# Code of Practice: Review and Reapproval of Programmes and Modules, and Programme Closures

# Contents

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose and Aims

1.1.1 The Code of Practice describes the University's approach to programme reviews and programme re-approvals, including the closure of programmes as deemed necessary to support strategic portfolio decisions.

1.1.2 Programme reviews and reapprovals map curriculum and assessment changes over time and the process aims to ensure programmes leading to awards meet their obligations and expectations of students, staff and external regulators by:

a) reviewing the currency of the curricula regularly to ensure it meets student expectations and employer demands;

b) engaging internal and external expertise including Industry Advisors; subject experts; Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs); and internal learning and teaching experts;

c) engaging current and past students, individually and collectively, to encourage discussion between subject experts, students and external stakeholders on improving the educational experience within the University and at its collaborative partners;

d) ensuring appropriate resources are available to deliver University programmes to high quality standards;

e) confirming that the continuous monitoring and evaluation of programmes (Code of Practice H) is being considered in the reapproval process.

## 1.2 Scope

1.2.1 University programme are validated for a set period of time and require reapproval at regular intervals, usually after 5 years.

1.2.2 This Code of Practice applies to the following awards from the Royal Agricultural University taught at its campuses in Cirencester and Swindon, as well as its Joint Institute for Advanced Agritechnology at Qingdao Agricultural University (RAU at QAU) Joint Institute; franchised and validated provision taught at providers in the UK and international:

- Level 4 Certificates

- Level 5 Diplomas

- Level 6 Honours

- Level 7 Masters

- Level 8 Doctoral

1.2.3 In the event of a programme being delivered at an academic partner institution, the subject area in which the partnership sits, will lead and work with the partner/s to ensure that the partner institution adheres to the same review and reapproval

processes as set out in this Code of Practice, though partner specific templates will be used.  This includes franchised and validated provision.

## 1.3    Regulations relevant to this Code of Practice

1.3.1    The following conditions of registration set by the Office for Students are relevant:

| B1 | The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high- quality academic experience which includes but is not limited to ensuring that each course:<br>a) is up-to-date;<br>b) provides educational challenge;<br>c) is coherent;<br>d) is effectively delivered; and<br>e) as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills. |
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| B2 | The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure students receive resources and support to ensure a high-quality academic experience for those students, and those students succeed in and beyond higher education; and that effective engagement which each cohort of students takes place. |
| B4 | The provider must ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards. The provider must ensure that<br>a) students are assessed effectively;<br>b) each assessment is valid and reliable;<br>c) academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible;<br>d) academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a way which appropriately reflects the level and content of the course;<br>e) relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously. |
| B5 | The provider must ensure that, in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body):<br>a) any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards;<br>b) awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards. |
| C1 | The provider must demonstrate that in developing and implementing its policies, procedures and terms and conditions, it has given due regard to relevant guidance about how to comply with consumer protection law. |
| E1 | The provider's governing documents must uphold the public interest governance principles that are applicable to the provider. |

| E2 | The provider must have in place adequate and effective management and governance arrangements to: |
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| | a) operate in accordance with its governing documents. |
| | b) deliver, in practice, the public interest governance principles that are applicable to it. |
| | c) provide and fully deliver the higher education courses advertised. |
| | d) continue to comply with all conditions of its registration. |

## Regulations relevant to this Code of Practice

1.3.2    The Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes, the QAA Advice and Guidance: Course Design and Development (Nov 2018) and the QAA Advice and Guidance: Assessment (November 2018).

1.3.3    In addition, as part of the 2024 Quality Code, the Quality Assurance Agency has published a set of sector agreed principles and key practices.  Principle 7 – 'Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes' states that "Providers design, develop, approve and modify programmes and modules to ensure the quality of provision and the academic standards of awards are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework. Providers ensure their provision and level of qualifications are comparable to those offered across the UK and, where applicable, The Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. Key practices state that "all programmes and modules meet academic standards that are consistent with relevant national qualifications and credit frameworks. Where applicable, provision also meets professional body and accreditation requirements, and apprenticeship standards". In addition, Principle 6 – 'Engaging in external review and accreditation' may apply, whereby "Providers engage with external reviews to give assurance about the effectiveness of their approach to managing quality and standards. External reviews offer insights about the comparability of providers' approaches and generate outcomes that provides can use to enhance their policies and practices. Reviews may be commissioned by providers, form part of a national quality framework or linked to professional recognition and actively include staff, students and peers. They can be undertaken by representative organisation, agencies or professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) with recognised sector expertise according to the provision being reviewed. Further information about Principles 6 and 7, including full information on all of the key practices within the principle, is published on the QAA's website: https://qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/2024

### 1.4    Responsibilities

1.4.1    Academic Board is responsible for confirming that the University's named awards and their curricula are appropriate, dynamic and challenging and that the quality and standards of provision is appropriate to the level of award offered.  It devolves responsibility for approval of programmes to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC).

