

Policy Coversheet

Name of Policy:	Taught Course Approval Guidance
Purpose of Policy:	To define the questions which should be considered during the course development and approval process, indicating in which documents these questions should be addressed.
Intended audience(s):	Staff/External Parties
Approval for this policy given by:	Quality Committee
Last Review Date:	01/10/2018 05/04/2019
Review Due Date: (3 years from last review)	01/10/2021
Individual responsible for review:	Director of Quality Enhancement and Standards
Authorising department:	Academic Development Unit

Staffordshire University

Taught Course Approval Guidance

The following documentation will be required for a new course approval (or a reapproval of an existing course):

1. Approval Support Document (and staff CVs) [template]
2. Programme Specification [[undergraduate template](#) or [postgraduate template](#)]
3. Module Descriptors [[template](#)]
4. Academic External Advisor Comment Sheet [[template](#)]*
5. Employer External Advisor Comment Sheet [[template](#)**]

* For Flexible Learning Course proposals an existing External Examiner can be nominated as the Academic External Advisor.

** For Apprenticeship and Flexible Learning Course proposals, *Employer* External Advisor Comments are not required.

For proposals which are apprenticeships, the following *additional* documentation will be required:

6. Apprenticeship Handbook [[Template](#)]
7. Apprenticeship Workplace Mentor Handbook [[Template](#)]
8. Sample Job Description

Following the approval of your new course, you will need to complete a [Disability Course Profile](#) (see section 6), a [Course Handbook](#) and [Module Handbooks](#).

This guidance document provides a list of questions which should be considered during the development and approval of a new course, indicating in which documents these questions should be addressed. The documents in italics will not be part of the submission to the Course Approval Panel, but the panel may still wish to explore these questions with the team.

Aims and Distinctive Features

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
1.	Do the course aims provide a brief, but clear, overall impression of the educational purposes of the course, articulating what the course intends to deliver and the rationale behind it?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i>	The aims must be the same in both documents.
2.	Have the distinctive features of the course been clearly and accurately identified?	Programme Specification	

Learning Outcomes

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
3.	Does the course documentation define clearly the learning outcomes students must demonstrate in order to be awarded each named qualification?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i>	Final and intermediate award learning outcomes are listed in the Programme Specification and Course Handbook.
4.	Do the award learning outcomes align with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications ? (Are the learning outcomes expressed at a level which meets or exceeds the threshold standards set out in the FHEQ?)	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i>	
5.	Do the award and module learning outcomes align with the Staffordshire University's Typology of Award Outcomes and Indicative Descriptions of Levels (the 8 plus 2)?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
6.	Is there clear information, advice and guidance about how learning outcomes relate to regulatory	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i>	

	and/or professional body competency standards? (if applicable)		
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Curriculum Design and Content

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
7.	Will the content and structure of the course enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the award learning outcomes at the requisite level?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
8.	Does the curriculum align with the proposed titles of the intermediate and final awards?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
9.	Is the curriculum current?	Module Descriptors	
10.	Does the curriculum take into account and reference relevant subject benchmarks? Has this been demonstrated through the inclusion of a learning outcome mapping table within the Programme Specification and Course Handbook?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i>	The mapping can either be done as a separate table or can be done within the learning outcomes table by indicating which elements of the benchmark statements are covered (using a paragraph number).
11.	Is the structure of the course coherent; ensuring an appropriate study load in each semester?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
12.	Are modules appropriately sequenced for both full and part-time routes to facilitate student progression? (Where appropriate)	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
13.	Are the learning and teaching methods pedagogically sound, appropriate to the academic subject/academic level and clearly articulated within the course documentation (including the Learning and teaching strategy)?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
14.	Is it clear how or whether work based/placement learning fits into the design of the course? Including how this will be managed, supported and assessed.	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Approval Support Document, <i>Placement Handbook</i>	The Approval Support Document should explain the rationale for how and why placement learning has been incorporated into the curriculum and how it will be managed.
15.	Will technology enhanced learning be used appropriately to enhance students' learning experience? E.g. use of online discussions blogs, reading lists, e-resources, audio and video, etc. that facilitate students' learning.	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors, Approval Support Document	The teaching and learning strategy in the Programme Specification, Course Handbook and Module Descriptors should state where technology will be utilised and the Approval Support Document should give an explanation of the team's approach to this.
16.	Is it clear how the course will make appropriate use of research-engaged learning and teaching, including how staff will draw upon their research, scholarship and/or professional development to inform their teaching?	Approval Support Document, <i>Course Handbook</i>	The Approval Support Document should provide details about how the curriculum design makes use of staff research and scholarship.
17.	Is the range/type/volume/timing of assessment: appropriate; practicable for students and staff; and appropriately articulated within the assessment strategy?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
18.	Is there a clear statement of how assessment feedback will be provided to students?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i>	

