AT A GLANCE – APPROVAL PROCESSES FOR PROGRAMME CHANGES

This a guide to the approval process for making changes to a programme. It is meant to help you understand what you need to do when you make a change to an undergraduate or postgraduate taught programme. If you need further help or clarification with regards to any category of change and the approval process you can contact the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (AD ESS) or the relevant Head of Curriculum for your School and the relevant Associate Director for Academic Quality (ADAQ)in the Centre for Education and Student Success (CEdSS).

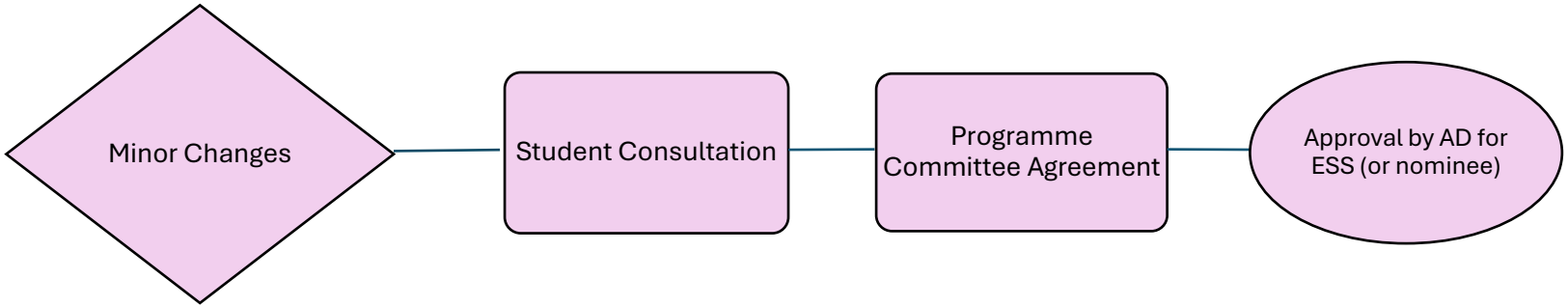
The type of approval process required will depend on the extent of the changes made so at the start of the process you will need to understand the level of programme changes you are anticipating. Changes made to a programme will fall in one of these three categories: **minor changes, significant changes or major changes**.

1.0 WHAT ARE MINOR CHANGES?

These are amendments to specific elements of a programmes which require changes to Programme Specifications, including limited changes to programme learning outcomes; updates to DMD syllabus and limited changes to assessment arrangements. There might be minor re-ordering of the curriculum (but not between levels). If the anticipated changes tick the boxes below, they can be approved by the School's Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (AD ESS) or their nominee.

Minor Changes	Approved by AD ESS (or nominee)
Minor changes to Programme Specifications, including limited changes to programme learning outcomes.	✓
Syllabus updating on DMDs, and limited changes to assessment arrangements;	✓
Minor re-ordering of the curriculum (but not between levels).	✓