1.4.2    AQSC is responsible for ensuring programmes meet high-quality design principles, qualification frameworks, and that all programmes meet the relevant Office for Students

(OfS) Conditions of Registration. AQSC has responsibility for the approval and re-approval of programmes and modules of the University, with subsequent recommendation to Academic Board for final sign off.

1.4.3    The reporting of the revalidation and review process to Academic Board provides the University's Governing Council with the information it needs to underpin the required assurances to the Office for Students (OfS) (Condition E).

1.4.4    Academic Quality is responsible for notifying Programme Leaders of upcoming programme reviews, and for organising and managing reapproval processes. Academic Quality is responsible for the provision of up-to-date guidance and templates.

1.4.5    Programme Leaders are responsible for setting up programme review meetings with relevant module leaders, and review programme documentation to ensure content and assessments are current; respond to and take into account student feedback, meet external stakeholder requirements, and quality standards are comparable to other programmes in the sector.

1.4.6    Module Leaders are responsible for working with Programme Leaders on the review and reapproval process, and contribute their expert knowledge to the content and assessment design.

## 1.5    Further Guidance

1.5.1    For further guidance on this section please contact the Academic Quality team by emailing quality@rau.ac.uk or your contact your allocated Academic Quality Officer for your subject area.

1.5.2    For queries involving UK and international partnerships, please contact both the Academic Quality team and the Academic Quality Officer (Partnerships) by emailing collaborative.provision@rau.ac.uk

# 2. Overview of Requirements

## 2.1    Process Stages

2.1.1    Overall there are four process stages for the review and reapproval of programmes, and though closely linked to the new programme approval process as set out in Code of Practice F, there are slight variances:

a)    Academic Quality identifies each academic year, programmes due for reapproval the following academic year, based on programme validation periods. Academic Quality notifies the Academic Strategy and Planning Committee (ASPC), Subject Deans and Programme Leaders in the autumn each academic year.

b)   Programme Teams submit a revalidation proposal to ASPC, and when approved, will review and develop their programmes with the input of student consultations, external experts, PSRB and industry advisors.

c)   The Programme Team works with Academic Quality to produce a final set of documentation for consideration by a Programme Reapproval Panel.

d)   Programme reapprovals are considered by AQSC with recommendations to Academic Board for final sign off.

## 2.2   Criteria for Programme Reapproval

2.2.1  By submitting programmes for reapproval, Programme Teams should provide assurance to Academic Quality, AQSC and Academic Board that programmes continue:

- to be well designed and meet the most up-to-date theoretic, practical, industrial and subject specific considerations, including academic research;

- to provide a high-quality student experience;

- to provide academic rigour and intellectual challenge, and demonstrate to students that regardless of their background or previous academic achievements, how they can achieve standards above the threshold level in line with similar qualifications;

- to contain content that has industry currency, is clearly written and understandable by all stakeholders in the context of the subject, thereby demonstrating coherence and clarity of appropriate levels, outcomes and continuation from one module to the next;

- to be informed by internal and external stakeholder input that includes past and current students, external expertise, PSRBs, industry advisors in the programme review and redesign of modules with the intention of enhancing standards;

- to ensure students experience a range of relevant and effective delivery, fair assessment methods, formative learning activities, academic and digital skills development, as well as opportunities to experiment with access to learning outside of their own programme;

- to be supported by expert staff and resources;

- to provide subject matter and appropriate levels of study that will prepare students for success in their chosen programme and prepare them for employment;

- to adapt the most recent industry / PSRB standards and the mapping of indented learning outcomes meets these requirements;

- to engage with students effectively to ensure that they have opportunity to provide feedback on their programme and engage in programme development activities;

- to clearly explain admissions criteria to each programme which provides all students regardless of their background and previous academic achievements,

with the opportunity to achieve intended learning outcomes within the set study hours and mode of delivery;

- to describe appropriate outcomes and exit qualifications which meet the sector recognised standards as set by the Office for Students.

