



Curriculum Development and Management Policy and Procedure

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POLICY - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Purpose

- POL.1. This policy sets out the University's approach to the development, approval and management of curriculum, across the lifecycle of both modules and programmes from initial idea, through approval, maintenance and as appropriate, withdrawal.
- POL.2. In conjunction with the associated procedure (provided within this document), and taking account of the fundamental basis of the academic regulations, the policy seeks to support curriculum innovation (guided by institutional and Faculty strategic plans) and enable responsiveness to market demand and organisational ambitions, whilst maintaining coherence in the University's portfolio and academic standards and quality.
- POL.3. The policy also facilitates the maintenance of a full and current record of the University's academic portfolio, including all modules and programmes, and robust processes to ensure appropriate consideration and approval of education provision. In formulating this policy, account has been taken of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

Scope

- POL.4. This policy and the associated procedure relate to the University's entire curriculum and operate in conjunction with e.g. academic regulation and the PGR Code of Practice.
- POL.5. The policy should be read and considered alongside the University's Curriculum Design Framework (CDF) which provides a reference point and set of resources for the design, ongoing enhancement and operation of programmes (and modules within them) and which comprises a common set of practices, requirements, principles, structures and processes for learning, teaching and assessment matters.

Definitions

- POL.6. **The terms for which a definition is provided in this section of the policy are the terms that are formally approved within the University and therefore required to be used consistently by staff. The inclusion of the specified terms/words reflect their relevance to the overall management of curriculum and programmes. The consistency of use of these terms facilitates clarity and common understanding.**
- POL.7. **Articulation**
An agreed route of entry into a degree programme, based on another qualification or specified academic credit providing entry into an advanced point in the programme. An example could be an HNC being accepted by the University as the basis of entry to second year of an undergraduate degree programme.

- POL.8. Bologna Process**
The Bologna Process is a European intergovernmental initiative launched in 1999 aimed at harmonizing higher education systems to enhance mobility, quality, and recognition of qualifications across Europe.
- POL.9. Combined Honours Degree Programme**
A programme of study in which a structured combination of subjects is taken, with the combination being reflected in the programme structure and name. Further detail on the required specifications for combined programmes is provided in the [‘Curriculum Structures’](#) section of this policy.
- POL.10. Mandatory Module**
A module which is a fundamental requirement of the degree programme in terms of essential content and learning in line with the degree award, QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, and in some cases in terms of professional award or accreditation requirements. Where a module is designated as mandatory’ within a programme, it is compulsory for students on the programme to take, complete and pass the module, for the student to meet the requirements of the programme and the degree award. As set out in the University’s academic regulations, mandatory modules can be attempted in their entirety by a student twice. If the student does not successfully pass the module at the first or second attempt of the module, they will not be able to continue on the programme and will be required to withdraw from the University or change to a different programme (which does not also have the module designated as mandatory within its structure).
- POL.11. Course**
An alternative term for a Programme, used only for the purposes of external marketing.
- POL.12. Curated Option Module**
An undergraduate module which, whilst not a mandatory requirement of a degree programme, carries key importance within the programme structure in terms of skills development and/or content, and is therefore pre-selected for students on the programme at a specific point in the programme structure. Curated option modules are not assigned ‘mandatory’ designation. Normally, a minimum of one and a maximum of eight Curated Options are available at any relevant point in the programme structure for students to choose between.
- POL.13. Curriculum Management Sub-Committee (CMSC)**
A Sub-Committee of the Education Committee, with the remit to consider and undertake decision-making on proposed curriculum amendments. The Terms of Reference for CMSC are provided as [Appendix 1](#).
- POL.14. Dissertation Module**
A module which comprises an extended, independent study (between 40-60 credits) taken in the final year of a UG degree and final year/stage of a PG degree. It may take the form of a research project, in-depth study of an issue, or be entitled “major project” (or similar) and be based around a live client brief or similar, dependent upon the discipline.

- POL.15. Double Degree**
See paragraph 23.
- POL.16. Dual Degree/Award**
A dual degree is one in which two or more awarding bodies together provide a single jointly designed programme/curriculum that leads to separate qualifications and separate award certification being granted by both, or all of them. While dual degree programmes involve more than one degree-awarding body working together to offer a jointly conceived programme, a student does not need to satisfy the requirements of both/all the bodies to receive an award. In this case, the programmes are designed to enable students to achieve more than one distinct set of criteria (learning outcomes or other requirements, and in some arrangements the different sets may overlap) and more than one award.
- POL.17. Elective Option Module**
A module that a student chooses from a specified selection of module options, available at a specific point in an undergraduate programme structure. Elective Modules do not gain the designation of a mandatory module upon selection, they retain the status of an option module. These modules provide a level of flexibility in the curriculum, allowing students to explore different subjects or areas of study, within the specified scope of optionality as set out in the Curriculum Design Principles. Normally, a maximum of 14 Elective Modules are available at any relevant point in the programme structure for students to choose between.
- POL.18. European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS)**
The European framework designed to facilitate the transfer of credit between courses for students who choose to study at more than one European University, including exchange students. Further detail on the ECTS is set out in paragraph 62.
- POL.19. Faculty**
Faculties are academic and administrative units within the University's organisational structure. Faculties are comprised of related Schools and are led by an Executive Dean. The University's current faculties are: Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Faculty of Health, Sport and Society; Faculty of Natural Sciences; Stirling Business School. For the purposes of academic governance and oversight (including this policy), the International Study Centre is also regarded as a Faculty.
- POL.20. Graduate Apprenticeship**
A route through which students can undertake a degree programme whilst also being employed, using work with their employer towards the attainment of the degree award.
- POL.21. Integrated Degree Programme**
A programme of study with a structure based on an integration of delivery or an integration of subjects. Internally, an integrated degree programme is one in which content is holistically integrated across the breadth of the programme. An example would be the BA (Hons) Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Integrated degree programmes can also be those that are formed through an integration of

delivery and input between the University and another education provider.
Integrated degree awards are granted by the University of Stirling.

POL.22. Integrated Masters Degree

A programme of study that combines undergraduate and postgraduate level study into a single programme, from which the first-degree qualification 'Integrated Master of Science' (MSci) can be achieved.

POL.23. Joint Degree Award / Double Degree Award

A joint degree is one in which two or more awarding bodies together provide a programme, or programmes that are fundamentally linked (a student cannot complete one programme without also completing the other), leading to a single award made jointly by both/all of the awarding bodies. Students must fulfil the requirements of both/all awarding bodies before an award can be considered. A single, formal certificate or document attests to the successful completion of this jointly delivered programme, replacing the separate institutional certificates. In some jurisdictions there are legal or regulatory impediments to the award of a single certificate of this kind, or difficulties with the recognition or acceptance of a single joint certificate, which mean that it is not in the interests of students to mark their achievement in this way. In these circumstances, students completing a joint degree (as described above) may be awarded two (or more) certificates, one from each degree-awarding body involved. The certificate and/or transcript or record of achievement of at least the UK degree-awarding body or bodies must refer to the existence of the other(s) and makes clear that they refer to the completion of a single, jointly conceived course. Where legally permissible, the same reference should be included on the documents issued by the other degree-awarding body or bodies. Within the Bologna Process, where two or more certificates are issued for a joint degree, this is described as a double degree (or multiple degree, where more than two degree-awarding bodies are involved).

POL.24. Mode of Attendance

The pattern of attendance/engagement a student will adopt in undertaking study with the University, e.g. full-time, part-time.

POL.25. Mode of Delivery

The approach taken to delivering a programme of study.

POL.26. Module

A self-contained, formally structured block of study, with an explicit set of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and credit-value.

POL.27. Module Duration

The period of time in which a module will be delivered. Most modules are designed to be delivered over one semester. In a limited number of instances, it may be appropriate for a module to be delivered over more than one semester. Where this is the case, the module is referred to as a 'spanning module' and must meet the institutional definition of a spanning module.

