

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

School policy on programmes and courses: approval, modification, suspension and withdrawal

Introduction

1. The following guidance sets out the School's policy and procedures for programme and course approval, modification, suspension and withdrawal.
2. By *programme* is meant a whole programme of study leading to an award, conventionally a degree of BA, BSc or LLB; a diploma; MA, MSc, MRes or a taught MPhil programme. By *course* is meant an organised component of a programme. A course can contribute to more than one programme.

Programme approval

3. The Academic Board has the authority to introduce a new programme, which it has delegated to the Undergraduate Studies Sub-Committee (USSC), the Graduate Studies Sub-Committee (GSSC) and the Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC). The relevant Sub-Committee will consider programme proposals in detail, though it may refer difficult proposals to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASC) for advice or a final decision.
4. The Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office ([TQARO](#)) will provide annual information on its website about the deadlines for submitting new proposals. It will also advise on how newly approved programmes will be included in School publications such as the prospectuses, the Calendar and other web material.
5. Proposers of new programmes should check their proposal plans against existing provision in the School at an early stage. This should involve consideration of provision in other departments/institutes and consultation with colleagues who have expertise/research interests in the area. Such consultation could help with the development of the programme and also to reduce overlap.
6. Proposers of new programmes should discuss the reading list requirements with the Library at an early stage of planning. Library staff are available to attend Departmental or other planning meetings to offer a resource perspective from their knowledge of the collections. Library approval for the new programme is required to ensure that learning resources are available.
7. It is strongly recommended that the Teaching and Learning Centre is consulted at an early stage about new programme proposals. TLC can advise on teaching approaches and assessment formats. Please contact the [academic developer](#) assigned to your department.
8. New programme proposals should also be discussed with the [Learning Technology and Innovation](#) team (LTI). LTI can advise on a wide range of technology opportunities that address various pedagogical challenges during the early stages of programme design. Please contact liti.support@lse.ac.uk for information.
9. The issue of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion can be addressed through a consideration of accessibility and inclusivity in all areas of teaching, learning and assessment. Please see [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) or contact Tlc.Academicdevelopment.lse.ac.uk for more information.
10. Programme proposers should consider the following questions:
 - At what level is the curriculum being designed/evaluated?
 - What are the intended learning outcomes for the programme?
 - Does the programme promote progression so that the demands on the learner increase over time in terms of intellectual challenge, skills, knowledge and learning autonomy?
 - What is the level of the programme on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQs)?
 - What QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) are relevant (if any)?

- Will Professional or Statutory Body (PSRB) accreditation be sought?

These reference points need careful consideration, particularly as they will inform the monitoring and review process for the programme once the programme is approved.

11. The proposal must be discussed and agreed in principle with the Pro Director (Resources and Planning) at the Annual Monitoring meetings and be subsequently approved by the Academic Planning and Resources Committee (APRC) prior to submission to the Sub-Committee. When new programmes intend to draw on a course(s) from outside the proposing Department, the proposing Department will need to discuss the proposal and its resource implications with the Department supplying the course(s) concerned. Approval will mean that the Department concerned supports the programme proposal and will assign all the resources necessary for the programme to be taught.
12. Proposers of new programmes must complete a 'new programme' proposal form. Completed forms should be submitted electronically to the relevant Sub-Committee secretary at least three weeks before the meeting at which the proposal is to be considered; this is to allow time for the secretary to arrange consultation with other Departments.
13. All new programme proposals will be referred to an external academic assessor for comment. When submitting the completed programme proposal form, the proposer should include the name and contact details of two potential assessors. The relevant Sub-Committee Chair will determine which assessor will be approached first, with the second only being approached if the first assessor is unavailable. The assessor will be asked to produce a short report, where possible commenting on how the proposed programme maps with the relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement. The assessor will be paid a small fee for his/her services.
14. An external view provides an objective and independent perspective on the merits of the proposed programme and confirmation of standards. An external assessor will also be required for major modifications to existing programmes. The relevant Sub-Committee will determine whether proposed modifications are 'major' for this purpose. These external requirements will not be waived except in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the relevant Sub-Committee Chair in consultation with the ASC Chair.
15. The Sub-Committee secretary will seek approval from the heads of services for any resources required (e.g. IT Services), for the impact on timetabled teaching space and for any unusual demands on non-academic units outside the control of the department(s). The Head of Planning – on behalf of the APRC – will also need to confirm that sufficient student numbers and resources have been provided for the new programme to be offered.
16. Where a proposal contains provision for study at another institution, the Sub-Committee will need to be assured of the standing of that institution and of its support for the proposed arrangements before the proposal can be approved. Any such arrangement must be governed by a formal agreement between the School and that other institution. These proposals should be discussed with the Academic Partnerships Office prior to submission to the Sub-Committee secretary.
17. All new PhD programme proposals must provide evidence to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee that the programme displays a strong academic rationale; has a sufficiently critical mass; and is sufficiently distinctive from existing provision in both the Department concerned and the School.

