

Programme Design, Approval and Reapproval Policy and Procedure

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Principles of Programme Approval.....	4
3	Programme Approval Procedure	5
4	Principles of Programme Reapproval.....	7
5	Programme Reapproval Procedure	8
6	Advice and Support	11

Related Regulations from the Academic Manual are shown in boxes like this.

Ownership	Head of Quality
Policy Contact	Quality Office
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1 Introduction

3.1.1 All programmes of study must be approved through the Goldsmiths procedures for the approval, amendment and review of programmes and modules. They must meet the requirements of the Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework.

1.1 General

1.1.1 The [Goldsmiths Strategy](#) (2018-23) sets out the institution's aim to:

- Continue to evolve our curriculum, exploring further opportunities to expand our offering and develop new and original programmes at the forefront of research and disciplinary and interdisciplinary developments.
- Continue to refresh current programmes so that our curriculum remains contemporary and relevant, includes explicit engagement with theory, research and practice, and provides direct bearing to graduate success.

1.1.2 Goldsmiths operates a process for the approval and reapproval of all educational provision to ensure:

- Strategic fit, ensuring that proposals are viable and compatible with other programmes and with the College's aims and mission.
- A high-quality academic experience on programmes which are appropriate in terms of level and content and designed taking account of current practice and developments in the discipline, including the requirements of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB).
- Successful outcomes for all students in terms of progression, completion, employability and/or further study.
- Effective and rigorous assessment of student achievement of programme outcomes.
- Appropriate resources and support for the delivery of the programmes and student success.
- Robust academic standards consistent with sector-recognised requirements.

New programmes may stem from identified disciplinary developments from the proposing department, market intelligence or from other sources.

1.1.3 The reapproval of programmes is designed to provide an opportunity for reflection on the quality, standards and current relevance of the College's academic portfolio over a period of time, developing, enhancing and re-approving the previously approved provision. This is undertaken through an analysis of student performance and outcomes, the impact of change, merits

of curriculum design and local strategies for learning, teaching and assessment. Programme reapproval allows reflection on the strengths and areas of possible improvement of programme(s) and the experience of students.

- 1.1.4 Programme reapproval takes place on a five-yearly cycle. It enables Goldsmiths to verify over a particular timeframe the academic standards of the award(s), the quality of the student learning experience, the continuing relevance of programmes to both internal/external needs, alignment with sector agreed reference points, as well as the identification of good and innovative practice.
- 1.1.5 It is possible for departments to propose minor amendments to a programme during its approval period. A number of minor changes over a period of time may be considered cumulatively to constitute a major amendment, which could initiate the programme approval or reapproval process. This is set out in the [Programme Amendment Policy](#).
- 1.1.6 Where significant amendments to existing provision are being proposed via the programme reapproval process, the extent of change may mean that the proposal falls within the remit of Programme Approval rather than Reapproval. The Quality Office will liaise with Departments on proposals for significant amendments on a case-by-case basis so that the appropriate process can be confirmed.
- 1.1.7 This policy is designed to ensure that full consideration is given to all factors which determine whether a programme should be approved or re-approved. It has been written in accordance with the Office for Students (OfS) B [Conditions of Registration](#) (specifically B1-B5) and the Expectations of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This policy applies to:
 - All taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes leading to a University of London or Goldsmiths award, including University of London Worldwide programmes.
 - Research degrees with a taught component (e.g. MRes).
- 1.2.2 Programme reapproval at Partner Institutions will also take place on a five-year cycle. The approval and reapproval of validated programmes at Partner Institutions is undertaken in line with the procedures detailed in the Academic Partnerships Framework. Programmes delivered wholly or partly on campus, which lead to a dual award with a Partner Institution, will be subject to approval and reapproval procedures that are appropriate to the nature of the arrangement, but which will adhere to the principles of this policy.

PROGRAMME APPROVAL

2 Principles of Programme Approval

2.1 The following strategic principles provide the framework which underpins programme approval:

Distinct Academic Identity

- Articulating our mission, values and approach: all programmes offer a distinctive curriculum and innovative approach to pedagogy which reflects and advances our institutional mission, strategy, and values.
- Enhancing Cross-disciplinary Learning and Applied Academic Skills: all programmes provide students with interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary learning opportunities and modules highlight where this is delivered.

