Guidance for Programme Approval

Scope

All taught programmes leading to an award of City University London

To be read in conjunction with

Quality Manual section 3

Updated:

October 2012
Policy for Programme Approval

The policy can viewed online in Section 3 of the Quality Manual: http://www.city.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/68919/approval_of_a_new_programme.pdf

This guidance should be considered in conjunction with the policy.

Introduction to Programme Approval

Programme Approval is the University’s formal process for reviewing and approving new programme proposals and significant amendments to existing programmes. It is made up of a number of stages and involves various members of staff from across the University, as well as at least one External Adviser.

The process and the main areas for consideration for the proposal at each stage can be found below. Although some stages undertake similar considerations, these occur from different perspectives and with different foci. Each stage is important to ensure that the proposal has been adequately considered by all relevant parties. However, streamlining or a more customised approach may be possible for some proposals. Any proposals of this nature should be discussed with Academic Services, who can provide advice on whether this would be appropriate.

University oversight is crucial to support sign-off by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate, to ensure comparability across all of the institution’s credit-bearing provision.

Academic Services can provide support from initial planning stages through to final approval.
School planning exercise highlights potential new programmes or programme amendments, which are subsequently inputted into the Programme Approval Schedule.

- Stage 1 School Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC)
  - Initial strategic fit and viability
  - Market, wider programme viability, strategic fit, proposed mode of delivery, resources
- Stage 1 University Programme Approval Committee (PAC)
  - Fit with University Vision and strategy, risk (financial, reputational), market, resource requirements and academic standards/quality.
- Stage 2 School PARC
  - Close scrutiny of programme content, including external views. Consideration of external reference points, practical issues (placements, staffing), employability, admissions criteria, AP(E)J and L,T&A. First sign-off of student-facing programme documentation (specs and handbook).
- Stage 2 University PAC
  - Final check of all student facing documentation and resources. Scrutiny of updated documentation following report from External Adviser and consideration of external involvement and views. Consideration of student experience. PSRB accreditation (if applicable). Consideration of quality and standards and final enhancements.
## Stages for the Approval of Provision

(Approved at APPSC on 21 April 2010; updated in August 2011; updated to reflect changes to partnership approval in March 2012)

This table is provided as a guide. New styles of provision and certain types of partnership activity may require the framework to be adapted to ensure that the mechanisms for approval are appropriate – this might involve fewer stages or additional consideration at University-level. In such cases, the emphasis will be on the judgement and expertise of the Programme Director, the School's Associate Dean (Education) and Academic Services at the early stages of programme development. Any adjustments will require the approval of the DVC.

Detailed guidance for the development of proposals and the operation of each stage of the process are provided on the Academic Policies and Regulation website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>New Provision (internal)</th>
<th>New Provision (partnership)</th>
<th>Articulation Agreements and off-site delivery (based on pre-approved programmes)</th>
<th>Franchised and franchised access/feeder provision (based on pre-approved programmes)</th>
<th>Consideration and sign-off</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off plan</td>
<td>If not in School Plan</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>University approval: VC and DVC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 0</td>
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<td>Yes (if new partner is proposed)</td>
<td>Yes (if new partner is proposed)</td>
<td>Yes (if new partner is proposed)</td>
<td>School approval: Dean of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional consideration of a new partner</td>
<td>Compatiblity of organisation, strategic and educational fit of proposals</td>
<td>Requirements for site visit, where necessary</td>
<td>Consideration of the specific responsibilities of partner institution and School for the programme</td>
<td>University approval: DVC and DVC (R&amp;I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Consideration: School Ex-Co (consideration of starred documentation only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programme title, outline proposal and structure</td>
<td>Market opportunities and risks*</td>
<td>Potential level of demand</td>
<td>School resources, budget, other financial matters*</td>
<td>For partnership programmes – site-visit report*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continued fit with School and University Plan</td>
<td>For partnership programmes – site-visit report*</td>
<td>For partnership programmes – due diligence*</td>
<td>Also consider: Site visit report</td>
<td>Also consider: Site visit report</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Due diligence</td>
<td>Due diligence</td>
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1 Where proposals involve significant amendment to pre-approved provision a full approval will be required.
2 See above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Consideration and sign-off</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1: University</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consideration: University Programme Approval Committee (Chaired by DVC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• As per Terms of Reference (see <a href="http://webapps.city.ac.uk/adu/university_governance/new/pac/pac.html">http://webapps.city.ac.uk/adu/university_governance/new/pac/pac.html</a>)</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Also consider: Site visit report</td>
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<td>Due diligence</td>
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<td><strong>Stage 2: School</strong></td>
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<td>Approval: DVC</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Peer review of detailed proposal: curriculum, structure, credit values and exit points, learning and teaching, assessment, student support and overall student experience</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Consideration: Programme Approval &amp; Review Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>• External consideration of proposal, including quality and relevance of provision, learning experience and academic standards</td>
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<td>Recommendation for approval: Dean of School</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Academic standards and quality</td>
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<td>Approval: DVC</td>
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<td>• Programme management and staffing</td>
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<td>• Employability and destinations</td>
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<td>• Student numbers and marketing</td>
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<td>• Enhancement of the proposal drawing on internal and external comment and good practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Endorsement of proposal</td>
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<td>• Consideration of the specific responsibilities of partner institution and School for the programme</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2: University</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consideration: University Programme Approval Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As per Terms of Reference (see <a href="http://webapps.city.ac.uk/adu/university_governance/new/pac/pac.html">http://webapps.city.ac.uk/adu/university_governance/new/pac/pac.html</a>)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Recommendation for approval: Committee Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consideration of the specific responsibilities of partner institution and School for the programme</td>
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<td>Approval: DVC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support for programme development
Approving new programmes or significant amendments requires a substantial amount of work; in order for the University to maintain accurate records and to ensure quality and standards of provision, a wide range of information has to be formally documented.