Course approval

18. The Academic Board has the authority to introduce a new course, which it has delegated to the USSC, GSSC and RDSC. ASC is not normally involved in this process, although if any Sub-Committee faces difficulties in approving a proposal it can refer it to ASC for advice or a final decision.
19. The proposal should be discussed and endorsed at a Departmental meeting. Endorsement will mean that the proposal has the support of the Department concerned and that it will assign all the

resources necessary for the course to be taught. Proposals should also be discussed at a Staff:Student Liaison Committee meeting (SSLC). At the approval stage, the relevant Sub-Committee Secretary will ask whether the proposal was supported by the SSLC.

20. Proposers of new courses should discuss the reading list requirements with the Library at an early stage of planning. Library staff are available to attend Departmental or other planning meetings to offer a resource perspective from their knowledge of the collections. Library approval for the new course is required to ensure that learning resources are available.
21. It is strongly recommended that the Teaching and Learning Centre is consulted at an early stage about new course proposals. TLC can advise on teaching approaches and assessment formats. Please contact the [academic developer](#) assigned to your department.
22. New course proposals should also be discussed with the [Learning Technology and Innovation](#) team (LTI). LTI can advise on a wide range of technology opportunities that address various pedagogical challenges during the early stages of course creation. Please contact liti.support@lse.ac.uk for information.
23. The issue of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion can be addressed through a consideration of accessibility and inclusivity in all areas of teaching, learning and assessment. Please see [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) or contact Tlc.Academicdevelopment.lse.ac.uk for more information.
24. School policy requires undergraduate classes and graduate seminars to have a maximum limit of 15 students per group. For new course proposals which are seeking permission to run oversized classes/seminars, the proposal will need to outline the pedagogical reasons for the request and include a summary of the teaching style (and why it is appropriate), the additional student support arrangements that will be put in place and the likely normal class/seminar size if the request is granted.
25. A proposal for a new course should be made by no later than the fifth Sub-Committee meeting (usually in May) in the academic year prior to when it is proposed that the course should commence. For undergraduate course proposals, the deadlines for online course selection (in the Lent Term) and deadlines for inclusion in the Undergraduate Prospectus (usually in December) should be taken into account. The USSC secretary can give further advice on these deadlines.
26. Proposers of new courses must complete a 'new course' proposal using the Course and Programme Information System ([CAPIS](#)). Please refer to the '[New courses: proposal procedure](#)' for further guidance including detailed user guides about how to complete a proposal using CAPIS. Completed proposals should be submitted via CAPIS to the relevant Sub-Committee secretary at least three weeks before the meeting at which the proposal is to be considered: this is to allow time for consultation with other Departments. The proposal must state the programmes to which the course will contribute.
27. The Sub-Committee Secretary will seek approval from the heads of services for any resources required (e.g. IT Services, Library), for the impact on timetabled teaching space and for any unusual demands on non-academic units outside the control of the department(s). The Head of Planning –on behalf of the Academic Planning and Resources Committee (APRC) – will also need to confirm that sufficient student numbers and resources have been provided for the new course to be offered. Proposals will not normally be approved for introduction without the approval of the appropriate resource providers. Course approval will not normally be conditional.

Modification of programmes

28. The relevant Sub-Committee must approve any proposed amendment to programme regulations; this can usually be considered by Chair's action outside of Sub-Committee meetings. However, the Chair might decide to put complex modifications to a full Sub-Committee meeting. The relevant Secretary will be able to advise Departments in this regard.
29. Departments should send an email to the Secretary of the relevant Sub-Committee as soon as the amendment is discussed and agreed within the Department. The email should explain the

amendments required and give reasons for the request. The Department should also submit a revised version of the programme regulations. This should be in the form of a Word document, using track changes to allow TQARO staff to see where the changes are being proposed. This helps make updating the relevant School publications easier, once the proposed amendment has been approved. Please refer to [Modifications to existing programmes](#) for further guidance.