- POL.28. New Programme Approval Panel (NPAP)**
The Panel that undertakes final consideration and decision-making in respect of new programme proposals. The Terms of Reference for the Panel are provided in [Appendix 2](#).
- POL.29. Option Module**
A module which can be chosen from a group of modules and taken as an option within a programme of study, in line with the specifications of the programme. Option modules may be included in a programme's structure either as a Curated or an Elective Option Module.
- POL.30. Portfolio Management and Review Group.**
The committee that considers the business case for developing a new programme, or suspending or withdrawing a current one, and that reviews the effectiveness of the overall portfolio.
- POL.31. Programme**
A programme of study that is formally structured, with an explicit set of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and credit-value. Programmes are made up of a coherent and structured group of modules, and lead to an award/qualification.
- POL.32. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)**
Statutory body with responsibility for monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education.
- POL.33. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)**
The national qualifications framework for Scotland.
- POL.34. Spanning Module**
A module that is delivered and therefore completed by students over more than one semester. A module being delivered with a Spanning delivery approach is appropriate where either: the volume of academic credit assigned to the module means that it cannot be completed in one semester; or the content of the module complements and aligns with a range of other modules in the programme and is most effectively delivered in parallel with these modules over more than one semester.
- POL.35. Specialist Pathway**
A pathway within a programme that offers an opportunity for specialism within a particular area of the discipline. Specific requirements for specialist pathways are set out in paragraphs 79 – 81.
- POL.36. Suspension**
Where an approved module or programme ceases to be offered for admission for a specified period but continues to be retained within the University's portfolio. Where an entry point for a module or programme is removed after the module or programme has been offered for admission, this will also constitute a suspension.
- POL.37. UK Quality Code for Higher Education**
Key reference point for UK higher education that sets out what is expected of providers in terms of quality and standards.

POL.38. Validation

Validation is the process through which the University, as a degree-awarding body, assesses a module or programme developed and delivered by another organisation and approves it as being of an appropriate standard and quality to contribute, or lead, to an award made under the University's name and degree awarding powers. In such circumstances, students may have a direct contractual relationship with the other organisation.

POL.39. Withdrawal

The formal withdrawal of a programme of study from the University's portfolio. Where a programme is withdrawn, it ceases to be approved as a programme of the University and would require to be considered for approval again through the specified procedure before it could be offered at a future point.

POL.40. Work-based Learning

Learning provision in which the focus is on situations where the main location for the student is the workplace, that is provision which often includes a work placement. The curriculum meets the needs of both the University and the employer and is jointly planned, delivered and assessed.

POL.41. Work-related Learning

Learning developed through students undertaking 'real world' and/or simulated tasks or other experiences where employability skills (subject-based and more generic) are developed such as lab work, field trips, performances, live client-briefs and site visits; students' learning undertaken through volunteering or paid employment may also be drawn on.

Points of Policy

POL.42. Academic Council delegates responsibility to the Education Committee for overseeing and regulating the University's curriculum and the approval of curriculum.

POL.43. The Education Committee considers and approves new programme proposals for quality purposes through its 'New Programme Approval Panel' (NPAP). NPAP operates in alignment with the 'Portfolio Review and Management Group' (PRMG) which has responsibility for considering business cases for new programmes and programme suspensions and withdrawals.

POL.44. The Education Committee considers and approves module and programme amendment proposals through its 'Curriculum Management Sub-Committee' (CMSC) and within this, delegates some responsibilities to Faculties.

POL.45. Full detail of types of module and programme amendments, their impact type both within the University and in respect of compliance with consumer protection legislation guidance are provided in the Module and Programme Amendments Approval Routes matrix which is provided [here](#).

POL.46. The Terms of Reference for CMSC is provided in [Appendix 1](#). The Terms of Reference for NPAP is provided in the '[Development and Approval of New Programmes](#)' section on the Procedure and for ease of reference, in [Appendix 2](#).

- POL.47. Curriculum is regularly reviewed and enhanced to ensure it remains current and appropriate. The student experience, the interests of current students and/or applicants, as well as the University's legal obligations in relation to consumer protection legislation are consistently essential points of consideration in terms of curriculum development and management. As such, management of all the University's curriculum provision must take consistent account the requirements regarding information provision, change management and student interests specified by consumer protection legislation and within the University's [Student Terms and Conditions](#). Advice on consumer protection legislation for Higher Education Institutions published by the Consumer and Markets Authority (CMA) can be found here: [Consumer law advice for higher education providers](#).
- POL.48. Circumstances beyond the University's control can at times mean that changes require to be made to modules or programmes. In offering modules and programmes, and admitting students to them, the University has obligations in respect of consumer legislation, which require that we, for example, provide clear information about the study opportunities we offer, operate fair terms and conditions, and deliver on the contractual requirements that are established when we offer admission and this is accepted.
- POL.49. Points 41-44 of the University's Student Terms and Conditions set out the contractual provisions that are currently in place relevant to changes to programmes of study. Whilst these provisions support appropriate change, they also set out how such change requires to be managed and communicated. It is vital in considering proposals for change, particularly the suspension or withdrawal of a module or programme, that the potential impact on applicants or students and the University's obligations in respect of consumer legislation are taken into account.
- POL.50. **Curriculum offerings and changes to curriculum offerings must only be implemented once they have been approved in line with this policy and its associated procedure.**

Co-production Model

- POL.51. The University adopts a 'co-production' model to the development, approval and implementation of curriculum. As such, all relevant University stakeholder teams must be engaged in the process and working collaboratively at points throughout the process, to ensure that curriculum development progresses comprehensively and all aspects of academic and administrative development are effectively considered. This in turn enables modules and programmes to be created in a way that supports them being offered as soon as possible following approval.

Figure 1 below summarises the key co-producers who are required to be involved in the development of new curriculum offerings, along with the Programme Director/Module Coordinator/Faculty lead or team.

Figure 1:

University Area / Team/ Stakeholder	Role/Area of Input
Faculty Team*	Lead in developing curriculum
Digital Learning / Library	Learning technology within curriculum design and learning and teaching delivery / Reading lists, learning resources
Academic Registry	Quality assurance, academic regulation and policy development and governance, module and programme coding, curriculum information governance and management in the University's system infrastructure,
Students	Student views should be sought on the development of new programmes, and amendments to existing provision
External Advisers	Input from external advisers such as business, employers, alumni, professional bodies and external examiners, should be obtained and used in relation to the development of new programmes
Communications, Marketing and Recruitment	Marketing, contributing to market research, student recruitment, transnational education partnership considerations and arrangements
Admissions and Access	Entry criteria, English language requirements, admissions arrangements, mapping intake targets
Skills and Employability Service	Work-based and work-related learning; business engagement, career management skills development, graduate attributes, reflective practice
Student Learning Services	Support for students in the development of academic and learning skills
Policy and Planning	Strategic alignment, external drivers such as Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding implications, data to support market research
Student Support Services	Accessibility
Finance	Financial modelling and costing
Institute for Advanced Studies	Links with PGR programmes

Curriculum Design

POL.52. Fundamental to curriculum design is that all programmes, modules, learning outcomes and assessments should be constructively aligned and mapped. Learning should be at the appropriate level in relation to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and subject matter/learning outcomes should align to the relevant QAA [Subject Benchmark](#).

- POL.53. The University operates its Curriculum Design Framework (CDF) as a guide, reference point and set of resources for the design, ongoing enhancement and operation of programmes (and modules within them) which comprises a common set of practices, requirements, principles, structures and processes for learning, teaching and assessment.
- POL.54. The CDF:
- i. Provides a consistent reference point for design of new programmes as well as for updating and enhancing existing programmes.
 - ii. Enables academic staff to decide what and how students should learn (and why) and how their learning should be assessed, within an agreed set of operational parameters.
 - iii. Supports conversations about “big questions” framing curriculum decisions.
 - iv. Enables effective sharing of innovation, knowledge and ideas within and between teams.
 - v. Guides academic teams to intentionally design, develop and teach holistic and innovative programmes which prepare students effectively for their future careers.
 - vi. Enables students to experience coherent, well-designed programmes which develop their skills and knowledge through increasing levels of challenge.
 - vii) Ensures students have equivalence of opportunities and experiences, whichever subject/s they study.
- POL.55. The CDF also enables and requires programme teams to consider and align their programmes to the Design Principles, the Design Elements and related University policies, to ensure high quality, relevant academic experiences for our students. These Design Principles and Elements are provided in [Appendix 3](#)
- POL.56. Modules may be designed and offered on a stand-alone basis, or as part of a programme. Modules do not normally operate with a cap on student cohort numbers, although some exceptions to this are permissible, normally based on limited availability of required facilities, staffing or equipment. The application of a student number cap on a module requires to be approved as set out in paragraph 76 of the Procedure (see page 33 of this document).
- POL.57. All programmes must be accessible and inclusive, with measures to improve accessibility mainstreamed and available to all students.