Employability and the Staffordshire Graduate

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
19.	Have the proposals been informed by employers, and/or relevant Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies?	Approval Support Document	The Approval Support Document should explain how employers, professional bodies and students have been consulted about the design of the course(s).
20.	Does the documentation clearly indicate how the course will support/enhance graduate employability?	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i>	
21.	<p>Undergraduate courses only: Does the documentation clearly articulate how the course delivers the Staffordshire Graduate attributes?</p> <p>i.e. through the inclusion of:</p> <p>a) a statement positioned immediately after the distinctive features of the course articulating how the course delivers the Staffordshire Graduate attributes;</p> <p>b) a clear and full mapping indicating which modules assess each of the Staffordshire graduate characteristics?</p>	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Approval Support Document	The Approval Support Document should explain how the Staffordshire Graduate attributes have been applied to the course.

Admissions Requirements

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
22.	Are the admissions criteria (including IELTS requirements) appropriate for the course?	Programme Specification	

Inclusivity

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
23.	Are the learning outcomes designed in such a way that they are achievable by a wide range of students (including students with protected characteristics and those students where reasonable adjustments may be required)	Programme Specification, <i>Course Handbook</i> , Module Descriptors	
24.	Will the course facilitate an inclusive learning environment which reflects the needs, interests and experiences of an increasingly diverse student body?	Approval Support Document, Implicit in all documentation	The Approval Support Document should explain how the course will facilitate an inclusive learning environment. This may be through the curriculum content, the teaching and assessment methods or the learning resources, which may be aligned to the needs of students, taking into consideration their age, gender, abilities, cultural background and previous educational experience.

Student Support and Guidance

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
25.	Is there an appropriate strategy for academic and pastoral support that conforms to the	<i>Course Handbook</i>	

	expectations of the University's Personal Tutoring Policy ?		
26.	Where applicable, are the arrangements for the academic and pastoral support appropriate for students undertaking off-campus courses/learning (work-based, distance, or outreach)?	<i>Course Handbook, Placement Handbook</i>	

Learning Resources

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
27.	Will the collective expertise and availability of academic staff facilitate the effective delivery of the curricula?	Approval Support Document	The Approval Support Document should include a table of staffing and (as an appendix) the CVs for all the staff included in that table.
28.	Will there be appropriate technical and administrative support?	Approval Support Document	The Approval Support Document should explain the technical and administrative support which will be available to this course.
29.	Are appropriate and sufficient books and journals available in the University library or library at the partner institute? If no, has an appropriate purchase plan been provided?	Approval Support Document	The Approval Support Document should include an appendix of the books needed for this course (as shown on the module descriptors) with a note of how many copies are available in the library and if not available, when they will be purchased.
30.	Based upon the information available, does the teaching and learning accommodation (including specialist facilities and equipment) appear to be appropriate?	Approval Support Document	The Approval Support Document should include a summary of the accommodation to be used for teaching, along with any specific resources/equipment which will be required.

31.	Where additional resources are required to support the course, has this information (with timescales for their acquisition) been provided?	Approval Support Document	The Approval Support Document should note any additional resources/equipment which will be required to support the course.
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Student Engagement

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
32.	Have the proposals been informed by consultations with former, current and/or prospective students?	Approval Support Document	The Approval Support Document should explain how students have been consulted about the design of the course.
33.	Does the documentation clearly state how student engagement in the management and quality assurance of the course will be facilitated? (Eg course committee meetings, student surveys, module feedback). Including students studying full-time, part-time and via distance learning where appropriate	<i>Course Handbook</i>	

Course Documentation

Question		Source of Evidence	Notes
34.	Is the course documentation accurate, consistent and complete?	All documentation	

Course Management

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
35.	Are arrangements for the management of the course clear?	<i>Course Handbook</i> , Approval Support Document	

Apprenticeships (If Applicable)

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
36.	Is the use of the course(s) an appropriate mapping to the Apprenticeship Standard?	Apprenticeship Handbook	
37.	Will the management and delivery of the apprenticeship meet the needs of the Apprenticeship Standard, the assessment plan and the overall requirements set down by the Institute for Apprenticeships ?	Apprenticeship Handbook	

Overall Conclusion

	Question	Source of Evidence	Notes
38.	Does the documentation present a clear rationale for the development of the programme; which is reflected within the final design of the course?	All documentation	
39.	Overall, does the course documentation take account of QAA guidance on qualification	All documentation	

	characteristics for doctoral, masters or foundation degrees? (If Applicable)		
40.	Does the course demonstrate compliance with the Staffordshire University academic regulations or any award specific regulations set out within the documentation?	All documentation	