The programme/significant amendment approval process is managed by Academic Services; all of the forms and guidance documents are available in section 3 of the Quality Manual.

Who can help?

- School Quality Staff (Officers/Registrars) can provide full details of School-based considerations of proposals and how this is managed. They may also be able to support in the preparation of documentation. Please contact these staff directly for further information.
- Associate Dean (Education) (or equivalent) as the Chair of PARC and a senior member of academic staff with responsibility for education can offer advice and guidance.
- LDC staff have a crucial role in programme development; they provide formal comments to the University Stage 1 Committee but before this, they can provide full support for the designing and developing of programmes and modules including the development of the required programme documentation.
- Academic Services staff can explain the processes and procedures to be undertaken to approve new programmes or significant amendments. They can also provide support with preparation of documentation and liaising with other relevant Professional Services (LDC, Timetabling, Library, IS).

Dos and Don’ts

- **DO** ensure that you have all the relevant authorisations
  - Stage 0: Dean and DVC (DVC International and Development, if applicable)
  - Stage 1: School Ex-Co (for authorisation of Due Diligence including site visit report, marketing and financial information), LDC, Timetabling, School Marketing Manager, School Financial Controller, PARC Chair, Dean, (Dean of contributing School, if applicable);
  - Stage 2: Library, IS, PARC Chair, Dean, (Timetabling, School Financial Controller, and Dean of contributing School if applicable).
  These sign-offs can be provided as an email from the relevant member(s) of staff.
- **DO** contact relevant colleagues (LDC, Timetabling etc) with plenty of time before the first submission deadline. Timetabling, for example, require up to 3 weeks to consider a proposal as they have to undertake a space modelling exercise before they can confirm whether the appropriate space resources are available.
- **DON’T** miss the submission deadlines for PARC or UPAC. Late or incomplete papers will not be accepted.
- **DO** provide information about any formal or informal external or student input. This can really support a proposal, particularly where this input is clearly demonstrated to have contributed to the proposal’s development.
External Advisers

External input is fundamental to programme approval; the University’s approach encourages informal external input, from both academia and industry, throughout the development of proposals. At the same time, the University appoints External Advisers in a formal capacity to support the assurance of the quality and standards of a proposed programme, its relevance and its comparability with similar programmes.

External Advisers are formally involved by:

1. Attending the School Programme Approval and Review Committee meeting for Stage 2 discussions; and
2. Providing a written report, based on a template, to Academic Services for consideration at the University Programme Approval Committee. The Chair would also be able to contact the external before or after a meeting to clarify any aspects of that report.

In exceptional circumstances, where attendance at the School PARC is not possible, a separate meeting should be arranged in advance of the PARC, the minutes from which should be reported to the Stage 2 PARC meeting.