Credit Rating and Credit Load

- POL.58. The design of the University's degrees and qualifications must take account of the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#) (SCQF). As such, the development of each module and programme requires to include robust credit rating to specify level and credit-points. Qualification level descriptors can be found here: [SCQF Level Descriptors - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#).
- POL.59. The University's standard module of study is assigned 20 SCQF credit points. In very limited, if not exceptional instances, modules with 10 credit points may also be acceptable, most likely where this is a requirement of a professional or regulatory body. Proposals will be considered for approval within the Procedure for Curriculum Development and Management. Dissertation (or equivalent) modules are assigned between 40 and 60 credits for undergraduate programmes and 120 credits for postgraduate taught programmes.
- POL.60. Apart from research degree programmes that are assessed solely by a final thesis, body of published work, artefact or performance, all University of Stirling programmes must meet the credit specifications set out in the academic regulations and summarised in this document as [Appendix 4](#). All these regulatory specifications meet or exceed the minimum credit requirements of SCQF, and therefore ensure the University's continued adherence to the Framework.
- POL.61. Further specification of credit requirements is set out in the section on ['Collaborative Programmes and Arrangements'](#) of this Policy, and in respect of dual/joint/multiple awards.
- POL.62. The European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS) defines credit slightly differently to the SCQF system as one year of study equates to 60 ECTS credit points. University of Stirling/SCQF credit values are translated into ECTS credits by dividing by two, for example: an Undergraduate Programme Module carrying 20 University of Stirling Credits = 10 ECTS credits. More information can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en.
- POL.63. Students will normally study up to 60 credits in one semester, within a baseline of 120 credits per year for full-time students. A maximum of 80 credits can be attempted in one semester.

Curriculum Structures

- POL.64. Programmes must be designed in line with the University's credit requirements, as set out in the academic regulations, and summarised in [Appendix 4](#). These credit requirements take account of national, statutory qualification frameworks.
- POL.65. In addition, where a programme is to be accredited by a professional body or association, programme design will also take account of the relevant requirements associated with this.
- POL.66. The curriculum will provide a coherent, structured route through the programme of study, that enables the achievement of the programme learning outcomes and ultimately the degree qualification.

- POL.67. All of the University's modules require to be assigned a 'module type', selected from the specified range of types as follows: Standard Taught; Dissertation/Project; Placement; Fieldwork; Thesis; Study Abroad.
- POL.68. In addition, in designing a programme's content and structure, each module that forms part of the programme must be assigned a 'module designation' within that programme. A module may be designated as either: mandatory; Curated Option; Elective Option. Designation is based on a module's status within a specific programme, and as such the same module may carry different designations within different programmes.
- POL.69. Programmes will normally contain a mix of mandatory, curated option and elective modules. In some instances, for example in respect of professional programmes, a programme may include only mandatory modules.
- POL.70. The structure of combined honours degree programmes is normally achieved by combining the mandatory modules of the relevant single honours programmes. In addition, a minimum of 80 credits is required in both subjects in the honours classification countable modules, which are taken in years 3 and 4. The balance of credits for each subject across the programme as a whole should be even or at least very close to even. Students should normally be able to choose either subject for their dissertation. This choice does not represent a specialist pathway.
- POL.71. Undergraduate modules should normally be designed at SCQF level 7, 8, 9 or 10, with programmes structured to facilitate a gradual progression through these levels. Ideally, the following structure should be used:

Semester	Credit level
1	7
2	7
3	8
4	8
5	9/10
6	9/10
7	9/10
8	9/10

- POL.72. Undergraduate programmes must be designed to reflect this credit level structure. On an exceptional basis and in respect of a minimal number of programmes, a variation to this structure may be approved, where a clear and demonstrable programme design or delivery requirement exists or professional body requirements differ.
- POL.73. When developing an undergraduate programme, consideration should be given to any specific relationship between modules and any such relationship should be managed through the structure of the programme.
- POL.74. The use of requisites within programme design is only permitted on an exceptional basis, that is where there is either a regulatory or essential pedagogy requirement that can only be achieved through a requisite arrangement.

- POL.75. Where an exceptional requisite is to be used, this can only be on the basis of either requisite type a), b) or c) specified below.
- a) **Pre-requisite:** A module that a student must have taken and successfully completed and passed, before they can take another particular module. In other words, in order to take module B, a student must first have taken and passed module A. A module will have the status of a pre-requisite where its content, learning or skills development is fundamental to the learning/experience that will be undertaken in another module, and a student would be unlikely to be able to successfully achieve this other module without having first successfully completed and passed the pre-requisite module.
 - b) **Co-requisite:** A module that a student must take in the same semester(s) as another particular module. In other words, in order to take module A, a student must also take module B at the same time. A module will have the status of a co-requisite where its content, learning or skills development is directly linked and related to that of another module, and a student would be unlikely to be able to successfully achieve either unless they are taken in the same period of learning.
 - c) **Prohibited Combination:** A module that a student cannot take within their programme of study, if they have already completed and passed another particular module, or if they are also registered for that particular module in the same semester. It is appropriate for a module to have the status of a Prohibited Combination where there is substantial overlap in the content of the other module and taking both would therefore result in a student being awarded two blocks of academic credit for largely a single topic of learning.
- POL.76. Successfully completed prerequisite modules will not be counted after five calendar years from module commencement.
- POL.77. Honours degree programmes will normally contain a piece of individualised study at level 10 (the dissertation/project), and an appropriate number of taught modules. Any proposed alternative programme structures would be considered as appropriate through the Procedure that accompanies this policy. Workload should be evenly spread throughout the degree programme.
- POL.78. In developing a programme of study, consideration will require to be given as to module durations, modes of delivery and potential modes of attendance that will be available. Student engagement / attendance requirements should be specified explicitly for every module.

Specialist Pathways

- POL.79. Specialist pathways can be included within a programme to offer an opportunity for specialism in a particular area of the subject or discipline. As such, a programme that offers a pathway to a specialism will have a common core structure for all students but will be structured to enable students to take differing modules to develop a specialism in a specific area of study within the parent subject/discipline. A specialist pathway within a PGT programme should be formed from a basis of at least 60 credits of study in the specialist area of the discipline, and in UG Honours programmes, at least 80 of the total credits in the final two years.
- POL.80. Specialist pathways are considered part of the programme and as such are approved as part of the programme. Students would apply for the programme and at the specified point in the programme structure, select their specialist pathway of study. The degree awarded will normally be the parent programme with the specialism reflected in the award title, in line with the programme naming requirements set out in [‘Programme Naming and Coding’](#) section of this policy. For example, MSc Environmental Management or MSc Environmental Management (Energy) or MSc Environmental Management (Conservation). In exceptional circumstances, the University may consider proposals for specialist pathways to result in a degree award with a name which is different to that of the parent programme, and therefore for the award title to be exceptionally designed in variation to the provisions of paragraph 121. However, this would be exceptional and would require prior approval of NPAP/CMSC.
- POL.81. It should be noted that a programme may offer students choice at various stages, e.g. where a student undertaking a combined honours degree can choose whether to complete the dissertation in one subject or another. However, such a choice does not constitute a ‘pathway’ since the term ‘pathway’ only applies to routes to specialism within a degree programme.

Additional Programme Design Guidance

- POL.82. Alongside the Design Principles and Design Elements described in the CDF there are other key considerations when designing a new programme or significantly reviewing an existing one.
- POL.83. There are two key elements to this guidance: **designing programme learning outcomes** and **designing module learning outcomes**. Initial guidance is set out on each one below, with further information on SCQF levels in the “Curriculum Structures” section of this document. Additional, more detailed guidance for designing effective programme and module learning outcomes is available on the Curriculum Design Framework SharePoint site.

