

## Programme Amendment Policy

### Scope

*All taught programmes leading to an award of City, University of London.*

*Specific arrangements for validated provision are set out in the Validation and Institutional Partnerships Handbook.*

### Senate Regulations

*Regulation 15 – Undergraduate Programmes*

*Regulation 16 – Graduate Programmes*

*Regulation 17 – Postgraduate Programmes*

*Regulation 19 – Assessment Regulations*

### Date approved/re-approved

XX

### Date for review

*To be reviewed every three years, with allowance for minor annual updates of roles and responsibilities by Educational Quality Committee, as required*

### To be read in conjunction with:

*Quality Manual, Section 3.*

## Equality and Diversity Statement

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

## **Programme Amendment Policy**

This policy relates to:

- Amendments to existing modules or programmes of study, that lead to an award of the University.
- The proposal of new modules within an existing programme.

New modules proposed as part of a new programme will be considered through the Programme Approval process.

### **Principles**

City, University of London is committed to the continual development of its programmes, taking account of student feedback, developments within the relevant discipline, pedagogic practice, Periodic Review, as well as in response to views of external examiners and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

City must ensure that any proposed changes to modules and programmes are academically sound, align to City's Vision and Strategy, meet City's Credit Framework, and can be appropriately resourced. Programme and module amendments must therefore be formally approved as outlined below.

### **Types of Amendment**

The approval process for amendments to both modules and programmes is dependent on the degree of change that is being proposed, and the potential impact on the structure of the programme, resourcing and the student learning process. The key factors in determining the type of change are consideration of the impact of the proposed change for:

- the structure and balance of the programme in relation to its educational aims
- the learning outcomes and content
- the wider practical implications for the student learning experience.

There are three types of amendments: editorial, minor and major. Examples of each are given as illustrations. Further guidance on the classification of amendments can be obtained from Student and Academic Services.

#### Editorial Amendment

Editorial changes are amendments that do not change the outcomes or nature of the module or programme.

Examples of editorial amendments include:

- Clarification of existing content, including variation to the content of individual lectures, seminars or discipline specific delivery methods that occur within a module, without diverging from the overall approved module specification.
- Updating factual information, for example changes to a School or Department name, or updating URLs.
- Updating of reading lists, which have been approved by the Library.

## Minor Amendments

Minor amendments are changes that have implications for how a module/programme is delivered and/or assessed, which do not amount to a major change.

Examples of minor amendments include:

- Change to a module title
- Changes to assessment within a module
- Minor variations in content
- Changes to pre- and co-requisites
- Approval of new modules
- Discontinuation/suspension of modules
- Changes to learning outcomes of a module
- Changes to the credit value or level of a module
- Changes to the weighting of modules/assessment within the overall degree
- Changing of modules from core to elective and vice versa

Where modules have been suspended, they will be automatically withdrawn if they have not been reinstated within 3 years.

## Major Amendments

Major amendments are those that change the learning outcomes, the nature of a large part of an entire programme, or a significant material change which would affect the marketization of the programme.

Examples of major amendments are:

- Change to the title of a programme of study
- Change to the educational purpose of a programme which results in substantial change to the programme aims, learning outcomes, teaching and learning and/or assessment strategy as set out in the Programme Specification, e.g. addition of a mode of study, curriculum redesign, increase or decrease in the total number of credits for the programme
- Substantive change to a number of modules which would impact on the overall programme learning outcomes.

Major amendments require institutional level approval. The nature of the approval process will be proportionate to the change being proposed. Dependent on the scale of the change, major amendments may need to be considered through the full Programme Approval Process. Further guidance on the scale of the proposed change, and the process for consideration and approval, should be sought from Student and Academic Services.

## **Consultation and communication with current students and applicants**

City has a legal responsibility to provide clear and accurate information to students and applicants on their programme of study, as well as any material changes. If a suggested amendment could have altered a student's decision to take up an offer on a programme, should they have known about it in advance, then the consent of all affected students on a programme will need to be obtained.

If proposed changes to modules and programmes affect published and/or material information, it is expected that the views of students on the programme are taken into consideration prior to the proposed change being formally considered, normally through Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs).

