Making Changes to Courses and Modules

Consulting with University stakeholders

Introduction

Consulting with key stakeholders from within the University can help to decide what changes to make and see what information is needed to support the request.

Within the department and faculty

- There should be discussions within departments over changes to share ideas, to consider courses as a whole, and to consider whether there's consistency where needed (for example over word counts, marking criteria, or volume and type of assessment).

- You may need to hold discussions at faculty-level, for example where there are resource implications (including staffing).

Other departments/schools

- Do remember that you will need to discuss upcoming changes for modules and joint degrees that are shared with other departments/schools involved. A report is available via SharePoint to allow you to find instances where modules appear in external departments as Core, Compulsory, Core with Options or Compulsory with Options. The report will show all courses not within the department selected.

Professional Services teams

- Departments should consider the impact curriculum changes could have on students, but also the overall functioning of the course itself. Professional Services teams should be consulted for

advice and particularly where they provide support for departments and students who could be affected.

Evidencing consultation via Curriculum Update

- Details of consultation undertaken with other teams should be entered into the relevant fields when submitting tickets on Curriculum Update.

Introduction

The Office for Students (OfS), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements **all highlight the importance of consulting over any changes made to the curriculum**. This includes clearly setting out any changes in advance, explaining the reasons for making changes, what the likely impact will be, and what students' options are.

As such it's very important that key stakeholders from within the Department but also across the University are consulted when changes to the curriculum are being planned, and in advance of changes being submitted via Curriculum Update. Submitting requests for changes without first consulting with other teams from across the institution may result in changes not being approved. Teams across the University work together collaboratively to enable Departments to teach their curriculum. Not providing enough notice or collaborating with other teams will reduce their ability to adapt and complete their processes in time to allow your proposed changes to happen.

Consulting and being transparent with key stakeholders from within the University can help to decide what changes to make and see what information is needed to support requests. Real and meaningful change to the curriculum takes time and almost always comes with challenges. When planning your changes build in space for collaborative discussion and time for providing information to other teams. Become familiar with what information is required by other teams to enable them to support you in making curriculum changes and prepare your approach with this in mind.

Which key stakeholders should be consulted?

- Quality and Academic Development
- Central Timetabling and Room Bookings
- Immigration and visa requirements
- Technology-Enhanced Learning
- Apprenticeships
- Resources
- University policies

Quality and Academic Development

- Review our webpages to see the guidance and advice on consulting with QUAD, but also requirements regarding consulting with students and externals. When assessment and teaching cross academic years, this can cause system issues — but these can be avoided with appropriate discussions before course approvals which will allow structures to be set up correctly by Course Records.

Queries should be sent to quad@essex.ac.uk and/or crt@essex.ac.uk

Central Timetabling and Room Bookings

- Consider the deadlines for submitting changes and how this impacts timetable construction. Requests for rooms to meet special requirements will need to be submitted as early as possible to ensure requirements can be met.

- Consider the impact of late changes on timetabling and booking of teaching space. Late changes to courses require late changes to the timetable and late booking of spaces.

Queries relating to the teaching timetable should be channelled through the departmental contact. Find the relevant contact for your timetabling query and the timetabling policy.   Email: cto@essex.ac.uk

Immigration and visa requirements

- You should consult at an early stage to ensure that any changes you are proposing comply with all relevant requirements for international students and that courses are designed to allow for teaching and assessment periods to fall within the CAS dates for students. Consider the start and end date of modules (including the assessment and teaching periods, where relevant) and ensure the final assessment deadlines fall within the student registration and CAS dates.

- Consider the needs of home and international students. Take into account how changes will impact and be received by overseas students.

- When making changes to PGT January starts, consider the following requirements:

Academic departments should be aware that in accordance with Home Office Immigration Rules, students studying on a course less than 12 months in duration will be given an additional 2-months wrap-up period after their CAS end date. Students studying on a course of 12 months or more in duration will be given an additional 4-months wrap-up period after their CAS end date.