Designing Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

- POL.84. PLOs are explicit descriptions of what students should know, understand and be able to do because of learning in the context of a particular programme. They describe explicit goals for learning, indicate the required level of learning and should inform (and reflect) how the programme is designed and taught through the modules that make up the programme.
- POL.85. It is recommended that undergraduate programmes have 8-10 and postgraduate taught programmes have 6-8 PLOs.
- POL.86. For combined honours programmes, it is important that whilst each subject is represented in the PLOs, the list is not simply double the PLOs that would be used for the single honours version. The PLOs should reflect the content of the modules studied for each element of the award. Some PLOs will relate to discipline-specific knowledge, skills and attributes and some will be shared by the two subjects; shared PLOs may articulate interdisciplinary skills and attributes and/or where there are overlaps in skills and attributes between disciplines.
- POL.87. In creating new PLOs or revising existing ones, it is important to reference the QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and the SCQF levels. As external reference points benchmark statements are essential in assuring standards, but outcomes should not be directly transposed from benchmark statements; rather they should be used as a point of comparison to prompt reflection. Professional and regulatory bodies may also stipulate numerous professional competencies / outcomes. Representing these within the recommended number of PLOs (e.g., grouping professional competencies within a single PLO) can be a useful approach.
- POL.88. The QAA Subject Benchmark Statements 'Describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas' (QAA) for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. Where an undergraduate programme is multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary, there may be no benchmark statement of direct relevance. In such cases, more than one statement can be used as a source of reference.
- POL.89. The 'Be the Difference' Skills & Capabilities Framework and Taxonomy presents revised Graduate Attributes (GAs) and a shared language that underpin our GAs. These also need to be referenced in PLOs.

Designing Module Learning Outcomes (MLOs)

- POL.90. MLOs are specific, measurable, and achievable statements that unambiguously indicate what a student should know and be able to do because of undertaking learning in the module. They should be relevant to the discipline and inclusive in scope to ensure all students can achieve their potential.
- POL.91. MLOs should be broad enough to convey to students the essential learning for passing the module and be assessable.
- POL.92. 20 credit modules should have between 3-4 broad learning outcomes, 40 credit modules should have between 4-5 broad learning outcomes, and modules of more than 40 credits should have a maximum of 6 broad learning outcomes.

Learning and Teaching Delivery

- POL.93. The QAA has at various points, and most recently in 2021, published guidance on 'contact hours'. This most recent guidance noted that, 'scheduled learning hours' and 'guided/independent study hours' are terms that appropriately reflect the range of ways students spend time learning.
- POL.94. The University defines 'scheduled learning hours' as: timetabled delivery of learning and teaching. It should be noted that student contact time will be broader than only scheduled learning hours and will also include a range of non-timetabled communications and contacts.
- POL.95. Within the design of every module, learning and teaching delivery including scheduled learning hours and independent study hours as appropriate, must be formulated in line with the requirements of this policy. The provisions of this policy take account of the importance of a balance of scheduled delivery activity and opportunity for independent study within curriculum design, as well as statutory UKVI policy for institutions that sponsor international students to study in the UK, which specifies a maximum volume of online/remote scheduled learning hours that is permissible for student visa holders.
- POL.96. The formulation of scheduled learning hours should be pedagogically driven, taking account of the nature and requirements of the subject-discipline, the activities required to enable students to achieve a module's learning outcomes, and any professional outcomes associated with the module, as well as the SCQF level of the module and the volume of academic credit that the module carries.
- POL.97. As such, volumes of scheduled learning hours can vary quite significantly across different modules, however every Standard Module (a taught module, excluding project, placement, dissertation and industrial research modules) must include at least the standard institutional minimum number of scheduled learning hours which is 22 hours and a maximum of 36 hours for a 20-credit module (pro rata for modules that carry a credit value other than 20 credits). It is important to stress that this minimum is indeed a minimum requirement for each module and not a norm. The actual number of scheduled learning hours is designed in line with the nature of the discipline, the learning outcomes and any professional requirements. In respect of 20-credit modules, the number of scheduled learning hours across a semester can vary quite significantly, depending on the module.
- POL.98. Furthermore, no more than 15% of an on campus delivered module's total scheduled learning hours can be delivered online or remotely. As such at least 85% must be delivered in person.
- POL.99. Programmes approved to be delivered wholly remotely as an online programme may comprise elements of both synchronous and asynchronous teaching. The information provided to prospective students about such programmes must include what this mode of delivery means in practice, for example, a mix of independent learning, synchronous or asynchronous teaching, or a mixture. It is

acceptable for online programmes to include some in-person teaching but again this must be communicated clearly to prospective students.

- POL.100. Interaction with additional learning and teaching materials, including digital recordings and resources provided to support the student learning experience and outcomes, should be included within a module's independent learning hours (and is therefore not subject to the 15% maximum threshold).
- POL.101. Teaching delivery must be designed and planned to be consistently coherent and organised. Whilst team teaching approaches can be effective in facilitating learning and the student learning experience, such approaches should be planned within the delivery design for the module and then overseen by the Module Coordinator. Teaching delivery must not be fragmented, disjointed or ad-hoc in nature to avoid inconsistency of experience for students. Where there are several different lecturers teaching one module, there must be effective communication between staff and students about the rationale for this, and appropriate handovers, to ensure a high-quality student experience.

Assessment

- POL.102. Assessment design is a vital element of the overall design of modules and programmes.
- POL.103. Detailed guidance specifically relating to assessment design is provided in the Assessment Toolkit and the Curriculum Design Framework.
- POL.104. The [Assessment and Marking Policy](#) is a further key reference.

Collaborative Programmes and Arrangements

- POL.105. The University may wish to develop and offer collaborative programmes either with established partners or with new emerging partners both in the UK and internationally.
- POL.106. In all cases, in the design and development of a collaborative programme, it must be clear from the outset what type of collaborative arrangement (joint degree, dual degree, integrated degree etc) the programme is being structured as.
- POL.107. An integrated degree programme may be delivered based on a collaboration between the University and another education provider. Where an integrated degree programme has a structure based on an integration of delivery and input from both the University and an external partner, students undertaking the programme are regarded as students of the University throughout the duration of the programme, including the elements delivered by the partner provider. Furthermore, on successful completion of the programme, students are awarded a University of Stirling degree.

- POL.108. In order for the University to enter into a dual or multiple award arrangement, the total number of credits for the award must at least meet the University's requirements for that type of award (in terms of volume and level of credits), irrespective of whether the partner institution(s) may normally require fewer credits in order to confer the equivalent award.
- POL.109. In addition, in all instances where a dual, multiple or joint award is to be offered, the programme should require students to pass at least 50% of the minimum required credits with the University of Stirling as part of the overall programme requirements. The total number of credits for any Masters dual/double/multiple award should generally not be less than 220 (110 ECTS) credits with no less than 120 (60 ECTS) credits at SCQF level 11.
- POL.110. In the development of collaborative programmes, the procedure for the approval of new programmes, as set out in the Procedure that accompanies this policy, is followed in respect of approval. As such, new programmes developed with new international partners require the approval of the New Programme Approval Panel (NPAP). This includes new programmes developed with existing international partners (i.e. building on an existing agreement). This approval is distinct from any approval process in respect of the partnership through which the collaborative provision is to be offered. In considering approval, NPAP will assess the academic quality and robustness of the proposed programme and may decide that it cannot approve the proposal or that further development is necessary before approval can be granted.
- POL.111. New International Study Centre programmes should be developed in conjunction with the ISC Academic Management Group and require the approval of NPAP.
- POL.112. Articulation agreements provide a framework whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on a programme at a partner university or college become eligible (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent part or year of a programme at the University of Stirling. Approval of such agreements requires the mapping of the partner institution's qualification learning outcomes to the learning outcomes of the UoS programme to determine the appropriate level of entry. In addition, the processes for articulation agreement approval and management must align and interact with the procedure set out in this document, to ensure continued appropriateness of study routes.
- POL.113. As set out in the Academic Regulations, an award from the University of Stirling requires that a minimum of one-third of the total credits are acquired through study at or validated by the University of Stirling. For some specific qualifications, the required level may be higher than this minimum.

External Accreditation

- POL.114. Where an external accreditation of a programme is in place or there is an intention to work towards accreditation, this requires to be noted within a programme proposal.

POL.115. An application of external accreditation will typically be submitted after a programme has been fully approved through the University's approval process, via the New Programme Approval Panel or the Curriculum Management Sub-committee.

POL.116. Academic Registry retains a central record of University of Stirling programmes that hold external accreditation via the institutional Curriculum Management System (Akari) and therefore all accreditations must be recorded in the system by the relevant faculty team and the information maintained current and up to date.

Programme and Module Naming and Coding

POL.117. The names of programmes should be considered in terms of both existing programmes within the University's portfolio, and market relevance.

POL.118. If a degree qualification is proposed which is not already approved as one of the University's degrees as set out in [Ordinance 58](#), Academic Council and University Court must approve the addition of the qualification to the Ordinance, and the Ordinance revised accordingly.

POL.119. A programme name should be presented with the: type of degree qualification; and then the title. The use of 'in' is not used. For example, BA (Hons) Descriptive Linguistics or MSc Chemical Engineering, and *not* MSc in Chemical Engineering.