Student Centred

- Personalised Learning Journey: all programmes are designed with a student-centred approach that puts student's interests first, offers student choice in what and how they learn, and positions students as active, responsible partners in the creation of their learning.
- Structured progression: all programmes are structured with clear progression built in at each level, integrated across modules, and tracked through levels and modules with respect to learning content, teaching approaches, assessment tasks and feedback.
- Inclusive and Accessible: equality and diversity will be embedded into the design of all programmes from the outset. This includes through curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and student support more broadly.
- Flexible and Technologically Enhanced Learning: digital technology will be utilised in the relevant areas of the College's programmes, pedagogy and student support and will enhance the student experience. The delivery mode will be considered at the programme design stage to ensure that the most appropriate mode is used for the programme however programme design will also be flexible allowing remote or partner delivered teaching and learning.

Embedded Employability and Enterprise

- Partnership Produced: programmes are designed and reviewed in partnership with students to support progression into desired destinations. Where relevant, programmes should both reflect and support Goldsmiths' Civic University Agreement and Community Engagement Strategy.
- Curriculum Based Employability and Enterprise: careers, employability and enterprise will be embedded into all programmes with all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment linked to future employment and

study opportunities.

2.2 The process will also be guided by the following operational principles:

- **Proportionality:** the process for approval will reflect the level of risk involved in activity so that process is flexible and responsive to discipline needs. Documentary requirements will also be commensurate with that which is necessary for the process.
- **Peer Review:** approval is underpinned by academic and professional peer review by internal colleagues and external subject specialists.

3 Programme Approval Procedure

3.1 Programme development and approval is a two-stage process which consists of strategic approval (stage one) and academic approval (stage two). At stage one, Academic Development Committee make recommendations to the Senior Management Team (SMT) on planning, resource and strategic approval of new programme proposals. At stage two, academic approval is delegated by Academic Board to the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee (PSSC). A programme will normally take eighteen months from inception to enrolment. Compression or elongation of the approval period is likely to have negative effects on student recruitment.

3.2 Strategic Approval (Stage One)

3.2.1 When proposing a new programme of study, a Department should initially discuss this with the Pro-Warden Academic and their Head of School to provide relevant market intelligence and agree any other data that may be required to inform the approval process. If it is agreed to start development a New Programme Proposal form, including a fully costed Business Case, should be submitted for consideration to the Academic Development Committee (ADC).

3.2.2 ADC will consider the proposal in relation to its fit with Goldsmiths' strategic aims and current portfolio, the resources required for effective delivery and their potential domestic and international markets. Additionally, the programme proposals are evaluated with respect to certain characteristics; namely their connectedness to institutional research expertise, their potential to enhance graduate employability and career development prospects, their global reach and relevance, and the potential for module sharing and interdisciplinary connections. Following consideration of the New Programme Proposal form and Business Case (costings) ADC will make a recommendation to the Senior Management Team (SMT) for final resource approval.

3.2.3 If SMT are satisfied that the proposal is feasible in terms of its fit with the Goldsmiths' academic strategy, its financial viability and its compliance with current University and College Ordinances and Regulations, approval will be given for the proposal to be further developed academically.

3.2.4 At this stage it may be possible, with the agreement of SMT, for a department to begin to promote the programme, 'subject to validation', (under which the programme may be advertised but no applications accepted) dependent on the stage of development and the planned timeframe for its introduction.

3.3 Academic Approval (Stage Two)

3.3.1 Once strategic approval to develop a programme has been obtained, the detailed academic case will be made through a submission to the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee (PSSC) in the form of a Programme Specification and related documentation which should be developed, seeking advice from the Quality Office as necessary. Programme and Module Specifications are the definitive descriptions of a programme and set out the intended learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve, the level of study, the credit allocation of the programme and modules, and the teaching and learning strategies to enable students to achieve them. They are an important source of information for students and key documents in programme approval and review.

3.3.2 The following documentation must be submitted to PSSC for all new programme proposals:

- Programme Approval Proposal Form summarising key information relating to the programme.
- Programme Specification.
- Module Specifications for proposals for new modules and/or track changed Module Specifications and module amendment form coversheets for each amended module.
- External Programme Readers' Reports and the programme team's response(s) to them.

3.3.3 Further advice and guidance are available as required from the Quality Office.

3.3.4 For a proposal to be considered by the Committee, the department must submit all paperwork at least two weeks before the date of the meeting. The Committee will only consider proposals with a complete set of documentation. A representative from the department proposing the new programme is expected to attend the meeting to speak in support of the proposal and answer any queries raised by the Committee. If PSSC is satisfied that the proposal, subject to the fulfilment of any recommendations or conditions it deems appropriate, meets the College's Principles for the approval of new programmes, it will report this to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and Academic Board.

