

Programme Development and Approval Policy and Procedure

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Ownership	Head of Quality
Approval	Academic Board
Last review date	June 2017
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The approval of proposed new programmes is considered in the light of both academic and planning criteria, including a consideration of the resource implications of any proposal.
- 1.2 This policy has been written in accordance with the expectation and indicators outlined in Chapter B1 'Programme design, development and approval', B3 'Learning and teaching', B6 'Assessment of students and recognition or prior learning' and Part
- 1.3 A 'Setting and maintaining academic standards' of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 1.4 Academic Development Committee make recommendations to the Senior Management Team (SMT) on planning, resource and strategic approval of new programme proposals. Academic approval is delegated by Academic Board to the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee (PSSC). The procedure is designed to ensure that full consideration is given to all factors which determine whether a programme should be offered.
- 1.5 The Goldsmiths' Strategic Plan sets out the institutions aim to increase the diversity, flexibility and sustainability of its degree programmes whilst continuing to ensure that they be informed by the outcomes of research. Proposed new programmes therefore, may stem from identified developments from the proposing department, market intelligence or from other sources.

2 Principles

- 2.1 The following principles underpin the aims of the programme approval process:-
- 2.2 Academic rigour – through this process Goldsmiths seeks to ensure that its programmes are well-designed, academically coherent and intellectually challenging, and that they are informed by research and capable of enriching the student experience; proposers of new programmes are responsible for making sure that proposals are drawn up with due reference to:
 - Academic Regulations, including the Assessment Regulations; Qualifications and Credit Framework;

- Goldsmiths' Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy ○ Framework for Higher Education Qualifications; ○ Relevant Subject Benchmark Statements;
 - Requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (where appropriate).
- 2.3 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 the level of risk;
- 2.4 Peer Review – approval is underpinned by academic and professional peer review by internal colleagues and external subject specialists.
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3 Aims

- 3.1 The aims of the programme approval process are:
- 3.2 To ensure that the programme is appropriate in terms of its level and content, and in the light of current practice and development in the discipline;
- 3.3 To ensure that the programme as an entity (and its assessment strategy) delivers and tests programme outcomes effectively and at the appropriate level for the award;
- 3.4 To ensure that it is compatible with other programmes and the College's aims and mission;
- 3.5 To ensure that the programme is appropriate in terms of its level and content, and in the light of current practice and development in the discipline;
- 3.6 To ensure that the programme as an entity (and its assessment strategy) delivers and tests programme outcomes effectively and at the appropriate level for the award;
- 3.7 To ensure that it is compatible with other programmes and the College's aims and mission;
- 3.8 To ensure that there is a market for the programme;
- 3.9 To ensure that the programme develops the employability of graduates;
- 3.10 To ensure that the necessary learning resources are available.

4 Programme Development

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Professional Support Services including the Quality Office, Planning Office and the Admissions Office can provide support and advice linked to quality and standards, and marketing during the programme development process. Additionally, Pro Wardens and Associate Pro Wardens can provide ongoing support and guidance to departments.
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5 Scope

- 5.1 This policy applies to:
- 5.2 All taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes leading to a University of London or Goldsmiths award;
- 5.3 Research degrees with a taught component (e.g. MRes)
- 5.4 Programmes developed by Goldsmiths' Partner Institutions are subject to the programme approval procedures detailed in the Collaborative Provision Handbook.
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6 Procedure

- 6.1 The following process should be followed to develop a new programme.
- 6.2 If, as part of its planning process, a department decides it wishes to develop a new programme of study, it should initially discuss this with the Deputy Warden. 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). It is recommended that the preparation of any new programme proposals should begin in the autumn term;

- 6.3 ADC will consider the proposal in light of 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 the potential for module sharing and interdisciplinary connections. Following consideration of the New Programme Proposal form and Business
- 6.4 Case (costings) ADC will make a recommendation to the Senior Management Team for final resource approval;
- 6.5 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;
- 6.6 At this stage a department may begin to promote the programme, 'subject to validation';
- 6.7 Once approval to develop a programme has been obtained, the detailed academic case will be made through a submission to the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee in the form of a Programme Specification and related documentation which should be developed in conjunction with the Quality Office. 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 the key documents in programme approval and review, as well as being an important source of information for students;
- 6.8 In addition to the Programme Specification, the following documentation must also be submitted to PSSC for all new programme proposals:
- 6.9 Module Specifications for proposals for new modules;
- 6.10 Track changed Module Specification and module amendment form coversheet for each amended module;
- 6.11 External Programme Readers' Reports and the programme team's response to them;
- 6.12 Programme Approval Covering Template.

- 6.13 An introductory course on the Virtual Learning Environment provides guidance to those developing new programmes on the use of external reference points and advice on writing learning outcomes and assessment methods. <https://learn.gold.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6606>
- 6.14 Further advice and guidance is available as required from the Quality Office;
- 6.15 PSSC meets several times a year at dates published in the committee timetable. In order 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 with the academic case for a proposal and that the resources required for its delivery are sufficient to ensure the quality of the provision, it
- 6.16 will report its approval of the proposal to the Learning, Teaching and
- 6.17 Enhancement Committee and Academic Board;
- 6.18 PSSC may attach conditions or recommendations to its consideration of proposed new programmes. Confirmation and evidence that these conditions have been met will be required before reports are made to the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee and Academic Board;
- 6.19 A programme will normally take eighteen months from inception to enrolment. An eighteen-month lead-time (i.e. from publication to enrolment) also applies to the publication of the undergraduate prospectus. However, there are alternative methods of promoting programmes and, while resorting to such options may have a deleterious effect on recruitment, the opportunity will be taken to expedite programmes where this effect can be avoided. Design of, and consultation about, new prospectus entries should begin well before publication dates to ensure that publicity material is as effective as possible.

6.2 Externality

- 6.2.1 During the academic approval stage of the programme approval process (stage 2), the programme structure, content and learning, teaching and assessment methods of all new proposed programmes will be scrutinised by independent external subject specialist readers. These external readers will also comment on a number of set questions, including the appropriateness of the curriculum with respect to relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and the level of the proposed programme in relation to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and the appropriateness of principle members of staff involved in the delivery of the programme (usually evidenced in the form of a Curriculum Vitae).
- 6.2.2 The Readers' Reports represent a fundamental reference point for the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee (PSSC), since members rely on them for guidance in a field of which they may have little direct knowledge.
- 6.2.3 It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to appoint two independent
- 6.2.4 '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 staff or students 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 programmes alignment with external reference points and the coherency of the curriculum to its subject area(s).
- 6.2.5 The External Readers should be sent the completed Programme Specification along with all the documentation for the PSSC and full details on principle members of staff involved in the delivery of the programme in order to comment on their appropriateness (usually evidenced in the form of a Curriculum Vitae).
- 6.2.6 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 proposed academic framework.
- 6.2.7 In addition, the membership of PSSC includes an external senior academic member of staff at another UK higher education institution who provides additional assurances that proposed new programmes have fully considered external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and that the programme structure and learning, teaching and assessment methods are sound.

7 Policy Review

- 7.1 The programme approval process and associated templates are kept under constant review. Policies are reviewed in light of other internal or external factors, such as, changes to the internal committee structure or an amendment to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.