POL.120. In respect of combined honours degree programmes, the programme name should be presented with the different subjects being studied included in alphabetical order, and the use of the word 'and'. For example, BA (Hons) Business Studies and English Studies.

POL.121. In the case of a programme with specialist pathways available, the core programme name will be consistently reflected, with specialisms being added in parentheses after this, e.g. MSc Environmental Management or MSc Environmental Management (Energy) or MSc Environmental Management (Conservation), and *not* MSc Environmental Management with Conservation or MSc Environmental Management and Conservation.

POL.122. In respect of both modules and programmes, the name should align appropriately and accurately with the content.

POL.123. Programme and Module coding should follow the University's specified coding conventions, which are managed by Academic Registry.

Curriculum Management System

POL.124. The University operates a Curriculum Management system (CMS) to support and facilitate: its effective and efficient management of curriculum information and approval; and the Procedure for Curriculum Development and Management that requires to be consistently followed in all instances of module or programme development, amendment or withdrawal.

POL.125. The system facilitates:

- Required information being developed and contributed at relevant points by a range of University teams and staff members;
- Comprehensive data sets being prepared for the purposes of programme specifications, module descriptors, and degree structure information that is required in order for module registration to take place, and related to this, for students to have access to information throughout their studies that supports them in completing module registration and having clarity on the study that requires to be (successfully) completed in order for the degree to be achieved;
- The efficient consideration and approval of proposals for new modules and programmes, and the amendment or withdrawal of an existing module or programme;
- An audit trail of consideration and approval of proposals for new modules and programmes, and the amendment or withdrawal of an existing module or programme;
- A single source of core curriculum information being retained within the University;
- Curriculum information being available to feed into other University systems to support: curriculum information being published to the website and therefore marketing and student recruitment; curriculum information being created within the student record system to enable student admissions, enrolment, ongoing module registration and the determination of student attainment and awards.
- The availability of information that can be exported from the system and used by Faculties for handbooks and other purposes.
- Mapping functionality in respect of aspects of curriculum such as assessment and learning outcomes.
- The availability of information and data that is readily available to be used for reporting purposes.

Definitive Record of Programmes

POL.126. It is essential that the University holds a definitive record of all the programmes and modules it currently offers and has offered in the past. This record comprises: programme specifications; module descriptors; approval/amendment documentation; dates upon which the programme or module were offered by the University and the location(s) in which they were offered; and periods in which the programme or module had students registered on them. Academic Registry provides governance for these records, with the CLM system acting as the University's primary, single source of curriculum information.

POL.127. Programme specifications, module descriptors and syllabus are made available to prospective students, students and staff.

PROCEDURE - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

General

- PROC.1. [Paragraphs 42 – 46](#) of the Policy set out the authority delegated by Academic Council to the Education Committee and in turn by the Education Committee to the New Programme Approval Panel and Curriculum Management Sub-Committee, in respect of decision making for approvals.
- PROC.2. The process by which proposals, amendments, suspensions and withdrawal of programmes and modules are managed has been developed to:
- Support innovation and the exploration of new ideas through their testing, shaping and refinement;
 - Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration;
 - Ensure robust, transparent, simple and clear processes;
 - Enable all internal decision makers and stakeholders to be involved in the process at the relevant stage and avoid bottle-necks being created, or this important process being considered a ‘tick box’ exercise;
 - Support informed decision making and the effective management of curriculum;
 - Provide clear opportunities for external and student engagement;
 - Ensure that accurate and comprehensive information on curriculum is prepared and maintained, therefore facilitating the effective operation of modules and programmes within the University and the effective provision of information to students and prospective students.
- PROC.3. All programme proposals are considered for approval based on the final award that can be achieved. All students can be eligible to achieve standard exit awards in line with University regulations. However, if any bespoke exit awards are to be proposed, these should also be set out in the proposal. If it is the intention to enable applicants to apply for and gain a named award at a level that is lower than the final award being proposed (e.g. Diploma, Certificate), separate programme proposals for each of these must be prepared and approved by NPAP.
- PROC.4. Programme and module development, proposal, amendment, suspension or withdrawal should be considered within the context of both the University Strategic Plan, the Education and Student Experience Strategy and Faculty plans as well as all relevant regulations or policy.

- PROC.5. As part of annual activity to review curriculum marketing information and plan recruitment communication, each year Faculties will be asked to consider the entry points that are to be offered for each programme in the next cycle of recruitment and admission. These intended entry points are reported to CMSC for information.
- PROC.6. All programmes, even those whose content spans more than one Faculty, are owned by one owning Faculty and this Faculty should lead the preparation and submission of any curriculum proposals. Proposals will require approval by both or all Faculties that will contribute to the content of the programme. Where a proposal is approved, the 'owning' Faculty is responsible for: the students on the programme; the operation of Boards of Examiners for the programme; submission of any future amendments or a proposal to withdraw the programme; convening of the Staff Student Voice Committee (SSVC) and other relevant committees; appointment of the Programme Director.
- PROC.7. The consistent adoption of the co-production model (see paragraph 51 of the Policy on Curriculum Development and Management), and therefore engagement with a range of co-producers will support the development of complete, comprehensive and robust proposals which, if approved, can be readily implemented.
- PROC.8. Curriculum proposal development should consistently include appropriate engagement with students and external advisers. Students should be engaged through the established SSVC structures and/or Faculty Officers, or through other effective approaches. The student engagement that has formed part of the curriculum development process should be outlined in proposal documentation.
- PROC.9. Proposals relating to postgraduate research programmes should be discussed with the Institute for Advanced Studies at an early stage of consideration.
- PROC.10. Faculties should consider how best to engage with external advisors within their own contexts and the goals. In respect of engaging external advisers such as business contacts/employers, alumni and external examiners, faculties may wish to engage with Advisory Boards as the key link to these external advisors, or adopt other approaches. External examiners are a valuable network who can provide advice and guidance regarding the development of new programmes in both the context of the University's current portfolio and the broader academic context. The external engagement that has formed part of the curriculum development process should be outlined in proposal information.
- PROC.11. All module or programme proposals and amendments, suspensions and withdrawals should be prepared and approved as soon as possible, and in line with the internally specified operational timelines. This ensures that curriculum can be appropriately marketed, student recruitment and admission can take place, and students can complete module registration and enrolment.

Development and Approval of New Programmes

- PROC.12. As noted in paragraphs 31 and 11 of the policy, the University defines a 'programme' as: *a programme of study that is formally structured, with an explicit set of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and credit-value. Programmes are made up of a coherent and structured group of modules, and lead to an award/qualification*, while 'course' is defined as: *an alternative term for a Programme, used only for the purposes of external marketing*.
- PROC.13. The procedure applies across all faculties and to all proposed new programmes whether at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and short courses, whether for delivery by the University, through its International Study Centre (ISC), or through a UK or international partner.
- PROC.14. All proposals for new programmes must be developed in line with the:
- i. The University's strategic objectives as set out in the Education and Student Experience Strategy.
 - ii. Institutional Curriculum Design Principles (as articulated through the Curriculum Design Framework).
 - iii. University Academic Regulations, academic standards and quality assurance requirements.
- PROC.15. Furthermore, all new programme proposals must be strategically aligned, financially viable, market-responsive, and designed to deliver excellent graduate outcomes.
- PROC.16. No new programme can be offered for recruitment/admission by the University of Stirling until it has been fully considered through this procedure and the programme has been granted final, institutional approval.
- PROC.17. Where a proposed new programme is to be delivered as collaborative provision, the approval of the relevant partnership and contract will be developed and approved through a separate process led and managed by Communications, Marketing and Recruitment.

Overview of the Procedure

- PROC.18. The procedure is based around six key stages:
- Stage 1: Concept Development and Faculty Endorsement
 - Stage 2: Concept Approval
 - Stage 3: Business and Financial Case Development
 - Stage 4: Business and Financial Case Approval
 - Stage 5: Full Programme Development and Faculty Academic Approval
 - Stage 6: Final New Programme Approval
- PROC.19. The details and requirements of each these stages are provided in the paragraphs below.

