Portfolio Approval Committee

# Rules and Regulations governing the PAC Schedule for the consideration of new course proposals, course withdrawals and suspensions

**Introduction**

1. The PAC Schedule is designed to ensure that proposals submitted to PAC can be dealt with in an effective and timely way that:
	* optimises marketing opportunities in order to maximise student recruitment;
	* ensures that applicants are able to make informed decisions;
	* ensures that the University continues to be compliant with consumer legislation.

# Schedule

1. The PAC Schedule is as follows:

# New On-Campus Course Proposals

* + New Undergraduate course proposals must have PAC Stage 2 approval by the end of October, twenty-four (24) months prior to planned commencement e.g. PAC Stage 2 approval by October 2022 for entry in October 2024. Courses with multiple entry points must have PAC Stage 2 approval twenty-four (24) months prior to planned commencement of the first cohort e.g. PAC Stage 2 approval by January 2023 for January 2025 entry.
	+ New Postgraduate course proposals must have PAC stage 2 approval by the end of March, eighteen (18) months prior to planned commencement e.g. PAC Stage 2 approval by March 2023 for entry in October 2024. Courses with multiple entry points must have PAC Stage 2 approval eighteen (18) months prior to planned commencement of the first cohort e.g. PAC Stage 2 approval by July 2023 for January 2025 entry.

# Withdrawals and Suspensions

* + Withdrawals and Suspensions must have PAC approval by the end of October twenty-four (24) months prior to the withdrawal or suspension coming into effect e.g. PAC approval by October 2022 for no intake in October 2024.

# Title changes

* + Title Changes must have PAC approval by the end of October twenty-four (24) months prior to planned commencement e.g. PAC approval by October 2022 for implementation in October 2024.

# ODL courses

* + New ODL course proposals must have PAC stage 2 approval no later than twelve (12) months prior to planned commencement e.g. PAC Stage 2 approval by October 2022 for entry in October 2023.
1. All proposed activity of any kind must have been approved before the release of the print and online prospectuses in which it would be published e.g. all new UG courses, suspensions, title changes etc. must be approved by October 2022 before the AY2024-25 prospectus is published in March 2023.

# Exceptions

1. In exceptional circumstances there will be permitted exceptions to this schedule which may arise outside the usual planning schedule; these will be considered on a case-by-case basis. These proposals will be considered under the ‘fast-track’ process.
2. The PAC schedule will be communicated annually to Schools and published on the AQP website.

**Fast-Track Proposals**

# Outline

1. In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for a new course proposal to be fast- tracked through the Portfolio Approval Committee process and for it to be considered outside the standard schedule.

# Criteria

1. Fast-tracking will enable a new course proposal to proceed directly to Stage 2 of the PAC process. A proposal for fast-track will be considered where the proposal meets the following criteria:
	* Be a specific requirement of an accrediting body and/or employer
	* Be the focus of an external contract or tender

# Process

1. A request for a new course proposal to be considered for fast-track approval should be submitted to the Secretary of PAC. The request should include a clear rationale for why fast-track approval is being sought. If the proposal meets one of the above criteria the process of fast-tracking will be initiated as follows:
2. The PAC Secretary will submit the proposal to the Chair of PAC for review.
3. If approved by the Chair, the proposal will be permitted to enter the process directly at PAC Stage 2.
4. The proposing team will then be expected to produce a standard PAC Stage 2 proposal (this includes a completed PAC Stage 2 template, market research report and a financial report).
5. Stage 2 proposal considered by PAC.
6. If approved by PAC, the proposal will proceed to validation.

# Submissions Outside the Standard PAC Schedule

1. In very exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for new course proposals, course suspensions or withdrawals, or course title changes to be submitted to and considered by PAC outside of the standard PAC schedule.

# Criteria

1. Requests for late proposals to be considered outside of the published PAC schedule will only be possible where a proposal meets the following criteria:
2. For new course and major/minor proposals:
	1. Be a specific requirement of an accrediting body and/or employer **AND/OR**
	2. Be the focus of an external contract or tender
3. For withdrawal and suspension proposals:
	1. PSRB accreditation has been lost/suspended
	2. Recruitment figures are very poor, and there is a risk that the resulting student experience will be unsatisfactory
4. For title change proposals:
	1. PSRB accreditation has been lost/suspended
5. Note that the latest that a course may be validated before its first entry point is normally three (3) months before enrolment e.g. the end of June for a September start. Therefore, submissions outside the Standard PAC Schedule will only be considered if it factors in enough time to be validated within this timeframe.

# Process

1. Where a proposal is received outside of the published PAC schedule, the proposal should be sent to the Secretary of PAC along with a brief rationale explaining the proposal and the reason why it should be considered out of cycle. If the proposal meets the above criteria, the process will be as follows:
	* The Secretary of PAC will submit the proposal to the Chair of PAC for review.
	* If approved by the Chair, the proposal will be permitted to be submitted to the next available PAC meeting.
	* If not approved by the Chair, the course team will be asked to submit an updated proposal, to come into effect the following academic year.

**Presenting to PAC**

1. Where possible, a member of the proposing team should attend the PAC meeting during which their proposal is being considered, in order to field any questions from the Committee. The required attendees to speak on behalf of each proposal will normally be as follows:

**Stage 1**
Course Convenor

Senior Member of School staff (to speak to the strategic fit of the proposal)

Marketing Manager

Finance Business Partner

**Stage 2**

Course Convenor

Marketing Manager

Finance Business Partner

**Minors and Pathways**

Minor/Pathway Convenor

Senior Member of School staff (to speak to the strategic fit of the proposal)

Marketing Manager

Finance Business Partner

**Withdrawals and Suspensions**

Course Convenor

Finance Business Partner

**Title Changes**

Course Convenor

Marketing Manager

# Post-PAC

# Following approval at Stage 2 by PAC, a new course proposal then proceeds to validation. A validation event is expected to take place within nine (9) months of Stage 2 approval being awarded by PAC. If longer than nine (9) months passes after Stage 2 approval, PAC approval expires, and the course can no longer proceed to validation.

# If the course team wishes to pursue the proposal, they are expected to resubmit a PAC Stage 2 proposal, accompanied by new Market Research and Finance reports. This will enable PAC to make an informed decision about the proposal, based on current data that reflects any developments in the market, any new financial implications, or any other changes since the previous submission.

**Alignment with Academic Business Planning process**

Alterations to course income and costs should be recognised in the annual Academic Business Planning process at a level commensurate with the degree of certainty associated with the changes.

* **Pre-PAC Stage 2 approval.**

Ideas in the early stages of development should be included in Schools’ Academic Business Planning submissions with a conservative estimate of fee revenues, and a realistic assessment of implementation and ongoing delivery costs. Changes will not be included as drivers in the central planning forecast or RAM overhead allocation. Schools’ should be prepared to articulate the alignment with long-term teaching and research strategy and the level of risk to delivery. Given the timelines for implementation, it is highly unlikely that fee income would be generated in Year 1. ODL and PGT courses might exceptionally reflect in Year 2, changes to UG courses would flow into Year 3.

* **Post-PAC Stage 2 approval.**

Changes in teaching load will be included in the central planning forecast and hence RAM tuition fee income. Operational impacts to staffing and non-pay costs, or facilities requirements, should be included in Schools’ Academic Business Planning proposals. Schools should be ready to highlight and explain material changes from the original PAC submission, such as changes to market conditions or unforeseen set-up costs. Teaching load, space and staffing impacts will then become drivers within the calculation of the RAM overhead allocation.

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