1.1 WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR MINOR CHANGES?



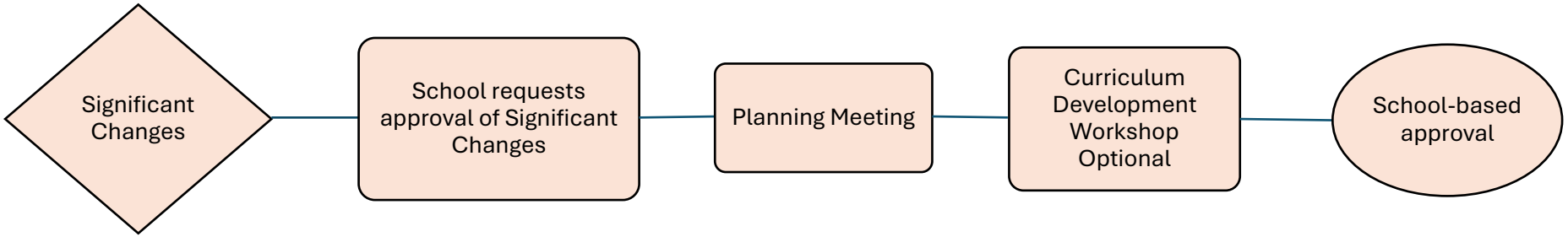
The Associate Dean for Education and Student Success or their nominee gives approval for minor changes. They will only do this after the changes have been discussed and agreed at the Programme Committee and there has been appropriate applicant, offer holders and student consultation and consent in order to be compliant with the Customer Marketing Authority (CMA) requirements. The Programme Leader (or nominee) should present the changes to the Programme Committee with the rationale for making the change at this time. They should also show evidence of consultation and consent will assure CMA compliance. The Programme Leader can request changes to the relevant document such as Programme Specification and DMD on the Curriculum Management System (CMS). The changes should be approved by the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (or nominee). The approval should only be made if it is within the University's timeline for making programme changes. If in year changes are required, the approver should get permission from the Director of Academic Quality. Relevant dates to remember can be found on the Academic Quality web pages: Validation and Review deadlines.

2.0 WHAT ARE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES?

These are changes to aspects of a programme that are more significant than minor changes but are not considered major changes. Examples of significant changes are changes to an award title or the addition of an alternative delivery mode (part-time, Sandwich, accelerated, etc). Significant changes include a restructuring of the curriculum including between levels; changes to programme learning outcomes or changes in the type and balance of assessment. If at least 25% of DMDs in a programme are amended including delivery mode, contact hours, assessment arrangements, etc; it is considered a significant change. If the anticipated changes to a programme tick one or more of the boxes bellow, a Significant Approval process is needed.

Significant Changes	School based approval
A change to an award title only	✓
The addition of an alternative delivery mode (part-time, Sandwich, accelerated, etc)	✓
Significant restructuring of the curriculum (including between levels);	✓
Significant changes to Programme Specifications, including programme learning outcomes and changes in the balance of assessment	✓
Changes to at least 25% of DMDs, including delivery mode, contact hours, assessment arrangements, learning outcomes, etc	✓
Changes resulting from significant revisions to PSRB (Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body) or apprenticeship standards.	✓

2.1 WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES?



School based approval is the process required when Significant Changes are made to a programme. School based approval is flexible and proportionate to the level of changes being made. The process involves a planning meeting, where a written summary and rationale for the changes (submitted in advance) inform the decision making. The process may include a Curriculum Development Workshop if requested by the School. At the planning meeting it will be decided whether consultation with an external subject expert is needed, the documents required, a timeline of events and the structure of the School based approval. The School-based approval panel consists of an Associate Director for Academic Quality, the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (or nominee) and any others considered relevant by the School. A School based approval normally includes panel meetings but can be an online exchange of documents between panel members if appropriate.

2.2 WHAT IS THE PLANNING MEETING FOR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOR?

The purpose of the Significant Changes planning meeting is to ensure a plan is in place to make changes that will enhance the programme, and that there is an approval process that is appropriately robust and proportionate. By the end of the planning meeting there should be a strategy for making changes, and a School based approval process agreed. The planning meeting will follow a standard agenda, but this can be adapted as needed.

2.3 WHAT IS NEEDED BEFORE THE PLANNING MEETING FOR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES?

The Programme Leader will complete a rationale statement and summary of the planned changes and submit it to the clerk at least one week before the Significant Changes planning meeting. The rationale statement explains why the approval is being sought at this time and outlines the amendments and enhancements the programme team wish to make. When writing the rationale statement and summary of changes, the following should be considered:

- Any recommendations following any ADC proposals or decisions; for example, approval in principle for any new award or amended award titles.
- Any relevant outcomes of a Portfolio Review
- Any PSRB requirements (including apprenticeships)
- Tableau data supporting any identified risks or other issues: for example, admissions data, progression, continuation data, attainment data, module failure rates.
- Risks from the last NSS/PTES data with themes and questions falling below UH thresholds.
- Subject specific issues and trends identified
- If module learning outcomes are changed, how the Herts Learning Principles and Graduate Attributes continue to be met.

