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| New course approval |  |
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| **Overview and stages of new course approvals** | |

# Requests for new courses

* This document outlines the stages for [course approvals](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/academic-standards-and-quality/new-courses) for awards and apprenticeships and the information to provide in each stage. The early stages of course approval help steer developments and put staff in contact so they can liaise over the course design and implications for introducing the course.
* Completing the three stages in order, and in particular completing Concept and Development stages prior to undertaking any work on the Final stage, can help the process progress more swiftly and focus efforts on developments that have approval to continue.
* For [validation events](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/academic-standards-and-quality/course-design-validation), the Concept and Development stages must be completed before the Final stage (validation event) can be arranged.
* If a new course proposal is received close to key deadlines, efforts will be focussed on completing the relevant stage – for example completing the Development Stage may be a priority when approaching deadlines for marketing materials such as the prospectus. Please find an overview of key deadlines relating to course developments in our [Quality Year Guidance](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/dept-quality-year-guidance.pdf).

# Please review the information in the Appendices:

* [**Appendix A:**](#_Appendix_A:) New course approval overview
* [**Appendix B:**](#_Appendix_B:) New course approval stages and information gathered
* [**Appendix C:**](#_Appendix_C:) New course approval categories
* [**Appendix D:**](#_Appendix_D:_) Course approval documentation

# Concept stage

* Early discussions over a course development can prove extremely useful and ease the process of approval, resolving queries and determining indicative approval routes and timelines in advance.
* Early discussions help identify which sections of the University can offer advice on designing the course to suit a wide a range of students and to provide the fullest choice of learning opportunities as possible.
* There are additional considerations and requirements when designing new apprenticeships which are outlined within the specific apprenticeship approval forms. Apprenticeships are designed in consultation with employers. Departments should therefore liaise with the [Apprenticeships Hub.](mailto:apprenticeships@essex.ac.uk) Please also become familiar with the Department for Education’s [Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provider-guide-to-delivering-high-quality-apprenticeships/provider-guide-to-delivering-high-quality-apprenticeships), the Office for Students [guidance](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/skills-and-employment/degree-apprenticeships/degree-apprenticeships-for-providers/) on degree apprenticeships, and the relevant Apprenticeship Standard which the new apprenticeship will need to be mapped to. Consider and discuss arrangements for End-Point Assessments early and the nature of the apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are subject to inspection by Ofsted and the [Education Inspection Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-september-2023) and [Further education and skills handbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif/further-education-and-skills-handbook-for-september-2022) are essential resources in understanding how quality and standards are inspected.
* Departments are therefore strongly advised to contact relevant staff as soon as possible regardless of the type of course being proposed. Information on who to contact is highlighted in the forms.

## Requesting Concept stage approval

* The information required can be captured while talking to your QUAD Manager about the proposed course or by submitting a concept stage form ([quad@essex.ac.uk](mailto:quad@essex.ac.uk))
* [**Concept stage form**](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/new-course-approval-concept-stage.docx)
* Please contact the team if you would like to arrange a phone call or a time to meet. If you submit the form, the QUAD Manager will be in touch.

## Responsibility for deciding the outcome of Concept Stage

* Faculty Executive Deans grant approval at Concept Stage.

# Development stage: Approval for publicity

This part of the process asks the department to show the academic coherence of the course and to justify its introduction. The decision is also made at this stage on whether the course can be advertised.

## Requesting Development stage approval

Once approved by the Head of Department, an application for Development stage approval should be submitted to the Quality and Academic Development team ([quad@essex.ac.uk](mailto:quad@essex.ac.uk)) together with the accompanying documentation:

* [**Development stage form**](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/new-course-approval-development-stage-form.docx)
* [**Market research report**](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/market-research.docx)

## Responsibility for deciding the outcome of Development Stage

* The proposal is considered and must be approved by the Faculty Executive Dean.
* The Executive Dean will consult with the Faculty Dean, Quality and Academic Development or Postgraduate Research Education team (according to the level of the course), Faculty Manager, Marketing and Student Recruitment team and other teams as needed.
* All new courses have resource implications, and the Faculty Accountant helps departments identify costs and advises on any bids which may need to be made for additional funding. The proposer should contact the Faculty Accountant, who will provide a costing report for consideration by the Executive Dean.

## The outcome of the Development stage will be one or more of the following:

## If successful at Development Stage:

* The course will be promoted in line with the outcome.
* The approval route will be confirmed as outlined in [**Appendix C:**](#_Appendix_C:) New course approval categories.
* The approval category is a strong indication at this stage - if anything changes that would affect the category when the Final Stage information is provided, the approval category may change so please provide updates in a timely manner.
* The Dean's decision is reported for information to the Faculty Education Committee, Academic Quality and Standards Committee, Education Committee and Senate.

