

## **Academic Policy Statement APS 28:**

### **Making Changes to Published Programme Related Information**

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#### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to strike the balance between the reasonable expectations of students who, based on information given to them, have accepted places on a University programme (or who are progressing through a programme); and changes made to programmes due to the need to:

- (i) keep the curriculum current;
- (ii) enhance learning, teaching and assessment;
- (iii) respond to legal, PSRB<sup>1</sup>, Quality Assurance Agency Quality (or similar) requirements;
- (iv) respond to student demand; and
- (v) address other challenges such as low demand for programmes

This policy defines the undertaking that is made by the University to prospective or enrolled students in terms of delivering the programme curriculum as described to prospective students, and to those progressing on programmes.

This policy applies to all students (whether full time or part time) on any University programme taught at any University campus, or on any franchised, joint and validated programmes delivered by University partners.

#### **2. Commitments to students by the University**

##### **2.1 Programme information**

For students offered places on a programme, or enrolled on a programme, the following should normally be guaranteed throughout the normal period of a student's enrolment on the programme (unless changes are necessary to meet obligations related to legal, PSRB, QAA Quality Code (or similar) requirements):

- the title of the programme and the qualification to which it leads;
- the programme aims;
- the programme learning outcomes;
- any professional recognition (subject to continuing PSRB approval);
- the overall structure, e.g. years of study, overall credit structure, exit qualifications etc.;
- delivery location (though not necessarily a specific campus);
- fees and additional costs throughout the normal period of a student's enrolment (including any planned increases in fees and/or additional costs); and
- any compulsory special features of the programme such as intercalated years etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Professional/statutory/regulatory bodies

The exception to this requirement is a programme that is undergoing validation or review, in which case it should be clearly indicated to prospective and currently enrolled students that the precise details of the above might change as a result of the programme validation or review.

## **2.2 Point of reference for programme information**

The points of reference for the description of the programme overall, are for:

- **prospective students:** the programme specification and marketing materials that describe the programme for the academic year the prospective student is applying for;
- **enrolled students:** the programme specification and module narratives that apply to the student's current year, and the marketing materials that described the programme when the prospective student applied (with due regard made for any changes as allowed as per section 2.1).

## **3. Programme Change process**

### **3.1 Notice of intent to change programmes via validation and review or major change process**

Programme changes may occur as a result of scheduled programme review, major changes to programmes (in line with procedures set out in the University's Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook) or via the replacement of a validated programme with a replacement. This is likely to result in changes to some of the items as described in 2.1.

In the case of such changes, successful applicants and students must be given as much notice as possible of proposed changes and all reasonable steps must be taken to minimise disruption to the applicants.

#### **3.1.1 Consultation**

Enrolled students who may be affected by such changes should be consulted, normally with at least two weeks response time (not including vacation periods), in addition to the formal student meeting required as a result of the programme review process. Consultations should be (as a minimum) by email, possibly augmented by face-to-face meetings. If more than 25% of the students who are enrolled and could potentially be affected by the change explicitly withhold consent for the changes, then it may be necessary to roll out the intended new arrangements starting with the next cohort, and old programmes will need to be taught out.

#### **3.1.2 Supporting applicants or students affected by changes**

If applicants or students are adversely affected by changes to the items described in 2.1, they will be supported by the University if they wish to apply for similar programmes within the University, or at other HEIs.

## **3.2 Timescales**

All changes must be completed within the timescales set out in the University's programme change quality processes, currently 31 May in any academic year.

## **3.3 Effect on progression routes**

Any changes made must still allow for progression to completion of the programme or an agreed equivalent for part time students, or for students entering with advanced standing.

#### **4. Module information**

##### **4.1 Compulsory modules**

###### **4.1.1 Offering compulsory modules**

The suite of compulsory modules to be offered will normally be those as listed in the programme specification handbook and marketing materials current at the time of application.

###### **4.1.2 Delivering compulsory modules**

All compulsory modules will normally be offered as per the description in the programme specification, module narratives marketing materials and current handbook<sup>2</sup> other than the:

- syllabus content;
- learning materials;
- members of staff;
- assessment tasks;
- assessment type and weighting (which may change subject to continuing to be consistent with the programme learning, teaching and assessment strategy); and
- location;

which may be subject to change.

###### **4.1.3 Changes to compulsory modules**

Exceptionally, e.g. to meet legal requirements, it may be necessary to withdraw a compulsory module, or to amend it beyond the limits as prescribed in 4.1.2.

#### **4.2 Optional modules**

##### **4.2.1 Offering optional modules**

As it may not always be possible to deliver optional modules due to student demand, availability of staff etc. not all advertised option modules may be delivered. Publicity and programme material should indicate that the suite of available optional modules may be subject to change.

The decision to withdraw an option module for delivery should be made at the earliest possible opportunity when students select their option choices for the following academic year. Consideration will be given to the learning experience for students should the number of students selecting an option module fall below a number which would provide a meaningful learning experience.

##### **4.2.2 Delivering optional modules**

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<sup>3</sup> That is the academic year in which the student is taking the modules.

All optional modules that are offered will normally be delivered as per the description in the programme specification and module narrative, marketing materials and current handbook<sup>3</sup>

#### **4.2.3 Changes to modules**

Exceptionally, e.g. to meet legal requirements, it may be necessary to amend an optional module beyond the limits as described in 4.1.2.

### **5. Module change process**

Module changes will take place according to the University's quality processes set out in the Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook (LQEH).

All changes must be completed within the timescales set out in the University's programme change quality processes, currently 31 May in any academic year.

#### **5.1.1.1 Consultation**

Students who may be affected by such changes should be consulted, normally with at least two weeks response time (not including vacation periods). Consultations should be (as a minimum) by email, possibly augmented by face-to-face meetings. If more than 25% of the students who are enrolled and could potentially be affected by the change explicitly withhold consent for the changes, then it may be necessary to roll out the intended new arrangements starting with the next cohort, and old modules will need to be taught out.

#### **5.1.1.2 Notice of intent to change programmes/modules**

All intended changes should be published to students as early as possible and the reasons for the changes fully explained.

#### **5.1.1.3 Effect on progression routes**

Any changes made must still allow for progression to completion of the programme for part time students, or for students entering with advanced standing.

### **5.1.2 Point of reference for modules**

The points of reference for the changes identified in 4.1.2 are the programme specification and module narratives and marketing materials that applied when the student applied for the programme, and the current programme handbook<sup>4</sup>.

## **6. Withdrawal or cancelling of a programme before it commences**

The University is committed to delivering the programmes that it has offered, however, if, due to unanticipated developments, such as legal or PSRB<sup>5</sup> requirements, or changes in demand for the programme, the University determines that a programme should be withdrawn or cancelled, then

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<sup>3</sup> That is the academic year in which the student is taking the modules.

<sup>5</sup> Professional/statutory/regulatory bodies

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the University will give as much notice as possible to applicants who have accepted places, and will make every effort to offer alternative programmes to such applicants or support them in finding an alternative. The University will fulfil all of its obligations as noted in the University's Financial Regulations for Students, and in the University Regulations.

## 7. Information on fee increases

The University will provide clear information as to the planned increases in fees for students recruited onto any University programme, and will be committed to meet this fee information. This information will be made clear in pre-applicant information, offer information and upon enrolment.

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