6. NEW COURSE APPROVAL

Overview

New course approval at the University of Sussex is overseen by the Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC). PAC is responsible for the strategic development of the University’s portfolio, and for approving all new undergraduate, postgraduate and foundation courses to proceed to validation.

Timeline

Partner institutions must endeavour to discuss proposals for new courses with the University at the earliest possible development stage.

PAC approval should be sought sufficiently in advance to allow a full academic year available in which the validation can take place. The ‘Calendar of Business’ lists the final deadline in the spring term for partner institutions to send proposals for new courses to the ADQE office for consideration in that academic year.

Process

New course approval is sought by completing ‘Appendix 6a PAC New Course Proposal for Partners’ for submission to PAC.

The sections of the form pertaining to the academic rationale and strategic context should be restricted to essential information at this stage as the process will allow for greater detail at the subsequent validation event. It is important that the course structure is expressed accurately and clearly, so that those reading the form do not have to refer the proposal back for more information. Adherence to the Academic Framework will make this a relatively straightforward task.

It is the responsibility of partner institution staff to complete the form, with support from ADQE and advice from the Partnership Tutor(s) where necessary. Proposals must be submitted to the University with the full support of the partner institution. This is confirmed on the form by the signature of the Director of Teaching and Learning (or equivalent).

Once the form is received, a checklist will be completed by the ADQE office to ensure that the proposal is ready for consideration by PAC. The checklist will deal with the following issues:

- The completion of all sections of the form
- Whether the proposal has been compiled in consultation with a cognate School at the University
- The compliance of the course with the Academic Framework
- The course has the appropriate number of identified convenors
- The intended start date is considered to be realistic

In reviewing a new course approval form, PAC will take account of the following:

- How the proposal meets the strategic priorities of the University
- The implications of the new course for existing internal provision
- Academic coherence
PAC may decide to:

- Approve the proposal to proceed to validation
- Refer the proposal back to the partner institution for further work
- Reject the proposal

The Secretary of PAC will advise all relevant parties of the outcome within three working days of the meeting. Courses approved to proceed to validation can then be advertised by partners as ‘subject to validation’.

There is an expectation that all partner institution proposals will be considered by the full Committee. If there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this, the Committee Chair may take action to approve a proposal.

Support

The approval process is supported by the ADQE Office, including: advice on University frameworks, regulations and processes, convening meetings between partner institutions and colleagues in a cognate School and reviewing course proposals prior to submission to PAC.