To enable Student visa holders to be admitted, all Masters courses (whether October or Jan start) should conform to the following:

- All compulsory teaching and academic contact points should be in-person. Remote delivery is not permitted.

- They should have **no more than a total of 8 weeks' vacation time** across the programme.

- The formal **course end date** as stated on a **student's CAS** should reflect the **last point of academic engagement** for the course.

- There should be **academic engagement after Christmas**, taking into consideration **when Accommodation contracts end earlier than the course end date** for students (before Christmas) and how this could impact their engagement in on campus activities.

For further queries contact the International Services Team via email: international@essex.ac.uk

Technology-Enhanced Learning

- The TEL team provide advice, training and support on most forms of educational technology. They can help you with Moodle, Zoom, Panopto, Poll Everywhere, Talis Elevate and Digital Discovery Tool. They can also help you choose the right learning technologies to support your particular teaching and learning practices. TEL have expertise in the following areas:

  o eLearning development

- o Digital curriculum design

- o Blended or hybrid methods of teaching and learning

- o Online and remote learning

- o Instructional design (learning resource development)

- o Learning theories (as they apply to online platforms like Moodle and Zoom)
- When making changes to courses and modules, there may be considerations related to ensuring any new content meets the Moodle baseline standard, accessibility requirements, as well as language and study skills needs across the student body. Liaise with TEL in advance of making changes to ensure that these areas are also considered when making changes.

You can find more information and training on the TEL pages on Moodle.

Email: tel@essex.ac.uk

Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships are created to meet employer demand and are mapped to the appropriate apprenticeship standard. As such you should ensure that any changes you are planning have been discussed with all stakeholders and mapped to the standard to ensure changes meet requirements. This included consulting with the Apprenticeships Hub for initial advice, and learners and employers themselves.

- It is vital that you ensure changes are discussed with employer representatives and stakeholders involved in supporting and delivering the apprenticeship.

Email: apprenticeships@essex.ac.uk

Resources

- Expected funding sources for equipment, staffing and course related resources, noting when two or more variants of the same course are funded differently. The Funding team need to be involved at early stage to advise on potential funding issues when changes are being planned. Email: income@essex.ac.uk or payments@essex.ac.uk

- Consider any characteristics of expected students that may be impacted by the proposed changes and what this means for the support or services they may need to access (e.g., part-time, international, work-based learning). Email: wellbeing@essex.ac.uk

- Liaise with Library and Cultural Services who are based across all three campuses in Colchester, Loughton, and Southend, and provide access to educational and research resources, high quality learning environments and specialist support in making the best use of information in all forms. This is pivotal when preparing changes to learning resources such as reading lists, which will need to be confirmed by a certain date. Email: libline@essex.ac.uk

Visit the Staff Directory to find any other information you may need.

University Policies

- Ensure you review University policies when identifying proposals for course changes. If your changes will require a variation to a policy, review that policy to identify whether a variation is allowed, and what process should be followed if a variation is allowed. Key policies that you may need to consider are:

  o Marking Policy – available on this webpage

  o Assessment Policies – available on this webpage. Adding boards and resubmission boards at certain points in the academic year can cause system and capacity issues that delay student results. Advance discussion allows exam boards to be scheduled appropriately.

  o Rules of Assessment – available on this webpage

  o Variation to Rules of Assessment – available on this webpage

  o Assessment feedback – available on this webpage

  o Work-based learning

  o Admissions policies – undergraduate, graduate

  o Health and Safety Policies

University Policies relating to Governance are available for viewing here.

Remember...

The data you supply for Curriculum Update reaches far beyond Course Records, enrolment, and timetabling. The University relies on accurate course information and ensuring you have communicated with key stakeholders before submitting tickets ensures data is as accurate as possible.

When in doubt, contact quad@essex.ac.uk (QUAD) or crt@essex.ac.uk (Course Records)

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