More information including selection criteria and responsibilities for the management of the External Adviser can be found in Appendix 4. Guidance for External Advisers and the Report Template for completion after the School Stage 2 PARC are available in Section 3 of the Quality Manual.

Informal External input

The University encourages informal external input into the development of proposals, both for new programmes and for amendments to existing provision. This could be from academic colleagues, PSRB representatives, industry/profession representatives, potential placement providers or potential graduate employers.

Programme Teams should include information about the how any informal input has contributed to the development of the proposal; while indication of support for a new programme is helpful, more developmental contributions demonstrate a more considered approach.

The External Adviser involved at School Stage 2 may be the same individual or a different individual. If it is the same person, the Programme Team must be confident that the External Adviser is able to fulfil his/her formal assurance role at Stage 2.

Student Representatives

The University places significant value on the input of students into the processes for managing the quality and standards of its educational provision.

Students can be involved in a variety of ways both formal and informal, through, for example, discussions at Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings or through student membership of the
School Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC). Potential students and alumni might also be involved, for example through surveys or questionnaires completed by prospective student groups or through use of social networking sites such as The Student Room.

The Students’ Union President or Vice-President (Education) is a member of the Stage 2 University Programme Approval Committee.

Academic Services and the Students’ Union are available to provide support for programme teams in collecting feedback from students.

Guidance for students involved in programme development and approval can be found in section 3 of the Quality Manual.

**Informal Student Input**

The University encourages informal student input into the development of proposals, both for new programmes and for amendments to existing provision. This could include discussions with current students on related programmes (or on the relevant programme for significant amendments) at the end of lectures or through Moodle forums, and/or alumni.

You should include information about the how any informal input has contributed to the development of the proposal; while indication of support for a new programme is helpful, more developmental contributions demonstrate a more considered approach. If the proposal has been discussed in a more formal meeting with students (such as an SSLC or SEC), an extract of the minutes could be provided.

**Cross-School provision**

There are a number of additional considerations that must be taken into account when proposing cross-School provision; if arrangements to deal with these items are not considered and documented in the proposal submissions, the likely result is conditions being applied to the approval of the proposal:

- Financial split: how will the costs (space, academic staffing, support staffing, resources, etc) be divided? This should be signed off by the Financial Controllers of both Schools.
- Communication channels for programme amendments: how will the other School be made aware of proposals to amend any elements of the programme?
- Which School will be the programme’s ‘home’? i.e. which School will take overall ownership of the programme? The Home School is responsible for oversight of all quality and standards mechanisms including:
  - External examiner payment and oversight;
  - Processes around compensation, marking/moderation and extensions;
  - Oversight of Assessment, including Assessment Boards;
  - Oversight of APEs, resulting actions,
  - Programme Handbook production;
  - Administration of students on SITS;
  - Oversight of Peer Review;
- Oversight of module evaluation and other student survey results;
- Management of Programme Committees and SSLCs.
**KIS information – UG programmes only**

All UG programmes are now required to provide a Key Information Set. This includes providing information on the number of hours of the different types of Teaching and Learning types and the proportions of Assessment types used. There is a set list of types for Teaching & Learning and Assessment which was developed by Hefce and QAA which are used by all institutions. In addition, where a programme offers elective modules, the expected ‘most popular’ route must be included so that the Teaching and Learning, and Assessment data from this route can be used in the KIS.

In order to ensure that the University has adequately captured the required information, it must be included in the Stage 2 proposal documentation.

Please contact Peter Clements in Academic Services for further information and support.

**What happens after University Stage 2?**

The outcome of the University Stage 2 Committee is made as a recommendation to the DVC who holds overall responsibility for educational aspects of the University's academic activity and has final authority for the approval of any proposal. Where a proposal has received conditional approval, the Programme Team will be required to provide a response to the conditions by a set deadline.

This includes:

- A formal, written response to the conditions, clearly detailing the changes and enhancements that have been made to the programme documentation to meet the conditions;
- Full supporting documentation, such as: updated programme or module specifications, evidence of any required authorisations or input, any other items/documents which will demonstrate that which has been undertaken to meet the conditions.

The full response and supporting documentation will usually be considered by the Chair of the Stage 2 University Programme Approval Committee for final sign-off unless a different approach was agreed by the Committee.