30. Where programmes are more than one year's duration, the Sub-Committee will seek assurances that students already registered are not disadvantaged by the proposed amendment. If they are affected, the Sub-Committee will ask for evidence that they have been consulted and agree with the proposal. Proposals will need to take into account the need for any transitional arrangements. In addition, major modifications to an existing programme may need to be subject to a report by an external assessor, on the terms set out in paragraph 11 above.
31. When proposing modifications to programmes, Departments need to consider the admissions cycle to ensure that planning occurs sufficiently in advance so that information published in the [Calendar](#) and the Prospectus is accurate. Changing information once published contravenes guidance from the Competitions and Markets Authority ([CMA](#)) in relation to the consumer rights of students and should be avoided.

Modification of courses

32. The relevant Sub-Committee must approve any proposed amendments to unit value, course availability, assessment methods (including amendments to examination arrangements), teaching arrangements and course title; this can usually be considered by Chair's action outside of Sub-Committee meetings. The Chair might decide to put complex modifications to a full Sub-Committee meeting. The relevant Secretary will be able to advise Departments whether proposed course amendments are of a kind that require Sub-Committee approval. In-year modifications are not usually permitted. Please refer to [Modifications to existing courses](#) for further guidance.
33. If a proposed amendment is submitted during Michaelmas Term Departments should send an email to the secretary of the relevant Sub-Committee as soon as the amendment has been discussed and agreed within the Department. The email should explain the amendments required and give reasons for the request. The Department should also submit a revised version of the course guide. This should be in the form of a Word document, using track changes to allow TQARO staff to see where the changes are being proposed. This helps make updating the relevant School publications easier, once the proposed amendment has been approved.
34. Once [CAPIS](#) has been rolled forward to the next academic year (a process whereby a copy of all course information is produced to enable edits to be made by departments for the following academic year), proposed modifications can be made directly in CAPIS. This will be possible during Lent Term and Summer Term. Proposed modifications submitted via CAPIS should include the same information as those proposed by email, including the reasons for the request. Guidance on how to submit proposals for the modification of courses using CAPIS can be requested via the CAPIS email: ard.capis@lse.ac.uk. Relevant information will also be distributed to CAPIS Managers and editors at the appropriate time each year.
35. When proposing modifications to courses, Departments need to consider the admissions cycle to ensure that planning occurs sufficiently in advance so that information published in the [Calendar](#) and the Prospectus is accurate. Changing information once published contravenes guidance from the Competitions and Markets Authority ([CMA](#)) in relation to the consumer rights of students and should be avoided.
36. School policy requires undergraduate classes and graduate seminars to have a maximum limit of 15 students per group. For course modifications which are seeking permission to run oversize classes/seminars, the proposal will need to outline the pedagogical reasons for the request and include a summary of the teaching style (and why it is appropriate), the additional student support arrangements that will be put in place and the likely normal class/seminar size if the request is granted. The Sub-Committee Secretary will seek approval of the class size exemption via Chair's action outside of Sub-committee meetings.

Suspension and withdrawal of programmes and courses

37. A programme will be suspended (that is, have no intake) or withdrawn only by approval of the relevant Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee may, if necessary, seek advice on such suspensions/withdrawals from the ASC. Suspensions and withdrawals will also be discussed with the APRC before approval is given.
38. Withdrawal or suspension of a course may be proposed to the relevant Sub-Committee up to Week 6 of the preceding Lent Term in which the course is to be suspended.
39. The suspension or withdrawal of a course can impact across programmes. Departments should therefore lodge with the relevant Sub-Committee a statement of intent to suspend or withdraw a course so that other Departments which may need to take account of the implications for their own programmes can be consulted. Requests for withdrawal or suspension should be submitted to the relevant Sub-Committee Secretary. If approval is granted the relevant Sub-Committee Secretary will arrange for the course information to be updated accordingly in CAPIS.
40. Any course that has been suspended for three consecutive years will be automatically withdrawn. Requests for exemption from this rule must be submitted in good time to the relevant Sub-Committee.

TQARO
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