3.4 Externality

3.4.1 During the academic approval stage of the process (stage two), the proposal will be scrutinised by a minimum of two independent, subject specialist readers. These external readers will produce a Reader's Report,

commenting on set questions relating to the programme content and structure and its relation to nationally recognised reference points. This will include relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements, and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The appropriateness of principle members of staff involved in the delivery of the programme will also be reviewed.

- 3.4.2 The Readers' Reports represent a fundamental reference point for PSSC, providing members with essential subject specific insight to inform their deliberations.
- 3.4.3 It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to appoint the independent 'external programme readers' to comment on programme proposals. They should normally be of the status of University Readers or Professors at other UK Higher Education Institutions. Exceptions may be considered to this rule if it is felt that an individual who does not meet this criterion is, nonetheless, particularly qualified to comment on a proposal. An external reader should be demonstrably independent and therefore not be a former member of staff or student of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed. In all cases External Readers must be able to report on the proposed new programme's alignment with external UK reference points and the coherency of the curriculum to its subject area(s).
- 3.4.4 The External Readers should be sent the complete programme documentation for PSSC including details of principle members of staff involved in the delivery of the programme.
- 3.4.5 Departments are expected to take due consideration of comments made by External Readers and to indicate in their responses to the reports how their suggestions have been incorporated or otherwise within the PSSC proposal.

PROGRAMME REAPPROVAL

4 Principles of Programme Reapproval

- 4.1 In addition to the principles outlined in Section 2 for Programme Approval, the following principles will apply to Programme Reapproval:
 - To continuously improve and develop individual programmes and the overall portfolio.
 - An evidence-based process drawing on a wide range of available management information including but not limited to: student admissions, progression and outcomes data (awards and employability); Departmental Development Plans; student voice data; external examiner reports; and PSRB reviews.
 - To identify areas of good and innovative practice and disseminate these across the College.

5 Programme Reapproval Procedure

- 5.1 All taught programme(s) will be subject to a cyclical reapproval process. As a minimum, a programme will need to be reviewed on a five-year basis. Where deemed necessary, programmes may be subject to review on a shorter timescale agreed at the time of approval and/or reapproval. It may be possible for programmes to be considered earlier than the agreed date for reapproval, for example where a major amendment is proposed.
- 5.2 Programme reapproval may consider programmes on an individual basis, as a group or cognate group of programmes, or a department's entire academic provision. It is normally undertaken at a panel event, including internal and external members and a student representative.
- 5.3 Where risk is deemed to be low, and/or the size and scale of reapproval small, reapproval may take place as a desk-based exercise based on the same documentation and evidence base but without the requirement for a full Panel Event to be held. The assessment of risk will be evidence based and will be assessed on student recruitment numbers, student retention, student outcomes and student satisfaction. If data across these areas indicates positives for the student cohorts, then this would make a programme low risk in reapproval terms. The final decision on the level of risk and the consequent method of reapproval will be taken jointly by the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience and the Pro-Warden Academic in liaison with the Quality Office.
- 5.4 The Quality Office will coordinate all reviews on behalf of, and reporting to, PSSC and Quality and Standards Committee (QSC). The reapproval will be based on the following documentation:
- Programme Re-approval Self-Evaluation Document (SED).
 - Definitive programme documentation:
 - Programme Specification with changes tracked
 - Module Specifications for proposals for new modules and/or track changed Module Specifications and module amendment form coversheets for each amended module.
 - At least one external programme reader's report (usually the current programme external examiner) and the programme team's response. Additional external comment may be required if significant changes to the programme are proposed.
 - Relevant management information data and evidence relating to student voice, student progression, achievement and employment or further study. This will typically include, but not be limited to, the following:

Centrally provided by the Quality Office

- Student recruitment, progression and completion data from the Planning Dashboard
- Student experience survey data (e.g. NSS, UKES, PTES) at programme and/or department level
- Student Module Evaluation Response Forms
- External Examiners' reports for the past 3 years
- Employability Survey data (e.g. GOS, LEO)
- Department Development Plan

Department/programme team to provide

- Reports (if any) from accrediting or other bodies
- Student feedback – Staff Student Forum minutes and any other feedback sources not covered above
- Other documentation as agreed by the Department/programme with the Quality Office.

5.5 The Quality Office will confirm the scope of each review and its requirements. Programme teams and/or Departments can use this as an opportunity for including additional aspects to the review where they wish.

5.6 The programme team(s) (or department if all provision is under review) will prepare the SED. The SED, with supporting evidence, should be discussed and agreed by the relevant departmental committee(s) before submission to the Quality Office. The SED and associated documentation should be received by the Quality Office 3 weeks prior to the review.