Stage 1: Concept Development and Faculty Endorsement

- PROC.20. Faculties may develop new programme ideas in response to an identified market or industry demand; strategic opportunities or gaps in the University portfolio; requests or recommendations from the Portfolio Review and Management Group (PRMG); or faculty/University strategic priorities.
- PROC.21. There will be occasions when the PRMG makes a recommendation to a faculty and requests that they consider a new programme for the portfolio. Any such request will be based on insights, industry demand and considered financially and strategically beneficial to the University.
- PROC.22. During this stage, the faculty/programme proposer should identify a Programme Director and complete a conceptual ideation process to ensure the idea is well considered, evidence-based, and aligned with institutional priorities.
- PROC.23. The Programme Director must review the University's existing portfolio of programmes to determine whether any similar programme already exists, to avoid duplication. The faculty must only bring forward proposals that they confidently believe align with the University's priority markets and have clear evidence of demand. The concept must consider employability and future career pathways.
- PROC.24. Before approaching the Portfolio Review and Management Group, the proposer must discuss with the Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching (ADLT) and present the concept to the Faculty Executive for endorsement.
- PROC.25. In considering any proposed new programme concepts, the Faculty Executive is required to consider:
- Alignment with faculty and University strategic priorities
 - Fit with priority markets and/or international partners and employability/skills objectives
 - Strength of evidence for job and sector demand
 - Availability of appropriate expertise and resources
 - Risk of overlap or cannibalisation
 - Opportunities for cross collaboration across the University
 - Financial implications and potential target forecast
- Only concepts with clear strategic fit, demand evidence, and employability focus should proceed to the PRMG for consideration
- PROC.26. The Faculty Executive may decide to: endorse or reject a proposal or refer it back to the proposer for further work.
- PROC.27. Where a proposal is given faculty level endorsement, it can proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Concept Approval

- PROC.28. When a concept has been endorsed by the faculty, the proposer must request a slot to present the idea to a Portfolio Review and Management Group meeting via the dedicated mailbox: prmg@stir.ac.uk. The composition of the PRMG includes:
- Deputy Principal (Academic)
 - Executive Director, Communications, Marketing and Recruitment (CMR)
 - Executive Director, Student Academic and Corporate Services and Deputy Secretary
 - Director of Marketing
 - Director of Recruitment and Admissions
 - Director of Financial Planning and Strategy
 - Head of Academic Quality and Governance
 - Deputy Head of Policy and Planning
 - Deputy Dean Faculty of Natural Sciences
- PROC.29. At this stage, only a high-level one-page summary of the proposal is required, covering:
- Overview of market demand and alignment with priority markets
 - Target student markets (e.g. domestic, international, TNE, ISC)
 - Competition
 - Graduate outcomes and how work-based learning will be embedded
 - Indicative student numbers and projected income (split by home international), indicating the evidence base for proposed numbers
 - Delivery model (in-person, online, or blended) and number of intakes
 - Indicative resource implications.
- PROC.30. The PRMG will review the proposal and consider whether it is strategically viable and merits development into a full business case, including full financial costings. The group may decide to: approve or reject a proposal or refer it back to the proposer for further work.
- PROC.31. Where a concept proposal is approved, it can proceed to Stage 3.
- PROC.32. The PRMG will communicate all its decisions at this stage to all relevant internal stakeholders, including the Deputy Principal (Education), Deputy Principal (Student Experience) and Academic Registry (via curriculum@stir.ac.uk).

Stage 3: Business and Financial Case Development

- PROC.33. When a concept has been approved by the PRMG, the proposer must complete a business case and financial proposal. The template business case form that must be completed and associated guidance is available from: prmg@stir.ac.uk.

- PROC.34. The financial proposal can be developed with the Director of Financial Planning and Strategy. Prior to working with the Finance team on the financial modelling, the Programme Director must discuss and agree the forecast intake numbers with the Director of Marketing and the Director of Recruitment and Admissions. Additionally, the fee band information must be provided by Planning, using the 360 tools, and agreed with Marketing and Recruitment.
- PROC.35. A business case must be accompanied by the programme information and the following information: all module titles; which modules would be mandatory and which options; number of shared and unique modules; how employability/skills development is embedded; whether the programme has a dissertation or work-based project within it; and for proposed January start or an online programmes, how the programme structure will differ from any September start version and any impact on programme duration or fees.
- PROC.36. When a business and financial case has been fully prepared, the proposer should request a slot at a PRMG meeting via prmg@stir.ac.uk, and submit the full business case, programme information, and financial proposal documentation to this mailbox at least a week in advance of the meeting date.

Stage 4: Business and Financial Case Approval

- PROC.37. The proposer will be required to attend the meeting of PRMG to present the proposal and answer any questions the group has.
- PROC.38. The group may decide to: approve or reject a business and financial case or refer it back to the proposer for further work.
- PROC.39. If resource is required, the case must also be considered and endorsed by the Core Planning Group and then approved by USPG.
- PROC.40. When a business and financial case is approved by the PRMG and where applicable, the Core Planning Group/USPG, this represents full approval of the business and financial case, and the proposed new programme should be fully developed.
- PROC.41. The PRMG will communicate all its decisions at this stage to all relevant internal stakeholders, including the Deputy Principal (Education), Deputy Principal (Student Experience) and Academic Registry (via curriculum@stir.ac.uk).

Stage 5: Full Programme Development and Faculty Academic Approval

- PROC.42. The details of the proposed programme must be created in full in the institutional Curriculum Management System (CMS) – Akari.
- PROC.43. When the proposed programme information has been fully completed in the CMS, the proposal should be formally considered for faculty-level academic approval by the Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching (ADLT) on behalf of the faculty.

- PROC.44. Where the proposal is for a new Combined Honours programme or another programme where the subject disciplines span more than one faculty, faculty-level approval (provided by the ADLT) is required from both faculties.

Stage 6: Final New Programme Approval

- PROC.45. Where a new programme proposal is granted faculty-level approval, this should be advised by the faculty to Academic Registry via curriculum@stir.ac.uk, with a request for it to be considered for Final Approval. The Business and Financial Case information submitted to the Portfolio Review and Management Group should be provided with the request.
- PROC.46. New Programme Final Approval consideration and decision-making are undertaken by the New Programme Approval Panel (NPAP). The Panel is chaired by the Deputy Principal (Education) and additionally comprises:
- i. Academic Registrar
 - ii. Director of Admissions and Access
 - iii. Two Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching, excluding those of the faculty/faculties from which the programme is being proposed
 - iv. Vice President Education, Students' Union
 - v. Academic Quality and Governance Manager
- PROC.47. NPAP may co-opt other appropriate University staff or external stakeholders to contribute as a member or an adviser to the Panel as required, with arrangements for this being made based on each proposal being considered and at the discretion of the Chair.
- PROC.48. A meeting of NPAP will be quorate when the Chair and at least four other members are present.
- PROC.49. One or two members of staff from the owning faculty/faculties are normally invited to participate in a portion of the meeting of NPAP to provide a brief presentation on the proposal, discuss it with the Panel and answer any questions.
- PROC.50. The Academic Registry team will provide administrative support and management to the Panel.
- PROC.51. Meetings of the Panel will normally proceed based on the standard schedule. Timings are indicative and may be adjusted to ensure sufficient time is allowed for discussion and questions.
- PROC.52. The Panel will use both the programme information in the CMS and the new programme business and financial case information considered by the Portfolio Review and Management Group as the key sources of information in its consideration of a proposal. In addition, summary CVs for all staff members who will teach on the programme will normally require to be prepared, in line with the specified template. A presentation on the proposal will also require to be provided by the faculty team during the meeting.

- PROC.53. In reading and reviewing this information in advance of a meeting, Panel members are required to consider the academic and quality scrutiny of the proposal that is required from the Panel and any elements that will require further exploration or scrutiny at the meeting. A checklist of key quality considerations is provided to the Panel members to assist in their preparation for the meeting.
- PROC.54. In all cases, NPAP can approve a proposal with or without required amendments, reject it or refer it back to the faculty for further development.
- PROC.55. The indicative outcome and recommendations will be communicated to the presenting team at the end of the NPAP meeting. After the meeting, a brief report will be prepared and shared with the faculty members who proposed the programme. Timescales will be agreed for completion of recommendations and completion of recommendations reported to the Chair of the panel via academicgovernance@stir.ac.uk.
- PROC.56. Academic Registry produces and retains a high-level record of the considerations and decisions of NPAP.
- PROC.57. Where a new programme proposal is approved by NPAP, this approval represents formal, Final Approval of the programme. Where a new programme proposal is approved with required amendments, it is necessary for these amendments to be completed before Final Approval is granted.
- PROC.58. Once such approval has been granted, Academic Registry will notify all relevant stakeholders, including the Student Population, Policy and Planning Group (SPPPG), and the programme can be established within the relevant University records and systems, marketed and recruited to. It will also become subject to standard quality assurance and enhancement monitoring, and any proposed amendments will be considered for approval through the 'Programme Amendment Approval' procedure.