2.4 WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE PLANNING MEETING FOR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

The Significant Changes planning meeting is arranged by academic services and is usually online. Membership for the meeting is flexible according to the requirements of the School, but the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success or their nominee should Chair the meeting and the Associate Director for Academic Quality linked to the School, Programme Leader and Clerk should attend. There is a standard agenda to guide the meeting, but it can be amended to suit the level and complexity of the programme changes. There are key areas that should be discussed and relevant decisions made for a plan to be agreed. They include:

- Development team membership
- Whether the development team would like a Curriculum Development Workshop
- The timing of the Curriculum Development Workshop and who will be the facilitator if requested.
- How the activities of any enhancements or amendments will be captured and communicated amongst the development team.

- The process for informing, consulting and gaining consent where necessary of applicants, offer holders and current students to be CMA compliant.
- The membership of the School based approval panel that will review the Significant Changes and be responsible for approval. This must include the Associate Director for Academic Quality and the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success or their nominee.
- A timeline including a deadline for submission of documents and the School based approval panel meeting.
- Other requirements such as those stipulated by PSRBs or other external drivers
- Confirmation of the documents that should be submitted to the School based approval panel and agreement of any additional documents required.
- If there are any changes of additions to award titles, ADC's approval should be evidenced.

2.5 WHAT IS THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP?

The optional Curriculum Development Workshop is a chance for teams to explore their practice, any key challenges and the impact of their proposed changes. A facilitator from the Education Team in the Centre for Education and Student Success (CEdSS) will work with the programme leader to identify the focus of the session. It is a space to clarify ideas and voice reservations, where colleagues are encouraged to be realistic, ambitious and imaginative in connecting with UH principles of effective and inclusive curriculum design. The facilitator will be able to articulate strategic university goals and help teams navigate the practical challenge of implementing these.

2.6 HOW DO THE TEAM GO ABOUT MAKING THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES?

Each development team will make changes and enhancements to aspects of the programme as required. The development team should consult stakeholders and seek advice as appropriate. The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring all those involved understand their roles and responsibilities and that changes and enhancements are proportionate and within the boundaries of Significant Change. They are responsible for ensuring the submission document is clear, the production of programme documents is consistent with the University's regulations and that the programme is ready for consideration by the agreed deadlines. All changes should be discussed and agreed with the Programme Committee and there should be appropriate applicant, offer holder and student consultation and consent to be CMA compliant.

2.7 WHAT DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR SCHOOL-BASED APPROVAL?

The documents required will depend on the changes and developments made. For a School-based approval, there should be clear indication of where any changes have been made, for example by highlighting them on key documents such as Programme Specifications, DMDs and Course Fact Sheets.

All comments and highlights indicating changes should be removed before the final documents are recommended for approval. The following documents should be produced for review.

- The rationale statement and summary that was discussed at the planning meeting. This includes the reason why the changes are taking place and outlines the changes. Additions can be made to the to the rationale statement and summary to explain if there were deviations from the original plan and what the final changes are.
- Programme Specification
- Any DMDs that have been changed or amended
- Assessment landscape
- Completed PSRB and apprenticeship mapping tools (if required)
- Proof of UPR exemptions (if required)
- Course Fact Sheet.
- Evidence of appropriate consultation and consent by applicants, offer holders and students that demonstrate CMA compliance.
- Where appropriate consideration of how stakeholder feedback has informed the development; for example: external expert consultation and employers.

2.8 WHO SHOULD THE DOCUMENTS BE SUBMITTED TO AND WHEN?

The documents should be submitted to the nominated Academic Services officer who acts as the clerk normally four weeks prior to the agreed deadline.