Only after final sign-off has been agreed with the Chair is the programme/significant amendment fully authorised to run.
Appendix 1: Programme Approval Process

Contact Jessica West in Academic Services.
Appendix 2: The role of PARC

The School Programme Approval and Review Committee plays a crucial role in the consideration of new programme and significant amendment proposals. Through its peer-review scrutiny of proposals, it should support the development and enhancement of proposals as well as providing an opportunity for the sharing of best practice from elsewhere within the School.

The minutes from PARC meetings support University Programme Approval Committee discussions particularly where they demonstrate a clear view on the following:

At Stage 1
- The strategic fit of the proposal within the School
- The proposed market
- The mode of delivery
- Budget
- Local resources
- Exceptions to regulations/academic year (if applicable)

At Stage 2
- Programme content, including consideration of external reference points
- Staffing
- Placements (if applicable)
- Admissions criteria
- AP(E)L
- Graduate prospects/employability
- Student-facing programme documentation
- Response to Stage 1 conditions and recommendations

NB The listed elements are not intended to be exhaustive but should act as a starting point for discussions.

The PARC should also ensure that proposal documentation is complete and of an appropriate quality prior to University level consideration. Proposals considered by the University Committee that are not of adequate quality will be referred back to the Programme Team and PARC for reconsideration.
Appendix 3: Programme Approval forms

Academic Services can support programme teams through the approval process.

When completing Stage 0, Programme Teams are strongly advised to seek advice from Academic Services.

When completing Stage 1, Programme Teams are strongly advised to seek advice from the following professional services:

- Learning Development Centre for advice on drafting the programme specification as well as general curriculum development support;
- Timetabling Department for information about space resources;
- School Marketing Managers for advice on completing the Market and Marketing sections and attachments.

The Stage 1 form can be found in Section 3 of the Quality Manual. There is also a version which includes guidance on how to complete the form.

When completing Stage 2, Programme Teams are strongly advised to seek advice from the following professional services:

- Learning Development Centre for advice on drafting the programme and module specifications;
- Timetabling Department if your requirements have changed since Stage 1;
- Library and Information Services for assistance and authorisation of Library and IS resources;
- Strategy and Planning Unit for support with management information requirements.

The Stage 2 form can be found in Section 3 of the Quality Manual. There is also a version which includes guidance on how to complete the form.
Appendix 4: External Advisers

The External Adviser’s main role is as an objective and independent assurer of the quality and standard of provision, although s/he is also encouraged to support programme development and enhancement of the proposal. External Advisers will normally provide high level insight into the discipline area and/or profession being considered and will be able to provide comparability with similar nationwide provision.

Selection criteria

An External Adviser will:

- Normally have sufficient authority and knowledge of the discipline area under discussion.
- Normally be at least Senior Lecturer level
- Cannot work in other roles associated with the University, for example as an External Examiner or visiting lecturer for a different programme.
  o If a former External Examiner or a former member of staff is to be used, s/he would normally have been out of that role for at least five years.

Fee for External Adviser

External Advisers will be paid a fee as thanks for their involvement and to enable them to dedicate time to the proposal. Programme Teams should discuss the level of this fee with Academic Services. Academic Services will manage the payment of the fee and of any expenses, in liaison with School Finance teams.

Role of the External Adviser

The External Adviser will:

- Be identified and approached by the Programme Team as early as possible in the process.
- Be provided with all documentation for School Stage 2 PARC prior to meeting, by the Programme Team.
- Scrutinize this documentation.
- Attend School Stage 2 PARC (if this is not possible, an alternative meeting should be set up between the External and the Programme Team. This should take place prior to the PARC).
- Write a report for the University Programme Approval Committee.
- Be available for discussions with the University Stage 2 Committee Chair and/or Academic Services.

Management of the External Adviser

- The External Adviser is identified, in line with the criteria above, and approached by the School.
- The School should arrange with the External Adviser when they are to attend the School PARC.
- The School will then provide the name and contact details of the External Adviser, along with confirmation of the arrangements made and the cost code to be charged, to Academic Services.
- Academic Services will contact the External Adviser, copying in the main School contact, providing the report template, an expenses form and any other relevant information.
The External should send their completed Report and Expenses Form to Academic Services who will authorise payment of the fee.

Guidance for the External Adviser can be found in Section 3 of the Quality Manual.
Appendix 5: Modules outside the Home Programme’s Domain

Guidance on the treatment of modules outside the Home Programme’s Domain

The procedures which follow relate to ownership, coding, quality assurance arrangements, administration and Assessment Board practices for modules outside the Home Programme’s domain.