Programme Withdrawal / Programme Suspension

- PROC.59. Withdrawal or suspension of a programme or one of its stated entry points after a module or programme has been offered for admission should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- PROC.60. All proposed programme withdrawals or suspensions are considered and approved by the PRMG and must be fully and accurately created and then submitted via the Curriculum Management System (Akari).
- PROC.61. Any such proposals must include appropriate plans for engagement with any affected applicants/students, that are effective in mitigating any risk associated with the withdrawal/suspension.

- PROC.62. If a proposed programme suspension is approved, the approval can only be provided for a maximum of one year. During this period, PRMG will wish to engage with the Programme Director to confirm whether the programme is to resume recruitment and delivery in the next academic year or if it is to be considered for withdrawal. If the programme is to be withdrawn, the procedure for withdrawal of programme must be followed, including submission of the proposed withdrawal through the Curriculum Management System (Akari).

Module or Programme Amendment

- PROC.63. There is a wide range of amendments that may be proposed to an existing, approved module or programme. Full detail of types of module and programme amendments, their impact type both within the University and in respect of compliance with consumer protection legislation guidance are provided in the Module and Programme Amendments Approval Routes matrix which is provided [here](#).
- PROC.64. All proposed module and programme amendments must be considered through the relevant approval route and must be fully and accurately created and then submitted via the Curriculum Management System (Akari).

Approval of New Modules, Module Amendments, Withdrawals and Suspensions

- PROC.65. All new module, module amendment, withdrawal and suspension proposals must be fully and accurately created and then submitted and considered through the Curriculum Management System (Akari).
- PROC.66. New modules, module withdrawals and suspensions are fully approved at Faculty level.
- PROC.67. Some specific module amendments can be approved at Faculty level. These are specified in the Module and Programme Amendments Approval Routes matrix which is provided [here](#).
- PROC.68. It is necessary however to recognise that a module level decision that may be within the authority of a Faculty may also represent or result in a programme level amendment that requires the approval of CMSC or indeed an NPAP. Careful consideration of the Module and Programme Amendments Approval Routes matrix is therefore consistently required.
- PROC.69. If a module is suspended, the suspension must be approved for a maximum of one year, after which the suspension must be considered again. If through this further consideration, the Faculty decides that it does not wish to resume offering the module, the module should be withdrawn, and the procedure for withdrawal of module followed.

New Module, Module Amendment, Withdrawal or Suspension – Faculty Approval

- PROC.70. The Faculty may choose to delegate authority for approvals to its Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching (ADLT) as its nominee for this purpose, or a nominated sub-group including the ADLT and other staff members, as the Faculty considers appropriate. The Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC) should be at least consulted and kept abreast of curriculum development and management activity. Relevant Programme Directors should also be involved in any proposed changes, their rationale and outcome.
- PROC.71. The following (non-exhaustive) list of points should be considered by the ADLT/nominated group when reviewing the proposal and considering the proposal for approval:
- What is the overall aim of the proposal?
 - How does the proposal enhance the overall programme and student experience?
 - Is the proposal pedagogically appropriate in terms of content, delivery, level of study and assessment and does it meet the institutional requirements of curriculum design, structure and delivery?
 - Are the learning outcomes and assessment constructively aligned in the module and, in turn, to the programme learning outcomes?
 - Have any impacts beyond the Faculty been fully discussed and considered including impact on programmes in other Faculties, progression from INTO UoS, impact on accreditation and impact on articulations into the relevant programmes?
 - In the case of withdrawal or suspension of a module, do the remaining modules address all the programme learning outcomes and graduate attributes effectively?
 - Does this proposal support the achievement of Faculty plans? Where relevant, has the proposal been considered from a resources point of view and approved, as necessary, at School or Faculty Executive level?
 - If required, has impact of the proposal on current students/applicants been considered and appropriately planned for?
 - Has the Competition and Markets Authority advice been taken into account, particularly in relation to module amendments?
 - Have any impacts beyond the Faculty been fully discussed and considered?
 - Have student and external views been considered?
 - If the proposal includes innovations in areas such as delivery model or approaches to employability or teaching tools, have relevant stakeholders been engaged in the development of the concept?
 - These areas are not exclusive and further areas of consideration may be identified by the ADLT and/or Faculty.

- Where appropriate, there should also be coordination with other ADLTs across the institution to identify potential impact across the University's curriculum.

PROC.72. The following decisions are available to the ADLT/nominated group on consideration of a proposal:

- Approve – the proposal is approved and can move to implementation.
- Refer – the proposal is not approved and specific questions / amendments are asked, or required, of the Module Coordinator. The proposal will be considered again on resubmission.
- Reject – the proposal will not be considered further at that time.

New Module, Module Amendment, Withdrawal or Suspension – Review and Develop

PROC.73. This stage only applies where an ADLT/nominated group refers a proposal back to the Module Coordinator and Programme Director. The Module Coordinator should ensure that the appropriate review and development of the proposal is undertaken in order to ensure the ADLT/nominated group is provided with all requested information and full responses to any questions raised. Once this has been completed, the proposal can be re-submitted to the ADLT/nominated group for consideration.

New Module, Module Amendment, Withdrawal or Suspension – Action Following Faculty Approval Decision

PROC.74. Regardless of the decision made by the ADLT/nominated group on a proposal, the decision requires to be confirmed in the Curriculum Management System. The system will then record the decision and facilitate onward action that is consequently required.

PROC.75. The relevant Faculty and Professional Services stakeholders will be notified of the decision via the system.

PROC.76. Where a decision of 'Approve' is recorded in the system, the details of the amendment, withdrawal or suspension will then require to flow into other University systems and platforms including the student record system and the website in order that marketing, recruitment, admissions and enrolment activity can subsequently take place. The preparatory work associated with this will be undertaken as quickly as possible, and the notification provided to stakeholders will give an indication as to the timeline.

PROC.77. If the proposal is rejected, a record of it will be retained within the system and will be accessible by system users across all Faculties and relevant Professional Service areas.

Proposed Student Number Caps on Modules

PROC.78. Proposed caps on student cohort numbers on a module should be submitted to curriculum@stir.ac.uk, for consideration and approval by the chair of CMSC.

Programme Monitoring and Review

PROC.79. All programmes are monitored and reviewed in line with the University's institution-led quality review arrangements to ensure appropriate quality assurance and enhancement. More information about institution-led review can be found [here](#).

Appendix 1: Curriculum Management Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE (CMSC)

Terms of Reference

Purpose and Scope

The Curriculum Management Sub-Committee (CMSC) is a sub-committee of the Education Committee. CMSC holds responsibility delegated from the Education Committee to act as an institutional point of decision-making in respect of the University's curriculum development and management, in parallel with the New Programme Approval Panel, and in line with the Curriculum Development and Management Policy and Procedure, and to drive the development and quality of programmes of study.

The scope of CMSC's responsibilities does not include institutional portfolio management, review or planning. Responsibilities for the planning and management of portfolio exist in a matrix across the Education Committee, faculty planning committees and institutional planning processes.

Authority Delegated by CMSC

CMSC may delegate authority to specific University areas to take action and/or decisions in respect of curriculum development and management, as it considers appropriate, in line with the provisions of the Curriculum Development and Management Policy and Procedure, and the operation of the Procedure. Authority is currently delegated as follows:

- a. **Faculties and Stirling International Study Centre (ISC)** have authority to make decisions regarding modules in line with the Curriculum Development and Management Policy and Procedure, and therefore currently for:

- approving new modules
- approving some amendments to individual modules, as specified in the Module and Programme Amendments Approval Routes matrix which is provided [here](#).
- approving module withdrawals
- approving module suspensions.

This delegated authority does not extend to the approval of any changes to previously approved module selections within a programme. Approval by CMSC is required for any such changes.

- b. **Academic Registry** has authority to:

- decide whether or not a proposal submission is sufficiently complete and clear and where it is not, to require the relevant faculty team to undertake further work on the submission prior to it being considered by CMSC
- conclude items of business where the only required or outstanding work is administrative in nature and does not require a substantive consideration by CMSC

- conclude items of business where the item has arisen only as a consequence to a decision made by CMSC, and where the item requires to be completed to fully action CMSC's decision.
- Manage programme availabilities – overseeing the review and approval of unchanged programme availabilities from the previous year.