## 2.3    Programme documentation

2.3.1    For the purpose of programme reapproval, Programme Teams must provide the following documentation:

a)    Programme specification;

b)    Module templates (core and electives);

c)    CVs of staff teaching the programme;

d)    Confirmation that the programme continues to meet the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) criteria and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)

e)    Updated assessment mapping

f)    External advisory reports relevant to the reapproval

g)    Student feedback through notes / minutes from student:staff liaison meetings, module surveys, internal students surveys and the NSS

h)    Updated resource statement

i)    Post-scrutiny Dean of Subject documentation sign-off form

2.3.2    Academic Quality will provide the following:

a)    External Examiner reports (2 years)

b)    Annual Programme Monitoring Reports (2 years)

c)    Subject Benchmark Statements

2.3.3    The programme documentation provides the basis for the legal contract between the University and its students; provides academic and professional services staff with a definitive record of documentation; and provides the basis for accurate and fit-for-purpose marketing materials.

2.3.4    Programme Teams must ensure the latest templates are being used.

2.3.5    All Programme documentation provided to future and current students must comply with the OfS Condition C1 and have due regard to guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
UK Higher Education providers - advice on consumer protection law to ensure that:

- the University provides accurate information about its programmes to students and any associated costs;

- the University ensures that programme and module information remains accurate and up-to-date, so that once a student has applied for a place of study, any changes to programmes or modules has the consent of all students affected by the changes;

- the University indicates to offer holders and current students any terms and conditions that are of particular importance, and that sit outside of the standard terms and conditions applied.

## 2.4 Variants of Existing Programmes

2.4.1 At the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) several programmes share modules to facilitate learning across different cohorts of students, and several elective modules are available to choose from. Variants provide a mechanism for expediting the creation of new programmes where much of the content has been scrutinised as part of an earlier approval process. There should be a single module template shared between parent programmes and their variants. All variants must be listed on the module template.

2.4.2 Most variants are treated as minor material changes to an existing programme, with the requirements for approval stipulated in Section 7 of this Code of Practice.

2.4.3 Academic Quality will arrange for a notification of changes to all stakeholders as appropriate (e.g. Registry, Timetabling, Exams Administration, Learning Technology), to make appropriate amendments to the University's information management and student record systems. Academic Quality will inform other professional services as appropriate (e.g. Strategic Planning, Admissions, Marketing & External Relations).

## 2.5 Periods of Approval and Re-approval

2.5.1 The University operates a rolling approval period. No programme can continue to enrol students without undertaking periodical programme review (see Code of Practice G). Programmes will automatically be suspended and enter teach-out unless a programme review is undertaken or an extension to the validation period is agreed. A request to extent a validation period needs to be submitted to ASPC for approval. For details of forthcoming committee dates please contact quality@rau.ac.uk.

2.5.2 Approval periods are set at the final point of validation a programme and are usually between 3 years (new partner programmes) to 5 years (existing programmes). To agree the period, the University will consider if:

a) the programme is in a new or rapidly developing field of study meaning the programme is unlikely to maintain currency over the period of approval, for example due to changes in PSRB standards;

b) specific quality circumstances or identified risks to the student experience (e.g. annual programme monitoring, completion data or student feedback) and require closer monitoring of the programme over a shorter period of time than the approval period;

c) the programme is in a subject discipline new to the University;

d) the provision is being validated for or franchised to a partner which is new to the University.

## 2.6 Timings

2.6.1 The aim is to allow for maximal exposure of programmes in university publicity materials as this will be important for recruitment activities.

2.6.2 Unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in the Portfolio Planning stage with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning & Resources) Revalidation Proposals should be submitted to the Secretary to ASPC no later than:

a) End of November for undergraduate courses commencing in the next recruitment cycle (e.g. by 31 October 2024 for courses beginning in September 2026). This would allow ASPC to approve/reject in November to inform the January opening of the programme marketing and recruitment activities cycle.

b) End of November for postgraduate courses commencing in the next recruitment cycle (e.g. by 31 October 2024 for courses beginning in September 2025). This would allow ASPC to approve/reject in November to inform January opening of the course marketing and recruitment activities cycle.

2.6.3 As the Revalidation Proposal template requires Programme Teams to obtain/confirm information from across the University, e.g. market research, employer engagement, staffing implications, resource requirements, financial planning etc, work on the Revalidation Proposal phase needs to begin well in advance of these deadlines.