5.7 The Reapproval Panel will consider the SED and supporting evidence in advance of the review event. Panel members will be asked to submit initial comments in advance of the event to enable initial lines of questioning to be drawn up.

5.8 During the Event, the Panel will usually meet with Departmental staff and students (if reapproval is desk-based, the opportunity for student input and its format will be agreed with the programme team). The duration of the event will be proportional to the risk level. Initial feedback from the Panel, signed off by the Chair, will be provided to the programme team(s) as a priority after the Event, normally within one working day.

5.9 Possible outcomes of programme reapproval are:

- Full reapproval for a 5 year period with or without condition(s) and/or

recommendations attached.

- Reapproval for a shorter period of time (1-4 years) with or without condition(s) and/or recommendation(s) attached.
- Suspension of a programme for a determined period of time.
- Closure of a programme.

5.10 Conditions are requirements that must be fulfilled within a specified timeframe for formal reapproval to be granted. The programme may not run until all conditions have been met. Recommendations are advisable areas of development for the department to consider, with suggested timeframes for action attached, but reapproval is not contingent on their completion.

5.11 Following the event the Quality Office will produce a report for consideration of the Panel, a draft of which will then be shared with the department for factual accuracy checking, prior to final sign-off. The report will confirm the decision of the panel for each programme and, in the case of reapproval or suspension, set out agreed time periods and any conditions and/or recommendations attached. Areas of good and innovative practice will also be identified for possible wider dissemination. Satisfactory completion of any conditions set by the panel must be confirmed by the Chair. Recommendations stemming from the Event will be set out in an action plan, progress against which will be monitored by departmental committees and overall by QSC.

5.12 Where a panel concludes a programme should be suspended or withdrawn, the requirements of the College's [Programme Suspension and Closure Policy](#) will apply.

5.13 Student Involvement

5.13.1 The programme reapproval procedure will be inclusive of students and is student-focused, as follows:

- Students should contribute to the preparation of the SED through participation in departmental student voice mechanisms (for example participation on departmental committees at which the document is considered).
- The panel event will include at least one student member: normally a Departmental Student Coordinator [DSC] from outside the programme(s) under review and the department(s) to which they are attached.
- A meeting with students from the programme(s) under review will be held as part of the Reapproval Panel Event (if reapproval is desk-based, the opportunity for student input and its format will be agreed with the programme team).
- Students should also be involved in drawing up the programme(s) action plan in response to the outcome(s) of the review and in monitoring of progress against it via departmental and central committees.

5.14 Membership of the Reapproval Event

5.14.1 The Panel normally consists of the following:

- Pro-Warden Academic and/or Head of School (in the Chair)
- CCR Project Board member * (for 2021-22 CCR review only)
- Member of ADC or PSSC
- Member of the Quality Office or Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience
- Chair of Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee or Head of Department external to the cognate area(s) under review
- External Subject Expert: normally of University Reader or Professor status at another UK Higher Education Institution, and demonstrably independent and therefore not be a former member of staff or student of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed
- A Student panel member: normally a Departmental Student Coordinator [DSC] from outside the programme(s) under review and the department(s) to which attached
- Member of the Quality Office (Secretary)

5.14.2 Composition of the Panel might vary depending upon the size or nature of the provision and the subject area(s) to be covered. Any variations should be approved by the Pro-Warden Academic.

5.15 University of London programmes

5.15.1 University of London programmes for which Goldsmiths is the Lead College are subject to the Programme Reapproval procedures outlined above as well as these additional requirements:

- The format, scope and procedure of the review will be discussed with representatives from the University of London Worldwide and the programme team(s).
- The evidence base will include an additional submission from the University of London Worldwide.
- A representative from the University of London Worldwide not directly linked to the provision under review will be a member of the panel.
- The draft report will be shared with the University of London Worldwide for a factual accuracy check.
- The final report and programme team's and/or Department's response will also be considered within the governance structure of the University of London Worldwide.

6 Advice and Support

6.1 The Quality Office, Planning Office, Careers Service and Admissions Office can provide support and advice linked to quality and standards, employability, and marketing and recruitment during the programme

development process. Additionally, Pro-Wardens, Heads of School and the Dean of Students can provide ongoing support and guidance to departments.

- 6.2 Support is available from the Teaching and Learning Innovation Centre (TaLIC) to departments as they develop new programmes to consider the teaching, learning and assessment methods to be utilised during programme delivery for inclusion within the programme specification.

Document history

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1.0	13/12/21	Approved by Quality and Standards Committee	Head of Quality	Approved