

## University of Suffolk

### PROCEDURE FOR THE APPROVAL OF NEW CREDIT-BEARING SHORT COURSES

#### 1. Introduction to the approval process

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- 1.1 The procedure outlines how credit-bearing short courses are approved for delivery by the University or its partner institutions. Short courses are defined as courses that do not directly contribute to an award of the University, with a minimum credit size of 10 credits and a maximum credit size of 60 credits. Any courses worth more than 60 credits should be approved in accordance with the standard University [procedure for the validation of new courses](#). A separate procedure exists for the approval of non credit-bearing courses.
- 1.2 A short course may incorporate existing module(s) that form part of a validated course, adapted to suit the short course delivery approach. Where this is the case, a new module code must be issued.
- 1.3 Short courses may be delivered by academic schools and/or professional services departments. Where short courses are developed for delivery by, or in collaboration with, an external organisation, the course team should liaise with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team to determine any additional requirements for approving collaborative arrangements.
- 1.4 The purpose of the short course approval process is to ensure that:
  - a) there is an appropriate rationale for the introduction of the short course, including market demand and sustainability
  - b) course content is current and engaging and provides participants with opportunities to gain relevant knowledge, skills and experience
  - c) underpinning learning, teaching and (where relevant) assessment strategies allow for the provision of a high quality, inclusive learning experience
  - d) the course aligns with all relevant external reference points, including the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#), the [UK Quality Code](#) and any professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements and/or professional standards
  - e) appropriate resources are available to support the delivery of the course (including staffing)
  - f) course documentation is clear, accurate and accessible, reflecting the requirements of relevant consumer protection legislation
  - g) the operation of the course complies with internal academic regulations.

## 2. Stage One: initial proposal

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- 2.1 To gain initial approval to proceed with the development of the short course, the short course proposal form should be completed and submitted to the Validation and Exams team ([validation@uos.ac.uk](mailto:validation@uos.ac.uk)), for onward submission to the relevant committee for approval (with a copy also provided to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team for information). For short courses to be delivered within the University, the form should be accompanied by a course costing produced in liaison with the Finance and Planning Department and signed by the Director of Finance and Planning. For short courses to be delivered by partner institutions, discussions should take place with the Finance and Planning Department to agree the financial arrangements underpinning collaboration in relation to the proposed short course. Discussions should also take place with External Relations to inform the section of the form on rationale and market demand.
- 2.2 The following committees are responsible for approving short course proposal forms:
- *For short courses delivered within University academic schools:* the relevant School Executive
  - *For short courses delivered within University professional services departments:* the Portfolio Oversight Committee
  - *For short courses delivered in collaboration with partner institutions:* the Quality Committee.
- 2.3 When initial approval to proceed is confirmed, all references to the proposed new course (including any information given to prospective participants, whether verbally or in writing) must make clear that the course is subject to approval.

## 3. Stage Two: course approval

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- 3.1 Once given approval to proceed in accordance with Stage One above, the approval of a new short course is normally undertaken via scrutiny of course documentation by:
- *For courses delivered by University academic schools:* the relevant School Academic Committee (which includes representation from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team)
  - *For courses delivered by University professional services departments or by partner institutions:* the Quality Committee.
- 3.2 The Quality Committee reserves the right to hold a full validation event for short courses where necessary (for example to meet the requirements of a relevant PSRB). This will be undertaken in accordance with the standard [procedure for the validation of new courses](#).

### Documentation requirements

- 3.3 The following documentation should be submitted to the relevant committee, via the Validation and Exams team ([validation@uos.ac.uk](mailto:validation@uos.ac.uk)), for consideration as part of the approval process:
- a) the signed short course proposal form (see Section 2 above)
  - b) a course handbook for participants (including module specifications where relevant)
  - c) CVs of those involved in delivering the course.
- 3.4 Templates for all key documents are available on the [course approval, modification and review](#) pages on the University website. Further guidance on producing documentation is available from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team.

### Committee scrutiny

- 3.5 The relevant committee is responsible for reviewing the proposed course documentation and determining whether the course should be approved and the period of approval (which is normally up to a maximum of five years). The committee may wish to set conditions that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the Chair of the committee by an agreed deadline before the course commences. The committee may also make recommendations for the course team to consider and respond to.
- 3.6 A unanimous decision of the committee is normally required, but in the event that individual committee members disagree with the majority decision, then the Chair of the committee will make the final decision.
- 3.7 The minutes of the relevant committee meeting should provide a full and accurate account of the discussions held regarding the proposed new short course, including a record of the official decision of the committee, the period of approval and any associated conditions of approval and/or recommendations. The outcome should also be recorded on the short course proposal form and submitted to the Validation and Exams team ([validation@uos.ac.uk](mailto:validation@uos.ac.uk)) to enable the short course to be set up on the system and for the outcome to be formally reported to Senate (via the Quality Committee for proposals from academic schools).

### Responding to conditions and/or recommendations

- 3.8 The course team should make a formal response to any conditions and/or recommendations by the agreed deadline(s), which should be submitted to the committee Chair via the Validation and Exams team ([validation@uos.ac.uk](mailto:validation@uos.ac.uk)). The Chair is responsible for signing off the response under Chair's action, drawing on the advice of other committee members as appropriate. The short course proposal form should be signed to evidence this and submitted to the Validation and Exams team, along with a copy of the definitive course documentation for inclusion in the relevant [course file](#) on MySuffolk.

- 3.9 Confirmation of the completion of the approval process allows the 'subject to approval' statement to be removed from any course publicity material.

#### **4. Ongoing monitoring and review**

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- 4.1 Short courses should be incorporated into Risk-Based Monitoring and Enhancement (RiME) processes undertaken at school or partner institution level. In particular, mechanisms should be put in place to gather and respond to feedback from course participants, for example via the issue of course and/or module questionnaires. This should feed into course and/or module evaluation processes, alongside relevant data (for example on the performance of participants). Evaluation of short course provision should be incorporated into the annual school or regional partner college RiME report, or in an annual monitoring report for other partner institutions.
- 4.2 The course team should comply with the University's standard regulations, policies and procedures relating to assessment, including those covering internal and external moderation, the conduct of Assessment Boards and the issue of transcripts. External examiner oversight may be via the use of an external examiner already appointed by the University where there is existing validated provision, or via the appointment of a new external examiner specifically to cover the short course.