1. Extra-programme module

Ownership – the module’s originating programme is its principal programme. The module is then made available to other programmes and approved as such within those programme specifications, by specific agreement of the Board of Studies for the principal programme.

Coding – the module is coded in accordance with the principal programme

QA responsibility – the Board of Studies for the principal programme is responsible for the quality of the module. The module is considered as part of the principal programme’s APE and External Examiner reports etc. The Board of Studies that is responsible for the programme is responsible for communicating any proposed changes to the module that might impact on other programmes, particularly in other BOS areas.

Administration – the School owning the principal programme is responsible for marking, moderation and results input for all students on the module and for day to day liaison with other schools regarding timetabling and other administrative matters.

Assessment Board – the Assessment Board for the principal programme considers and agrees the module results. Liaison between programmes will be needed regarding timing of Assessment Board meetings. These are then passed to the Assessment Board(s) for the students’ home programmes which considers progression and award.

2. Service taught module

Ownership – The module is owned by its principal programme which is the programme for which it was developed. The fact that it is service taught by another School reflects an arrangement between Schools for the provision of teaching and not the ownership of the module.

Coding – The module is coded in accordance with the principal programme, not the subject/programme from which the teaching is drawn.

QA – This is the responsibility of the Board of Studies for the principal programme. Concerns that may arise about the quality of teaching are managed through the normal management process. The Board of Studies that is responsible for the programme is responsible for communicating any proposed changes to the module that might impact on other programmes, particularly in other BOS areas.

Administration – The marking and moderation of the module are undertaken by the member(s) of staff providing the teaching. The input of results, programme, module and Assessment Board administration is the responsibility of school that owns the principal programme.
Assessment Board – The module results are considered by the Assessment Board for the principal programme. The member(s) of staff teaching and assessing the module may be required to attend the Assessment Board.

3. Shared teaching

Ownership – in these arrangements there is more than one module being taught together simultaneously. The ownership for each module is in accordance with its principal programme. Where there are different versions of similar modules, delivered together, each version has a principal programme which reflects the programme that it was specifically developed and approved for. Each module has its own module specification and module learning outcomes.

Financial arrangements – if shared teaching involves an element of service teaching or extra-programme electives are dealt with separately.

Coding – The modules are coded in accordance with their principal programmes, not the subject/programme from which the teaching is drawn.

QA – This is the responsibility of the Board of Studies for the principal programme for each module. The Board of Studies that is responsible for the programme is responsible for communicating any proposed changes to the module that might impact on other programmes, particularly in other BOS areas.

Administration – The marking and moderation of the modules are undertaken by the member(s) of staff providing the teaching. The input of results, programme, module and Assessment Board administration is the responsibility of the school that owns the principal programme.

Assessment Board – The module results are considered by the Assessment Board for the principal programme. The member(s) of staff teaching and assessing the module may be required to attend the Assessment Board.

4. Cross School Programme

Ownership – The ownership of the programme is usually determined by the school providing the largest proportion of the programme. Where the contributions are equal, one Board of Studies is identified to own the programme. It should be noted that the ownership of the programme and the ownership of modules can be with different Boards of Studies areas/Schools.

QA – The designated Board of Studies that owns the programme is responsible for its quality. Issues concerning modules that are owned by another Board of Studies because they belong to a different principal programme are dealt with through liaison between Boards of Studies. Concerns about teaching in relation to modules are effectively bespoke service taught are dealt with through the standard management processes. A Joint Programme Management Team is established to provide a forum for staff from both BOS areas to come together to manage the programme.

Administration - There is one programme director who is responsible for liaison with the contributing schools and ensuring the smooth-running of the programme. It is particularly important that arrangements are made clear to students. Programme administration, Assessment Board
administration are the responsibility of the designated school for ownership of the programme. Where modules from the other school(s) are provided on a ‘bespoke’ basis and effectively service taught for that programme, the administration for those modules is with the school owning the programme as the programme is effectively the principal programme for those modules. Where the modules from the other school(s) are provided on an elective basis, the administration of these modules resides with the school responsible for the principal programme for the modules.

Assessment Board – This is organised by the designated school for ownership of the programme. Staff involved in teaching the modules attend the Assessment Board as appropriate, regardless of the school to which they belong. Where the programme also includes extra-programme elective modules the provisions specified above apply.