Remit

- Receive and consider for approval, all curriculum development proposals relating to programme or module amendments, as specified in the Module and Programme Amendments Approval Routes matrix.
- Consider all proposals in terms of a programme curriculum's overall coherence, quality, and component elements and learning outcomes.
- Provide regular reports to the Education Committee on CMSC decisions and outcomes.

Reporting and Frequency

Reports to: Education Committee

Meeting Frequency: Monthly

Quoracy

At least one quarter of members will represent a quorum.

Mode of Operation and Items of Business

Meetings of CMSC normally take place online. This approach has been discussed and agreed by members as most conducive to the work of the sub-committee, and in line with this work being enabled by use of the University's curriculum management system.

The Committee's business operates in line with the requirements of its remit, and items of business are considered via the University's Curriculum Management System (Akari).

Curriculum operations take place in a timeline of activity throughout each academic year, as set out annually in the 'Curriculum Management Operations Schedule' document. The schedule confirms the institutional deadlines that are applicable to curriculum proposals and therefore that all staff are required to adhere to. Meetings of CMSC take place on a monthly basis to ensure the availability of opportunities for curriculum proposals to be considered and decided upon, and to encourage the submission of proposals at the earliest possible stage.

In order for a proposal to be considered by CMSC, it is required to be fully and accurately created and then submitted in Akari **at least three weeks** before the meeting date.

The Committee Manager is Emma Macnair (Senior Academic Quality Officer) and any queries regarding the Committee may be directed to academicgovernance@stir.ac.uk.

Composition

Member	Membership Status	Representing
Deputy Principal (Education) (Chair)	Ex-officio	Education Committee
Deputy Principal (Student Experience)	Ex-officio	Student Experience Committee
Academic Registrar	Ex-officio	Student, Academic and Corporate Services
Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	Ex-officio	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Health, Sport and Society	Ex-officio	Faculty of Health, Sport and Society
Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Natural Sciences	Ex-officio	Faculty of Natural Sciences
Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Stirling Business School	Ex-officio	Stirling Business School
UoS ISC Academic Director	Ex-officio	University of Stirling ISC
Academic Quality and Governance Manager	Ex-officio	Student, Academic and Corporate Services
Vice President (Education)	Ex-officio	Students' Union
One representative from Communications, Marketing, and Recruitment, relevant to marketing/student recruitment	Appointed	Communications, Marketing, and Recruitment
One representative from Communications, Marketing, and Recruitment, relevant to admissions and access	Appointed	Communications, Marketing, and Recruitment
One representative from Finance, relevant to student number and learning/teaching delivery planning	Appointed	Finance

Other members of staff may be asked to attend meetings in an advisory capacity as required. Such attendance will not constitute membership and therefore those attending for advisory purposes will not participate in decision-making.

Appendix 2: New Programme Approval Panel Terms of Reference

1. New Programme Final Approval consideration and decision-making are undertaken by the New Programme Approval Panel (NPAP). The Panel is chaired by the Deputy Principal (Education) and additionally comprises:
 - ii. Academic Registrar
 - iii. Director of Admissions and Access
 - iv. Two Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching, excluding those of the faculty/faculties from which the programme is being proposed
 - v. Vice President Education, Students' Union
 - vi. Academic Quality and Governance Manager
2. NPAP may co-opt other appropriate University staff or external stakeholders to contribute as a member or an adviser to the Panel as required, with arrangements for this being made based on each proposal being considered and at the discretion of the Chair.
3. A meeting of NPAP will be quorate when the Chair and at least four other members are present.
4. One or two members of staff from the owning faculty/faculties are normally invited to participate in a portion of the meeting of NPAP to provide a brief presentation on the proposal, discuss it with the Panel and answer any questions.
5. The Academic Registry team will provide administrative support and management to the Panel.
6. Meetings of the Panel will normally proceed based on a standard schedule. Timings are indicative and may be adjusted to ensure sufficient time is allowed for discussion and questions.
7. The Panel will use both the programme information in the CMS and the new programme business and financial case information considered by the Portfolio Review and Management Group as the key sources of information in its consideration of a proposal. In addition, summary CVs for all staff members who will teach on the programme will normally require to be prepared, in line with the specified template. A presentation on the proposal will also require to be provided by the faculty team during the meeting.
8. In reading and reviewing this information in advance of a meeting, Panel members are required to consider the academic and quality scrutiny of the proposal that is required from the Panel and any elements that will require further exploration or

scrutiny at the meeting. A checklist of key quality considerations is provided to the Panel members to assist in their preparation for the meeting.

9. In all cases, NPAP can approve a proposal with or without required amendments, reject it or refer it back to the faculty for further development.
10. The indicative outcome and recommendations will be communicated to the presenting team at the end of the NPAP meeting. After the meeting, a brief report will be prepared and shared with the faculty members who proposed the programme. Timescales will be agreed for completion of recommendations and completion of recommendations reported to the Chair of the Panel via academicgovernance@stir.ac.uk
11. Academic Registry produces and retains a high-level record of the considerations and decisions of NPAP.
12. Where a new programme proposal is approved by NPAP, this approval represents formal, Final Approval of the programme. Where a new programme proposal is approved with required amendments, it is necessary for these amendments to be completed before Final Approval is granted.
13. Once such approval has been granted, Academic Registry will notify all relevant stakeholders, including the Student Population, Policy and Planning Group (SPPPG), and the programme can be established within the relevant University records and systems, marketed and recruited to. It will also become subject to standard quality assurance and enhancement monitoring, and any proposed amendments will be considered for approval through the 'Programme Amendment Approval' procedure.

Appendix 3: Curriculum Design Framework Design Principles and Elements

Design Principles

Our curriculum design will:

1. Provide coherent and inclusive learning experiences which will attract applicants and support student success.
2. Be operationally efficient, sustainable, adaptable.
3. Engage students to develop powerful knowledge and skills and help them understand their development and progress.
4. Be guided by students' feedback and outcomes for continuous improvement.
5. Actively engage key stakeholders.
6. Enable academic teams and leaders' flexibility in programme design and subject pedagogies.
7. Be guided and underpinned by clear and considered regulations.
8. Facilitate active debate and sharing of knowledge about the nature and purpose of higher education in the 21st Century.
9. Take account of the nature and content of equivalent programmes offered at competitor universities.

Design Elements

1. Developing Skills (e.g.: through developing subject expertise, graduate attributes, embedding and surfacing skills development, models of work-related /integrated learning for modules).
2. Defining and explaining pedagogic approaches (e.g.: teaching methods, developing subject content knowledge, key disciplinary concepts, scaffolding learning, *meeting PSRB requirements and *QAA Subject Benchmark statements, links to research)
3. Defining assessment approaches (e.g.: types, inclusive practice, word counts linked to credit sizes and non-text equivalents)
4. Defining UG Curriculum Structures (e.g.: defining types of modules (mandatory, curated, electives), pathways, levels of optionality at different stages of the programme)
5. Additional Programme Design Guidance (e.g.: designing effective programme and module learning outcomes, number of credits for different awards, ensuring module titles align with content).

Appendix 4: University of Stirling Credit Specifications

SCQF Level	Degree / Qualification	Credit Specification
Level 12	PhD/DPhil	Credit definitions do not normally apply
Level 12	Other Doctorates	Minimum 540 with minimum 420 at level 12
Level 11	MPhil	Credit definitions do not normally apply
Level 11	Masters	Minimum 180 with minimum 160 at level 11 and maximum 20 at level 10
Level 11	Integrated Masters	Minimum 600 with minimum 120 at level 11
Level 11	Postgraduate Diploma	Minimum 120 with minimum 100 at level 11 and maximum 20 at level 10
Level 11	Postgraduate Certificate	Minimum 60 with minimum 40 at level 11 and maximum 20 at level 10
Level 10	Scottish Bachelor's degree with Honours	Minimum 480 with minimum of 180 at levels 9 or 10, including a minimum of 90 at level 10
Level 9	Scottish Ordinary Bachelor's degree	Minimum of 360 with minimum 60 at level 9 or above and minimum 90 at level 8 or above
Level 9	Graduate Diploma	Minimum of 120 at minimum of level 9
Level 9	Graduate Certificate	Minimum of 60 at minimum of level 9
Level 8	Diploma of HE	Minimum of 240
Level 7	Certificate of HE	Minimum of 120