2.6.4 There may be instances when the process of reapproving an existing programme can be completed quicker than the timescales indicate but this must be on the agreement of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning & Resource) and Chair of ASPC. For instance, where a programme has identified a new ready-made market to recruit from, or where inclusion in the University Prospectus and/or UCAS listings may not be critical to successful recruitment.

# 3. Confirmation of Review

3.1. Each autumn, Academic Quality identifies programmes for review if they have

- reached the end of their validation period;
- been identified through Annual Programme Monitoring of requiring strategic or major changes to ensure they offer a high quality student experience;
- been identified as needing to respond to PSRB or other external regulatory changes.

3.2 Academic Quality will annually present identified programmes eligible for review to ASPC in the autumn of each year (e.g. October 2024 for revalidations due in 2025/26).

3.3 Following approval for review at ASPC, Academic Quality will notify Deans of Subject and Programme Leaders, and work with them to establish timeframes for review and reapproval.

3.4 Where a programme for review is not approved by ASPC and the programme subsequently will be withdrawn at the end of the validation period, or replaced by a new programme, arrangements for student consultations with affected students are to be confirmed between Academic Quality, Dean of Subject and Programme Team.

3.5 For programmes that are approved for programme review, Programme Teams are required to submit a revalidation proposal to either of the Spring ASPC meetings.

3.6 By completing the form, Programme Leaders will need to:

a) Confirm any material or non-material changes it is proposing to make through the review process and whether these are driven by: changes in the market; student feedback; outcomes of module monitoring from module leaders or other motives;

b) Evaluate how well the programme remains up-to-date, coherent and well-designed and delivered taking into account the material and non-material changes it is proposing to make:

c) Confirm the involvement of external advisors in the review of the programme, including industry advisor, PRSB bodies or other stakeholders that affect the content of the programme;

d) Confirm the resources available for changes appropriate to the curriculum and provide track-changed documentation to Academic Quality showing where any changes are being proposed. The proposal may include reference to specific modules where these are currently being delivered, however any new modules should be referenced using content only to ensure that any marketing of the course is prepared in general terms.

e) Investigate and understand the requirements of any changes in accreditation, or where accreditations are an option a clear understanding of the timelines, costs, and benefits of any changes in accreditation requirements. Details of this will be required for the Revalidation Proposal.

3.7 Programme Leaders should conduct discussions with Programme Leaders within the subject cluster anticipated changes, and module leaders for their input to the reapproval process.

3.8 For programmes delivered at collaborative partners, the process for review and reapproval follows the same criteria as above. Academic Quality will liaise with Programme Link Tutors in both institutions concerning timelines and the documentation to be completed.

# 4. Programme Review Process

## 4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Programme Review ensures that programmes leading to an award by the University continue to meet high quality standards and are:

- Designed in accordance with the academic standards for the designated award;

- Designed in accordance with University approved strategic objectives, principles and regulations as approved by Academic Board;

- Resourced for delivery by appropriately qualified and skilled staff to ensure all students experience a high-quality learning experience;

- Able to access sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resource and student support services, enabling all students to experience a high-quality learning experience;

- Compliant with regulatory or legislative requirements, e.g. meets OfS conditions of registration, consumer law, visa and immigration.

## 4.2 The Programme Review Team

4.2.1 The Programme Team (Programme Leader and Module Leaders) should convene to review the programme to be able to meet and confirm the criteria set out under 3.6 and 4.1.1.

4.2.2 The Programme Team is responsible for nominating the External Academic Advisor who must meet the following criteria:

- Nominees must have the Right to Work in the UK
- Nominees must have current academic experience and subject expertise to be able to advise on the appropriateness of new modules/programmes, and comparability nationally
- Nominees must hold an academic qualification that is at least of the same FHEQ level as the module/programme to be validated/reviewed
- Nominees must be independent of the programme validated/reviewed
- Nominees must may not be appointed more than twice in a five year period
- Nominees must not be former employees/students of the University within the last five years

Completed nomination forms must be submitted to quality@rau.ac.uk and the Validation Officer for processing. All appointments require approval by the Head of Academic Quality and the Chair of AQSC.

4.2.3 Academic Quality will assign an Academic Quality Officer (Validating Officer) to each programme reapproval that is taking place and early engagement with Academic Quality is advisable. Academic Quality Officers can advise on internal and external regulatory requirements as well as processes guiding the validation.

