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| **New PGT January Start Entry Approvals** |  |

**Guidance and approval for new and existing courses**

Guidance for departments thinking about any form of year-round delivery is available on [course approval webpages](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/academic-standards-and-quality/course-design) (this covers both new courses and a new delivery time for existing courses).

For the current January Masters courses under development, please follow the steps set out below.

**New courses**

Follow the usual process for seeking approval - see course approval [webpages](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/academic-standards-and-quality/course-design).

* Please include the information set out below and in Appendix A for existing courses in the new course forms.

**Existing courses**

Faculty Deans (or nominee as agreed within each Faculty) are responsible for approving January courses and will work alongside departments and the Quality and Academic Development team (QUAD) to review and discuss proposals. Departments are asked to provide:

* The course structure – a template is provided in Appendix A, but details can be sent in alternative formats where the same information is covered
* [New module forms](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/academic-standards-and-quality/new-modules) (where needed)

**Postgraduate Taught January start structures**

* All PGT January starts span 12 months and two models are possible.
* While the timing of the dissertation differs between the two models, students are offered an equivalent experience by enabling all students to:
  + reflect on supervisor feedback before submitting their final dissertation
  + reflect their learning across all aspects of the course in their dissertation (as the capstone and culmination of student learning)

**Model 1: Dissertation follows all other modules**

* All taught modules are delivered over spring and summer terms.
* The dissertation follows other modules (or at least other modules are completed before the dissertation is submitted).
* The dissertation is submitted at the end of the course.

**Model 2: Dissertation initially based on essential elements of the course**

* Research methods and essential content for the dissertation are taken during spring term.
* The dissertation is worked on over the summer term (alongside the Oct start cohort), based on key elements covered in the spring term. Students submit an initial draft within the department at the same time as the October students.
* Modules which are complementary or independent of the dissertation are taken until the last date of academic engagement (CAS end date for students). Alongside this, supervisors provide feedback on the initial draft dissertation.
* The final dissertation is submitted at the end of the course. This gives students the opportunity to reflect material covered in the additional modules taken where relevant, either through an update to the dissertation or via an addendum to it.

**Tips and things to think about**

The following tips will help students see clearer information, including their course structure and modules and keep things consistent across versions of the course. They’ll also help courses align with the pattern of activity wherever practical, for example assessment timing, and will ensure other factors are accounted for, such as implications for international students.

* **Modules are assumed to remain the same** in terms of aims, content and outcomes where offered on all versions of the course. The only change will be to create a new version for a different time of year, but this will otherwise be the same. Otherwise, new modules will need to be created.
* **Modules can run with students from both intakes or be specific to an intake**:Depending on the course, students on different start dates might take modules together or on dedicated versions of the module. Check any pre-requisites or co-requisites, and any other factors that would affect which order and when students need to take their modules. Assessment tasks would need to be the same across all students if January and October students take the module at the same time. Please consider timings of Exam Boards when planning the differences and symmetry of module variants and the impact this will have on whether students (particularly on October start courses) need to have their work marked in time to be ratified.
* **Check the balance of credits taken and workload for students across terms**: Check workload for students across each term. Particularly for the alternative model and where optional modules can be chosen in different terms.
* **Run modules within an academic year:**  The course will span more than one academic year but keeping each module within the same academic year (i.e., within weeks 1-52) avoids needing to create two parts of the module, one to fit in each term. Students, and departments, will then see only one module, and not a module which appears in two parts.
* **Think about assessment and reassessment timing**: think about when students will take assessment, how these feed into the timing of Boards of Examiners and release of results, and when opportunities for reassessment will be, for internal modules and modules offered by other departments. Take into account the gateway progression requirement for Model 2; students must pass at least 15 credits at first attempt to be permitted to submit a dissertation.

Other teams should be asked to review proposals, including the International Services, Assessment and Timetabling teams prior to submission.

### Student Visa 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.

The new course end date (CAS end date) for **January 2026** start programmes will likely be **in January 2027,** although this is yet to be confirmed. There will be an expectation that there are academic engagement requirements for courses right up until this date.

**Additional considerations**

* **Rules of Assessment**: whether any adaptations are needed to current standard Rules to account for the alternative model.
* **Rules of Assessment**: For Model 2, be mindful that students need to pass 15 credits from SP modules to be permitted to submit a dissertation. Failure to meet this requirement means they will no longer be on track for the Masters.
* **Timetabling**: whether any adaptations are needed to current policy to accommodate teaching at different times of the year.
* **Assessment, Boards of Examiners, release of results and reassessment**: how to build in periods of assessment, Boards, results and reassessment within current periods and for any that fall at new times of the year. Deadlines for assessment must be before the end date of the course.
* **Admissions, Registration, Welcome and support**: how students starting in January are looked after and supported.
* **Part**-**time versions**: whether a part-time version of the course will be available.