2.9 WHAT IS INVOLVED IN A SCHOOL BASED APPROVAL?

A School based approval is flexible and in proportion to the level of changes made to a programme. The details of the approval process should be discussed and decided at the planning meeting. Typically, a School based approval involves the submission of documentation by the development team (see 2.7) for review by a School based approval panel (see 2.10). The panel review the documentation to check the programme changes are fit for purpose and that the programme documentation is correct and of a publishable standard. The panel decide whether approval can be given or whether further work is needed to meet the University's standard requirements.

2.10 WHO IS ON A SCHOOL BASED APPROVAL PANEL?

A School based approval panel is made up of an Associate Director Academic Quality and the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (or their nominee) plus any other person the School thinks relevant. For example, in some instances an employer may be included or if the development has focussed on improving student experience it may be appropriate to have a student panel member.

2.11 WHAT MEETINGS ARE REQUIRED FOR A SCHOOL BASED APPROVAL?

School based approval is flexible and can be adapted at the request of Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (or their nominee). Normally, after reviewing the documentation, the School based approval panel will have a meeting to discuss their findings. No written feedback is given to the development team, instead, a meeting is held with the Programme Leader and any other relevant members of the programme team to recognise good practice, clarify any issues and discuss any concerns. The standard agenda for this meeting can be adapted as needed. A clerk records the key themes discussed in the meeting including commendations and any conditions that must be met before approval can be recommended. If there are conditions the clerk will record them in the notes along with an agreed timeline for when they should be submitted before a follow up meeting to ensure all requirements are met. This record is distributed to the panel and development team.

2.11 HOW IS THE FINAL SCHOOL BASED APPROVAL RECOMMENDATION MADE?

If the School based approval panel require further actions from the development team they should be submitted and checked before final approval. All final programme documentation should be uploaded to the Curriculum Management System and checked and approved by the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (or nominee).

3.0 WHAT ARE MAJOR CHANGES?

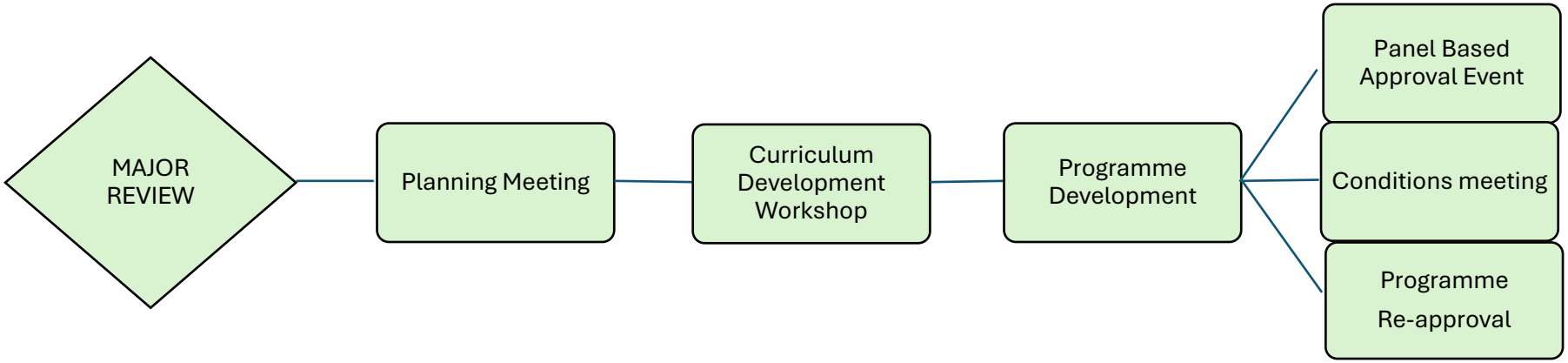
If the School wishes to make major changes to the programme or there is a PSRB requirement for regular review that extends beyond the criteria for significant change a Major Review is needed. A Major Review is required if the programme is identified at risk through the Continuous Enhancement Process (CEP) or there is a recommendation from Portfolio Review. If the requirements for major changes tick the boxes below, a Major Review is needed.