4.2.4 The Programme Leader is responsible for engaging a Student Panel that will assist Academic Quality and Programme Reapproval Panel at the reapproval event.

### 4.3 Programme Design and Enhancement

4.3.1 The Programme Team will agree a schedule and undertake an iterative design process based on testing, analysing and refining their proposal, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders. Through consultation, the Programme Team will complete:

a) Programme specification and module templates;

b) Updates to the Provision of Information for Prospective Students providing accessible marketing information (if appropriate);

c) Resource statement;

d) Programme assessment mapping sheet;

f) UG/PG EDI and UN SDG mapping.

4.3.2 The design activities will offer participants the opportunity to engage in subject specialist discussions including the latest research outcomes; share good practice; test design pedagogies and explore the use of the latest learning technologies.

4.3.3 Programme Teams should not hesitate to seek advice from professional services staff including but not limited to Academic Quality, Registry, Library and Learning Technology.

4.3.4 The External Academic Advisor must be involved from beginning in the design process and complete an External Academic Advisor Report which should be submitted to quality@rau.ac.uk and the Validation Officer.

4.3.5 It is recommended that the Programme Team seeks feedback from current or past students on their study experience, aspects they liked and recommendations for change.

4.3.6 Payments to External Academic Advisors are facilitated by Academic Quality upon engagement with the Programme Team, participation and contribution to the validation event and completion of the report.

# 5. Scrutiny Process

5.1     The scrutiny stage has been introduced to resolve programme design and development related queries in advance of the reapproval event. The scrutiny process is carried out by the Validation Officer and Programme Reapproval Panel Members upon receipt of the first set of documentation at least four weeks in advance of the date for the Reapproval meeting.

5.2     Academic Quality will collate feedback from panel members into Annex A covering the programme specification, modules, mapping exercises, and will include an overview of the types of assessments used, their wording and weighting to ensure comparability across the modules taught in one programme.

5.3     The collated feedback will be returned to the Programme Team within one week upon receipt of the first set of documentation and where desired by the Programme Team, the Validating Officer will convene a Scrutiny Feedback meeting during which additional queries can be addressed.

5.4     Upon carrying out further work, the Programme Team will submit the final set of documentation for validation at least two weeks prior the reapproval event to Academic Quality at quality@rau.ac.uk and the Validation Officer for distribution to the Programme Reapproval Panel.

5.5     Prior to submitting the final set of documentation to Academic Quality, the Dean of Subject is required to check the documentation and confirm readiness for approval by signing and submitting the 'Dean of Subject Documentation Sign Off' form.

5.5     During the scrutiny process, the Validating Officer will collate queries that have been raised by Academic Quality and  Progarmme Reapproval Panel members into an indicative agenda which will be shared with the Programme Team 2-3 days in advance of the validation event so they can prepare responses to queries and seek advice from appropriate sources.

# 6. Programme Reapproval Process

## 6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Validation and Programme Reapproval Panels, as part of the quality assurance process, ensure that academic programmes delivered by the University, or its collaborative partner institutions, meet or exceed the threshold standards appropriate to the level of the provision and ensure the quality of the student experience. Validation/revalidation approval draws on the evidence presented by the Proposing Team to demonstrate how the proposed provision addresses Institutional Policies, Regulations and Guidelines, appropriate reference points such as the OfS and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and, where appropriate, the requirements of Public, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Academic Board has delegated authority (through Academic Quality and Standards Committee, AQSC) to appropriately constituted Programme Reapproval Panels to assess whether or not the proposal meets the threshold standards.

6.1.2 Validation and Programme Reapproval Panels are also part of the process of continuous improvement and enhancement and as such, the meeting between the Programme Reapproval Panel and the Proposing Team is supportive rather than adversarial. A secondary aim of the Panel meeting is to identify good practice in programme design or learning, teaching and assessment that could be shared more widely.

6.1.3 As a minimum, Programme Reapproval Panels will consist of:

- A Chair
  (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students), Dean of Subject, a trained senior member of academic staff with experience of chairing programme validations, Director of Academic Services)
- Internal Panel Member
  (Academic staff member from another subject area)
- External Academic Advisor / Industry Representative
- Head of Academic Quality
- Academic Quality Officer (Validating Officer)

6.1.4 To represent the Programme Team, the Dean of Subject, Programme Leader and Module Leaders will be invited to present their programme proposal for reapproval to the panel.