Areas which need careful consideration include:

- Entry requirements

- Core modules
- Core hours
- Assessment
- The range of elective modules offered
- Award name
- Length of course
- Professional accreditation
- Additional costs

Applicants and students must be informed of changes to material information at the earliest possible opportunity. Major changes to undergraduate programmes will normally be approved by the start of the UCAS application cycle. This is in order to avoid informing applicants of substantial changes to programmes at the time of making an offer, or after an offer has been made. Further details relating to student consultation are provided in the Programme Amendment Guidance.

Timely communication should also take place with current students for changes impacting the programme which fall outside the scope of this policy, e.g. changes to the core group of academic staff for a programme to maintain academic expertise due to a staff departure, sabbatical leave or reallocation of teaching responsibilities.

### **Timings for Approval**

The purpose of establishing deadlines is to ensure that timely and clear information can be made available to students and applicants to inform their academic choices. The deadline for changes to modules and programmes are detailed in the programme amendment guidance.

All amendments should be submitted to Student and Academic Services by the published deadline.

In the event of significant unforeseen circumstances, the Deputy President and Provost retains the discretion, advised by Student and Academic Services, to consider approval of minor changes to modules and programmes after the published deadline. In such circumstances, careful consideration will be given to appropriate consultation and/or communication with students, and where appropriate, applicants. Advice should be sought from Student and Academic Services in the first instance.

### **Amendment Approval**

City monitors and takes oversight of cumulative change within its programmes of study to ensure that the educational purpose and coherence remains appropriate. To enable this School Programme Approval and Review Committees should review annually all proposed amendments across a programme for the following academic year.

This ensures that City is meeting its regulatory expectation to have oversight of cumulative change on a programme, and for programme teams and PARC to view proposed changes to a programme or assessment strategy holistically, and consider the impact on the student experience. Information on shared modules can be found in the Guidance.

A record of programme amendments should be considered during the Annual Programme Evaluation. An overview of amendments made between each Periodic Review will be included as part of the Periodic Review documentation.

Where the volume of cumulative change for a programme constitutes a major amendment, a programme may be required to seek re-approval through the Programme Approval process. The Periodic Review process may also be used for this purpose if it is considered appropriate. Advice should be sought from Student and Academic Services where a PARC considers the volume of cumulative change to amount to a major amendment.

### Editorial amendments

Editorial amendments can be undertaken at any time and do not require formal approval. Changes to module specifications should be submitted to the PARC Secretary for checking and monitoring. Once authorised by the PARC Secretary these changes are then made with immediate effect.

### Minor amendments

Minor amendments require approval from the School PARC, which has delegated authority from the Board of Studies, after appropriate consultation with students.

PARC is responsible for consideration of proposed amendments at a level of detail reflecting the classification of proposed change. The Committee should assure itself that:

- there is a sound case for the proposed amendment
- students have been effectively consulted and, where appropriate, are favourable to the proposed amendment
- City's legal obligations with regard to the accurate and timely dissemination of information to students and potential students are not compromised by the amendment
- there remains a coherent and academic rationale for the content, structure, delivery and assessment of the provision
- any proposed changes to assessment continue to enable students to meet the learning outcomes
- the educational aims and learning outcomes remain appropriate
- the any additional resourcing required by the amendment has been agreed by the School

Where appropriate, Schools should seek input from the relevant Professional Services in advance of the submission of changes.

### Major amendments

A major amendment should first be approved by PARC, according to the above criteria for minor amendments. If satisfied, the proposed major amendment must then be agreed by the Deputy President and Provost, advised by Student and Academic Services or the University Programme Approval Committee (UPAC). Where a major amendment may involve a change of degree title, the strategic and market implications for City and the potential impact on student recruitment will be considered.

### **Following Approval**

PARC Secretaries are responsible for the timely forwarding of final versions of documentation to Student and Academic Services for final approval. Student and Academic Services will liaise with the relevant Professional Services to ensure that the module and/or programme information is updated and correct on internal systems.

Programme Directors are responsible overall for ensuring that students are provided with up to date information about their current programme, including their choice of options. In particular, Programme Directors are responsible for notifying all affected current students, in writing, at the earliest opportunity of any approved changes to their module(s)/programme(s) (including any new modules), and for ensuring that the programme handbook(s) and programme specification(s) are amended appropriately.