Major Changes	Major Review
The programme as a whole requires a root and branch review of its structure and of the aims and learning outcomes of the programme to ensure its continuing fitness for purpose.	✓
There is a PSRB requirement for regular review (in which case, every 6 years)	✓
There is a recommendation emerging from Portfolio Review	✓
High risk is identified through the CEP process.	✓
The School requests a major change to the programme (including major change due to revised PSRB standards, changes to the majority of programme learning outcomes, major changes module DMDs, etc.).	✓

3.1 WHAT IS MAJOR REVIEW?

A Major Review is a root and branch appraisal of a programme's performance and subsequent redevelopment. It includes an analysis of key areas such as recruitment, student experience performance and achievement. Re-development is driven by internal drivers expressed in the University's Strategy-2025-2030 and external factors such as Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration, QAA subject-benchmark-statements, QAA Higher Education Credit Framework and PSRB requirements if appropriate, so it is important to engage key stakeholders such as students and employers as part of the process. The Curriculum Development Workshop is central to Major Review and encourages teams to create innovative career focussed curricula that develop students academically, professionally and personally. A Development Lead, usually the Programme Leader, brings together a programme development team with the appropriate skills and experience to ensure students have an excellent learning and teaching experience.

3.2 WHAT IS THE MAJOR REVIEW PROCESS?



3.3 WHAT IS THE PLANNING MEETING FOR A MAJOR REVIEW FOR?

The purpose of the Major Review planning meeting is to carefully consider the programme's performance and to identify any issues of concern and opportunities for enhancement highlighted by the Programme Analysis. The meeting is also used to clarify and agree practical issues such as roles and responsibilities of those involved in the redevelopment and the reapproval process. A timeline that ensures all aspects of the review can be completed by the University's deadlines for programme approval should be agreed.

3.4 WHAT IS NEEDED BEFORE THE MAJOR REVIEW PLANNING MEETING?

The Development Lead needs to review the performance of the programme, complete the Programme Analysis template and submit it to the clerk at least one week before the Major Review planning meeting. They should analyse data trends over the last three academic years and identify areas of good practice and where there are concerns and risks. The data to populate the Programme Analysis template can be accessed from the CEP Tableau tab or go to Herts Hub and search for Student Data Dashboards. NSS or PTES actions plans will also be needed. The Programme Analysis will include consideration of the following:

- Admissions - the entry requirements and trend in numbers of student demand
- Awards – the trends in numbers of students who attained good degrees and any attainment gaps
- Continuation - the trends in numbers of students who drop out of the programme

- Module Grade Profiles – the identification of any modules with repeated high failure rates
- Graduate outcomes – data indicators of graduate progression
- NSS or PTES – trends in student experience identified by National surveys and relevant action plans
- External influences – the identification of relevant QAA Subject benchmarks, PSRB requirements, opportunities for accreditation, placement learning or links to employers
- Course structure – the identification of changes requiring permission from the Academic Development Committee (ADC) such as changes or additions to the mode of delivery (part time, full time, online, blended), award title (s), or additions to entry points.

When completing the Programme Analysis, the Development Leader should identify areas for improvement and where good practice exists they should try to be clear and concise. The use of bullet points is encouraged. At the end of the template a rationale statement stating the reason for the review and a summary identifying priorities for development is required. The rationale statement and summary should be short and help focus the discussion during the Major Review planning meeting. The Programme analysis is required to be submitted two weeks prior to the major review planning meeting.

3.5 WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MAJOR REVIEW PLANNING MEETING?

The Major Review planning meeting is arranged by the clerk and is usually online. The Programme Analysis will drive the discussion and the programme rationale and summary of the priorities for development confirmed. The Chair will use the Major Review planning meeting template to structure the meeting and ensure that the arrangements for the development and approval process are agreed.