## 6.2 Student Representation

6.2.1 To support stakeholder engagement, consultation with students should take place when redeveloping and revalidating programmes for award. The Programme Team should work with Academic Quality to set up a Student Panel that forms part of the formal consultation with students and will take place as part of the reapproval process. Students are invited to meet with the Programme Reapproval Panel to discuss their study experience, areas for improvement and areas that work well. The Programme Team does not attend this meeting.

## 6.3 Outcomes

6.3.1 The outcomes of a Programme Reapproval Panel can be:
- ➤ Recommend approval to the AQSC (no conditions; with/without recommendations)
- ➤ Recommend approval (subject to conditions; with/without recommendations)
- ➤ Fail to approve (proposal requires significant work before being re-presented)

6.3.2 In a private panel meeting at the end of the reapproval event, the panel will consult on commendations, conditions and recommendations for the Programme Team to complete. These will be notified via email the following day, in advance of the Programme Team receiving the full validation report.

6.3.3 Normally conditions **must** be met before the proposal can be put forward to AQSC. However, where conditions are based on securing additional resources such as staff or equipment with a long procurement time, approval may be made subject to the conditions being met before the programme commencement date. Normally the Chair of the Panel in conjunction with the Secretary is sufficient to confirm that the conditions have/have not been met. Conditions can be set at Programme, Subject area or University Level.

6.3.4 Recommendations **do not** have to be met in order for the programme to gain approval but can be considered for further action by the programme leader in the first Annual Programme Monitoring report.

6.3.5 Reapproval of a programme will run from the start of the relevant academic period as specified. For RAU campus-based programmes the period between programme revalidations is normally five years. For collaborative partners the programme validation period is usually three years in the first instance, and five years thereafter. The validation period for partners may be reduced if:

- new areas of provision are proposed;
- there is a change of status to the partner, e.g. organisational change, change in ownership, change in significant activities or staffing changes;
- evidence emerges to suggest partners do not meet the University's quality assurance standards.

6.3.6 Once the Programme Team has met the conditions of reapproval, Academic Quality will present the updated Programme Reapproval Report to AQSC and Academic Board for sign off.

# 7. Programme Closures

7.1     From time to time, the University may decide to pause recruitment to programmes or withdraw programmes from its portfolio.

7.2     Typical reasons for programme closure can be one or more of the following:

   a)     decline in student demand so that the viability of the programme is at risk;

   b)     documented concerns over aspects of quality and standards which affect the programme's integrity and threaten the student experience;

   c)     loss of currency and changes to the University's programme portfolio and/or strategy;

   d)     external factors such as changes to student funding.

7.3     ASPC will consider annually in Spring which programmes are to be paused for recruitment for the forthcoming academic year. In this case, Admissions and Programme Leaders will contact applicants and offer holders to discuss available options such as a similar programme. Alternatively, the applicant / offer holder may wish to withdraw and commence their study at another University.

7.4     Where programme withdrawals are recommended, either through revalidation processes, or strategic decisions at ASPC, stakeholders need to be notified. Stakeholders can include:

   - Deans and academic staff involved in the delivery of the programme;

   - Professional services such as Admissions, Registry, Academic Quality, Marketing and Student Recruitment, Library, Learning Technology, Institutional Planning and Finance;

   - External stakeholders such as Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and other accrediting authorities if the programme has professional accredition recognition;

   - Current students if they are affected by the programme closure;

   - External Examiners

7.5     In the event of a programme being withdrawn, a consultation period should run as soon as possible, and no later than May of the year preceding the year from which the programme is to be closed or withdrawn. This will ensure there is sufficient time to inform applicants and offer holders of the decision and programme removal from UCAS.

7.6     The consultation process is key to the efficient coordination of a programme closure / withdrawal and it is recommended that separate meetings are held for student consultation to ensure the discussion focusses on the student experience.

7.7     All stakeholders (as set out in paragraph 7.4) relevant to the programme under discussion, must be consulted with. This should normally take the form of at least one face to face meeting. This ensure that all parties are kept informed and can contribute departmental perspectives.

**Summary of Procedure**

7.8   The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning & Resources) and Chair of ASPC outline the basis for the proposal to pause student recruitment or programme closure/withdrawal.

7.9   An analysis of staff implications will be undertaken such as the impact on workload allocations and whether academic staff could take up other academic activities.

7.10   Where the decision is for a programme to be withdrawn, consultations are needed with current students to discuss teach out arrangements. Teach out arrangement must ensure that students continue to experience a high-quality study experience and students receive the support to enable them to complete their programme of study.