## Publishing information on courses with Development Stage approval

* Prospective students, or students considering a course change, may base their decision on whether to apply on the information they have seen in marketing materials, webpages or at recruitment events.
* It’s therefore important that the information provided on courses which have not yet been fully approved is reliable and is not expected to change in later stages of development. Until a course is fully approved, any advertising and offers of admission will clarify that the course remains subject to final approval.

# Final stage approval

Full details are provided during this stage for [new modules](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/academic-standards-and-quality/new-modules), the programme specification, module map, and any additional information required to allow the course to be considered for approval. The format and extent of the information required depends on the approval category.

## Requesting final full approval

Submit the relevant documentation ([**Appendix B**](#_Appendix_B:)) to the Quality and Academic Development Manager (undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses) or Postgraduate Research Education team (research courses).

## Responsibility for deciding the outcome of Final Stage

* Category 1: Faculty Executive Deans.
* Category 2: Academic Quality and Standards Committee
* Category 3: Academic Quality and Standards Committee via a Validation Panel

## The outcome of the Final stage will be one or more of the following:

* Course fully approved
* Approved with conditions and/or recommendations.
* In this case the course team must provide evidence, within any agreed timescales, that the conditions have been met, and must respond to any recommendations.
* A course has not been fully approved or complete the Final Stage until the response to conditions and recommendations has been approved.
* Responses are usually approved by the Executive Dean, Faculty Dean or Chair of the validation panel.
* Not approved for further development or referred for more development work.

## If successful at Final Stage:

* The course will be promoted in line with the outcome.
* Advertising and offers of admission will continue to clarify that the course remains subject to final approval until the response to all conditions and recommendations has been approved and any required actions taken.
* The Dean's decision is reported for information to the Faculty Education Committee, Academic Quality and Standards Committee, Education Committee and Senate.
* Professional Services teams will update course information on relevant systems.
* Departments should also update any course and module information they are responsible for maintaining.

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# Appendix A:



# Appendix B:



# Appendix C:

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# Appendix D: Course approval documentation

# Category 1 and 2 new courses

Submit the relevant documentation as set out below to the Quality and Academic Development Manager (undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses) or Postgraduate Research Education team (research courses).

**Forms are available on the** [**Academic Standards and Quality webpages**](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/academic-standards-and-quality/course-design)**.**

## Taught Provision

* [Concept stage](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/new-course-approval-concept-stage.docx) information (Award)
* [Development stage form](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/new-course-approval-development-stage-form.docx) (Award) and market research report (if completed)
* [Final approval form](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/new-course-approval-final-stage-form.docx) (Award)
* [Concept stage form](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/new-apprenticeship-concept-stage-approval-form.docx) (Apprenticeships)
* [Development stage form](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/new-apprenticeship-development-stage-form.docx) (Apprenticeships)
* [Final stage form](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/new-apprenticeship-final-stage-form.docx) (Apprenticeships)
* Programme specifications [guidance](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/programme-specifications-and-module-maps-guidance.docx) and [template](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/programme-specification-template.docx) (see note below)
* [Module map](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/module-map-template.xls) template
* [New module proposals](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/course_design_approval_and_modifications/overview_new_module.asp)
* [Work-based learning](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/wbl-module-and-placement-year-approval-form.docx) forms, distance learning (please contact quad@essex.ac.uk)
* A report from an [external academic expert](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/template-external-academic-report-new-course.doc) (in line with the approval category)
* Evidence of professional input (in line with the approval category)
* Evidence of student consultation (in line with the approval category)

### Programme specifications:

* The information held in programme specifications is embedded within course approval forms for category 1 and 2 approvals. For validation events (category 3 approvals), separate programme specifications may be required.

### Research Provision

* [Postgraduate Research course approval form](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/postgraduate-research-course-approval-form.docx)
* [Integrated PhD Approval Form](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/integrated-phd-approval-form.docx)
* [Final Stage Form - Professional Doctorates](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/academic-section/academic-standards-and-quality/final_stage_form_prof_docs.docx)

# Category 3 new courses (a[pproval via a validation event)](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/course_design_approval_and_modifications/validation.asp)

* The Final stage form is replaced by [approval via a validation panel](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/course_design_approval_and_modifications/validation.asp), which reports to Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
* The documentation required for a validation event will be more extensive, to allow scrutiny by the panel of the new or non-standard aspects of the course and to account for the fact that membership of the Panel includes external experts who may not be familiar with the University or department.
* The Quality and Academic Development or Postgraduate Research team will discuss the validation event and membership of the validation panel with the department, in consultation with the Executive or Faculty Dean.
* Members of Faculty Education Committee are also given the opportunity to comment on the Validation Panel's recommendation.