3.6 WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE MAJOR REVIEW PLANNING MEETING?

The following people are required:

- Associate Dean of School (Education and Student Success) or their nominee - Chair
- Development Lead
- Associate Director for Academic Quality
- Education Team member from the Centre for Education and Student Success

- Academic Services Officer (Academic Quality) – Clerk
- Member(s) nominated by the school (Optional)

3.7 WHAT ARE THE KEY DECISIONS MADE AT THE MAJOR REVIEW PLANNING MEETING?

The Chair leads the meeting to address specific items on the Major Review planning meeting template to agree decisions about any key requirements for approval under the following categories:

- Key requirements related to potential structural changes to the programme; for example, changes to the programme title or award, Programme Specification, DMDs, PSRB or Apprenticeship requirements, UPR exemptions, entry requirements
- The development process; including the development team membership, the date and facilitator of the Curriculum Development Workshop, development meeting requirements, student consultation, partner consultation, arrangements for a Course Structure Development meeting, and External Consultation requirements.
- Arrangements for the Major Review Approval Meeting; including the date, date for submission of documentation, any PSRB involvement, and management of the Major Review Approval meeting including responsibilities for organising the Major Review Approval Chair and panel.
- Documents required for the Major Review Approval meeting; the final part of the Major Review Planning Meeting will confirm the documents required at approval.
- A timeline including, the deadline for submitting documents for checking and final sign off by the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (or their nominee), the deadline for submitting signed off documents to the clerk, the data of the Major Review approval meeting, the provisional date for the conditions meeting.

3.8 WHAT IS THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP?

The Curriculum Development Workshop is central to the success of a Major Review. It provides an opportunity for the development team to reflect together on the findings from the Programme Analysis and explore creatively how to respond to identified issues. It is facilitated by someone from the Education Team in the Centre for Education and Student Success (CEdSS) who will work with the programme leader to decide the focus for the session. It offers space to clarify ideas and voice reservations, where colleagues are encouraged to be realistic, ambitious and imaginative in connecting with UH principles of effective and inclusive curriculum design. The facilitator will be able to articulate strategic university goals and help teams navigate the practical challenge of implementing these.

3.9 HOW SHOULD THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM GO ABOUT DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMME?

Following the Major Review planning meeting and the Curriculum Development Workshop, the development team should work together to enhance and develop aspects of the programme. Each development team will make changes according to the specific requirements and drivers impacting the programme. The Development Lead is responsible for ensuring all those involved understand their roles and responsibilities and that the issues identified in the planning meeting and in the Curriculum Development Workshop are explored and addressed. They are responsible for the production of the submission document and programme documents and preparing for the approval process. The programme development should take into consideration external drivers such as employment trends, PSRB requirements and QAA Subject Benchmarks

The team should refer to the Education and Student Success strand of the University's Strategy-2025-2030 to ensure that the programme:

- creates an employer focussed curriculum that concentrates on enterprise, entrepreneurship and career development
- expands lifelong learning opportunities
- incorporates frameworks for access and induction, Personal Tutoring, Herts Academic Skills, Career Development, and Wellbeing and Mental Health
- delivers innovative, inclusive and authentic approaches to teaching, learning and assessment
- uses research informed teaching and blended learning, adopting a flexible and personalised approach to students' learning and assessment
- uses resources effectively to enable students to maximise their learning and manage their studies
- instils a culture of reflection and innovation, delivering inclusive and authentic experiences for our diverse community of students

The team should seek appropriate advice and support from relevant experts such as the central apprenticeship team and Learning Resource Centre staff. They may consult external subject specialists and key stakeholders such as employers. Student feedback and consultation should be part of the development process. Academic services staff, Associate Dean for Education and Student Success, Associate Director of Academic Quality and the Education Team from the Centre for Education and Student Success are available for support and advice throughout the process.

3.10 WHAT DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE PREPARED AND SUBMITTED FOR A MAJOR REVIEW APPROVAL MEETING?