**Contacts**

If you have any questions, please contact the QUAD Team ([quad@essex.ac.uk](mailto:quad@essex.ac.uk)).

**Appendix A: Information to provide to offer an existing Master’s course in January**

Please add / delete rows as needed. Add separate tables for full-time and part-time versions (if both are to be offered)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course title:** |  | **Full-time (12 months) /  Part-time (24 months)** |

## Existing course structure: details of module variants currently used

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Component**  **Number** | **Module Code** | **Module Title** | **FHEQ Level** | **Credits** | **New Module**  (complete new module form) | **Main Status**  **(core/comp/opt)** | **Will existing module variant be used?** | **PG Diploma**  **Exit Award Status** | **PG Cert**  **Exit Award Status** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| 8 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## January starts: New module variants needed, teaching, assessment weeks

When planning teaching weeks and vacation periods, please ensure you review the [student visa requirements as outlined in this document](#_Student_Visa_Requirements) and consider this when scheduling teaching.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Existing modules requiring new variant for January start** | **Term(s) Modules currently offered**  e.g., autumn, spring; summer term (into summer break) | **Term(s) new variants will be offered**  e.g., autumn, spring; summer term (into summer break) | **Teaching weeks** | **Study weeks** | **Assessment weeks**  (incl dissertation periods, c/w and exams) | **Vacation periods**  (weeks in calendar) | **Reassessment weeks of existing variants** | **Reassessment weeks of new variants** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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**Additional information**

* Please also add any links to professional body accreditation, any impact on the Rules of Assessment (including any variations in place for existing courses), work-based learning / placements, periods abroad and funding (e.g., if subject to a particular funding source).

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* Please provide information regarding the dissertation deadlines and any processes around this.

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| **Dissertation Deadline:**  **(Delete as applicable)** | ***If Model 1: Final Submission Deadline***  ***If Model 2: Draft Submission deadline AND Final submission Deadline*** |
| **Any other information:** |  |

# Department Support

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposal supported by the Head of Administering Department** | | | |
| **Department** |  | | |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |
| **Proposal supported by the Head of other department(s) contributing to the course** | | | |
| **Department** |  | | |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |

# Consultation – to be undertaken by department before submission to QUAD

**International Services Team**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CONSULTATION REQUIRED –  This form will be reviewed by the International Services Team [international@essex.ac.uk](mailto:international@essex.ac.uk). | | | | |
| For completion by the International Services Team: | | | | |
| Are you satisfied that this January variant of the course can be offered to students requiring sponsorship for a Student visa? | | Yes  No | | |
| If the course includes a Work Based Learning element, does this meet current Student Visa regulations? | | Yes  No | | |
| Is an [ATAS Certificate](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme) required? | | Yes  No | | |
| Any other comments from IST: | | | | |
| Name |  | | **Date** |  |

# Assessment Team

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CONSULTATION REQUIRED** –  This form will be reviewed by the Assessment Team ([pgt.ebqstaff@essex.ac.uk](mailto:pgt.ebqstaff@essex.ac.uk)).  *For areas to be further clarified, please indicate at what stage these need to be addressed* | | | |
| **Comments** |  | | |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |

**Departments may wish to consult additional teams such as the Timetabling team. Please add any further comments here if applicable.**

**Any other teams consulted:**

**Following, consultation, the new course proposal can be submitted to QUAD – please ensure you have consulted with IST and the Assessment team prior to this stage.**

# QUAD Comments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Structure reviewed | Yes  No |
| Confirmation of any additional variants | Yes  No |
| Any other consultation or information required? | Yes  No |
| Any other details or comments: | |

# Faculty Support

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposal support: Faculty Manager**  *For areas to be further clarified, please indicate at what stage these need to be addressed* | | | |
| **Comments** |  | | |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |

# Approval from Faculty Dean

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name, Faculty Dean (PGT)**  *For areas to be further clarified, please indicate what these are.* | | | |
| **Comments** |  | | |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |

**Document review information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Document owner | Quality and Academic Development Team |
| Document last reviewed by | Aminah Suhail, Quality and Academic Development Manager |
| Date last reviewed | March 2025 |
| Review frequency | Annually |