsible for ensuring that the appropriate paperwork (Curriculum Modification Form) is completed for each curriculum change. The Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality will convene revalidation events as required. These functions will be carried out in liaison DAQ as appropriate.

Faculty Associate Dean (Academic)

The Faculty Associate Dean (Academic) can provide advice on whether the changes you wish to make are in accordance with the university's regulations and must be involved in any changes to programme-specific regulations.

Faculty QA Administrator/Programmes Manager/Programme Management Board/SAC administrator

One of the above, depending on your Faculty, is responsible for ensuring that the relevant specifications (templates) are updated to reflect the changes you have made, and for ensuring that the student records system is amended as appropriate. Other responsibilities include advising on the logistical implications of the changes for students.

The Department of Academic Quality

DAQ will provide advice and guidance on all aspects of the modification process, and will particularly support the Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality in carrying out their role in relation to curriculum modifications.

DAQ will also adjudicate in cases where proposed modifications would contravene University policy or regulations.

Head of Timetabling

The Head of Timetabling can give guidance on the timetabling implications of the modifications and implementation options, taking into consideration all the constraints that apply.

Key Committees

Programme Management Board (PMB)/Subject Academic Committee (SAC)

The PMB/SAC has initial responsibility for approving (or otherwise) and overseeing curriculum change.

Development and Review Committee (DARC)/Faculty Academic Committee (FAC)

The DARC/FAC has the responsibility for approving all changes designated as modifications and for devolved revalidations.

Quality Sub-Committee (QSC)

The QSC will maintain an overview of the curriculum modification process from a quality assurance perspective and is responsible, via its sub-committee the Validation Service Board, for non-devolved revalidations.

Section 6: Responsibilities of faculty professional services staff in the modification process

Faculty professional services staff will be involved at various stages during the modification process, by making relevant updates to specifications (templates) and reflecting those changes on the student records system. The section below outlines the roles and

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responsibilities of faculty professional services staff. It is important that all staff adhere to the following guidance.

If you receive any request to change the curriculum on the student records system, with the exception of those changes listed as 'housekeeping' in this guide, please do not make the change unless you are sure it is authorised by the Faculty. This authorisation will consist of a completed and signed Curriculum Modification Form – or, in the case of late/urgent changes, the explicit written agreement of the Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality or Associate Dean (Academic). In such cases an email would be sufficient, assuming that the Curriculum Modification Form would be completed afterwards to document the late change. Housekeeping changes to the specifications (templates) can be made with the agreement of the PMB/SAC, and without a Curriculum Modification Form.

Programme Management Board (PMB)/Subject Academic Committee (SAC) secretary

Once a curriculum modification has been initiated, it is the responsibility of the PMB/SAC secretary to ensure that details of PMB/SAC approval (or otherwise) of the modification are adequately recorded in the PMB/SAC minutes for the meeting at which the modification is considered. For modifications approved to go forward by the PMB/SAC, the PMB/SAC secretary should liaise with the PMB/SAC Chair and/or proposer of the change to ensure that the partially completed Curriculum Modification Form is forwarded to the faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality for action.

Faculty Quality Assurance Administrator/Programme Administrator or equivalent

The Faculty QA administrator or Programme Administrator (or PMB/SAC administrators in some faculties) will make the appropriate amendments on the student records system (SAP) once modifications have been approved by DARC/FAC. The responsibility of this may vary in Faculties and it will remain within the remit of the current area of responsibility. It is helpul to send a reminder to the programme/module leader when SAP is updated, to ask them to cross-check the updated programme/module information against the published course pages on the DMU website, the prospectus and any other marketing literature to ensure that these are also updated to reflect the curriculum modification.

If a curriculum modification is deemed by the Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality to require a revalidation event, the QA administrator (or equivalent) will work with the Associate Professor (Quality) to arrange and support the revalidation event, according to faculty processes.

Section 7: Modification proforma and guidance notes

Curriculum Modification Form

This should be completed by the proposer of the change, normally the Programme or Module Leader, and follows the change through from initial consideration to approval. A series of notes at the end of the form explain its use and the responsibilities in completing it.

The proforma is available on the Department of Academic Quality [web pages](#).

Curriculum Modification Form guidance notes

Notes on the completed form

Please read these notes before completing the form. If you have any queries regarding the completion of the form, please contact your Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality or the Department of Academic Quality for advice.

The form may be completed for one or more changes to the curriculum. For example, if you have several modules to which the same modification is being made, these can be made on one form. If you have changes to a programme which as a consequence involve changing some of the modules which constitute that programme, these can also be made on one form.

It is the responsibility of the proposer of the change(s) to initiate this form. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality (on the advice of the Department of Academic Quality) to ensure that the appropriate level of scrutiny is applied (revalidation or modification) and to ensure that the form is completed and forwarded to the Department of Academic Quality.

Top section – include confirmation that the request for change has been approved by the Faculty PMB/SAC. If the request has not been approved by the PMB/SAC, the request will be rejected.

Sections 1 – 4 should be completed electronically by the **proposer of the modification(s).**

Section 1 relates to basic details of the provision to be modified. Ensure that any programmes affected by the change are listed in this section, including those outside of your programme/faculty.

Section 2 relates to the changes being made to the curriculum. It is important when explaining the changes that you are explicit about how the provision is now, and how it is going to change. For example, ensure that you clearly state both the old title and new title of a module if it is changing.

Section 3 needs to specify if a module is being removed from one or more programme(s), but remains available for other programmes, or if it requires full removal from SAP (mark SAP on proforma, this will remove it from the university offering).

It is essential that proposed changes are articulated using the current module/programme specification document. This document must be provided alongside the Curriculum modification form, with 'track changes' enabled to demonstrate the edits to the document. If you have not downloaded the document directly from the student records system yourself, check with your Faculty office to ensure you have the most recent version.

Ensure that the learning hours information is included as this is required for UDL.

Section 4 should identify what consultation has taken place. Please indicate who has been consulted, when, and summarise their comments if appropriate. Written or emailed evidence can be attached to the completed form, where appropriate.

You should consult your external examiner(s) in all changes to the curriculum prior to the change going to DARC/FAC.

If changes will affect students already enrolled or pre-enrolled upon the programme/module(s), their views must be sought and applicants should be updated of changes made before they commence their studies. If future queries arose relating to your modification, you would need to provide evidence of student consultation/consent.

For resits without attendance, please confirm you have taken steps to ensure that learning materials (including DMU Replay recordings) will be available to resit students following the modification.

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. Please refer to the [Competition and Markets Authority guidance](#) to HE providers on consumer rights legislation for more information if necessary.

Other consultations may include professional/statutory bodies, or the Timetable Office if module delivery patterns within a programme are changing. Account Managers in Educational Partnerships (EP) - for UK partners - and Strategic and International Partnerships (SIP) - for international partners - should be consulted if the change(s) relate to provision delivered at one or more partner institutions. Please indicate who has been consulted, when, and summarise their comments if appropriate. Written or emailed evidence can be attached to the completed form.

There are several tick list items included to prompt relevant points regarding UDL and Consumer Rights.

Section 5 should be completed by the Faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality to identify what level of modification is being made (revalidation/modification), if further work is required, and the date of approval. [Section](#)3 of the Guide to Curriculum Modification outlines the changes which fall into each category.

Section 8: Further information

Web resources
[Academic Regulations](#)

[A Guide to Validation](#)

[Guidance notes on completion of programme specifications](#)

[Guidance notes on completion of module specifications](#)

[Office for Students sector-recognised standards in England](#)