The documents required for the approval meeting are listed below:

- A submission document

- Programme Analysis with Rationale statement and summary
- Programme Specification(s)
- List of example modules to view and programme information on Canvas ; Reading Lists for new modules, software packages and any special physical resources for all modules. The planning meeting may specify further information to be included. *Link to generic LCS video: Getting Started Guide for 2020 - YouTube*
- Definitive Module Descriptors
- Assessment Landscape(s)
- Completed PSRB and apprenticeship mapping tools (if required)
- Minutes of the Planning Meeting
- Feedback from all stakeholders consulted during the programme development, together with feedback from the interim consultant and the Programme Development Team's response.
- Resources Statement
- html of the 'live' CEP Action Plan and External Examiners' reports (two years only)
- Full ADC submission and minute (where there are additions or changes to awards) but only for the Chair of the Major Review Approval Panel and the Associate Director for Academic Quality. (Clerk will provide this)
- Where appropriate evidence of applicant, offer holder and student consultation and consent demonstrating CMA compliance.

3.11 WHERE SHOULD THE FINAL DOCUMENTS BE SUBMITTED AND WHEN?

The documents should be submitted to the nominated academic services officer four weeks prior to the approval event who will clerk the Major Review meeting. Before final submission the documents should be signed off by the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (or their nominee). Usually there is checking process where the final draft of the documents is checked before final sign off and submission to the clerk.

3.12 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE DOCUMENTS ARE SUBMITTED?

After the documents are submitted the Major Review panel will review them and provide written feedback to the development team in the week before the approval event.

3.13 WHO WILL BE ON THE MAJOR REVIEW APPROVAL PANEL?

The Major Review approval panel will have an independent Chair and will include a student, School Panel Member, an external subject expert, the Associate Director of Academic Quality for the relevant School and any other relevant representative such as a PSRB representative.

3.14 WHAT HAPPENS AT A MAJOR REVIEW APPROVAL MEETING?

An approval event consists of a series of meetings. There may be some variation but normally there will be meetings with resource managers, the development team and relevant stakeholders such as students and employers. At each meeting the team will be asked questions related to the panel's written feedback previously provided and the team should respond give concise and specific answers to satisfy the query. It is the Major Review approval panel's job to consider the institutional context in which the programme is to be delivered and whether the programme sufficiently reflects the priorities of the University's Strategy-2025-2030 . The panel will the university requirements set out in UPR AS17 and will consider:

- the currency, educational challenge, and the coherence of the programme
- the appropriateness of standards of award including for professional practice
- whether the aims and learning outcomes are appropriate for the level of study
- whether the learning, teaching and assessment strategies are designed to meet the aims and learning outcomes of the programme
- whether there are adequate staff and physical resources to support the programme

The Major Review approval panel will highlight areas of good practice and ensure that the Programme Specification and DMDs are accurate, fair and represent a workable contract with students. By the end of the meetings the panel will recommend:

- the continuing approval or non-approval of the programme
- the term for which approval is fixed
- any conditions of approval, which must be fulfilled before the programme can begin to operate and the mechanism by which the Panel will confirm that this has been achieved
- any specific recommendations which the panel wish to make to the team.

3.15 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE APPROVAL EVENT?

The clerk will produce a summary of the Major Review approval panel's decisions and any further requirements. There will be standard requirements such as changing External Examiner contracts to align with the newly approved programme, completing forms to close any programmes or awards no longer needed and actions to ensure the key documentation is accurate and at an appropriate standard for publication. The panel may also stipulate conditions of approval which must be acted upon before the programme can be operationalised. A date is agreed when the conditions must be met and what the team should submit for review by the panel for their approval. There is a final conditions meeting Chaired by the Associate Director of Academic Quality and attended by the Associate Dean for Education and Student Success (or their nominee), the clerk and the Programme Leader. When all the conditions have been met the final approval is recommended and the appropriate forms completed.