### **Monitoring**

Student and Academic Services will provide an annual report to Educational Quality Committee and Senate giving an overview of programme amendments.



**Programme Amendment Guidance as approved by Educational Quality Committee (for Senate Information)**

**Guidance for Programme Amendment**

**Scope**

*All taught programmes leading to an award of City, University of London*

**Date approved/re-approved**

**XX**

**To be read in conjunction with:**

*Quality Manual Section 3*

## Guidance for Programme Amendment

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### 2. Policy for Programme Amendments

The Programme Amendment Policy can be viewed online in the Quality Manual: [\[INSERT LINK\]](#). This guidance should be considered in conjunction with the policy.

### 3. Introduction

City operates a defined Programme Amendment process to ensure that there is robust oversight of changes to programmes. This is to ensure that quality and standards are being upheld and that the University is also fulfilling its obligation under UK consumer protection law to provide accurate information about its programmes, at the right time; both before and after an offer is made. This includes the full details of:

- All academic information: academic title, mode of delivery, location of study, composition of the programme (balance of lecture/seminar, contact/self-directed study), programme content for the likely duration of the course (including core modules, likely elective choices) and timing and frequency of assessments.
- What the programme will cost, including future likely fee increases and any “hidden” costs such as for equipment, field trips etc. Any costs that are likely to have a direct impact on academic success must be defined.

This information must be available at the start of the recruitment phase; up to 18 months before a student enrolls at City. When any of these details change, City, under its legal obligations, must ensure that these adjustments are communicated to all affected students and applicants.

City’s Programme Amendment Policy and this guidance reflect City’s obligations under consumer law. They are intended to guide staff in determining what type of amendment to a programme is being made, and what consultation with students and prospective students must be undertaken. Further guidance can be sought from Student and Academic Services.

#### 4. Process for Amendments

Within the Programme Amendments Policy there are three categories of amendments: Editorial, Minor and Major. These are classified dependent on the level of change being proposed, and whether the proposed change alters the learning outcomes, or the nature of a large part of the overall programme. The oversight for the approval for each of the categories is proportionate to the change.

To enable Programme Teams and the School PARC to take a holistic view of the proposed changes to a programme, all minor and major amendments for the programme for the following academic year must be reviewed annually by the School Programme Approval and Review Committee. This is so that the overall impact of changes to e.g. content, delivery and/or assessment strategies and the student experience can be considered, and facilitates the monitoring of cumulative change on a programme. For modules shared across programmes, the owning programme will submit the proposed change which should be approved by the other Programme Directors.

For programmes with PSRB accreditation please be mindful of any PSRB requirements when proposing amendments. Further advice should be sought from the School Quality Team.

<b>Editorial Amendments</b>	
<p>Editorial amendments are those that do not change the outcomes or nature of the module of programme.</p> <p><b>Examples include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification of existing content, including variation to the content of individual lectures, seminars that occur within a module, without diverging from the overall approved module specification.</li> <li>• Updating factual information, for example changes to the School or Department name, or updating URLs</li> <li>• Updating of reading lists, which have been approved by the library.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Approval:</b></p> <p>Editorial changes can be made at any time and do not require formal approval. Changes to module specifications should be submitted to the PARC Secretary for checking. Once authorised these changes are then made with immediate effect.</p>
<b>Minor Amendments</b>	
<p>Minor amendments are where proposed changes have implications for how the module/programme is run/assessed, which do not amount to a major change.</p> <p><b>Examples include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to a module title</li> <li>• Changes to assessment within a module</li> <li>• Minor variations in content</li> <li>• Changes to requisites</li> <li>• Approval of new modules</li> <li>• Discontinuation/suspension of modules</li> <li>• Changes to learning outcomes of a module</li> <li>• Changes to the weighting of modules/assessment within the overall degree</li> <li>• Changes of modules from core to elective and vice versa</li> </ul>	<p><b>Approval:</b></p> <p>The Programme Amendment Form should be submitted to PARC for approval. If approved this will be sent to Student and Academic Services for review for completeness and institutional reporting. Student and Academic Services will then liaise with the relevant professional services for the SITS record, website and other systems to be updated.</p>

<b>Major Amendments</b>	
<p>Major amendments are those that change the learning outcomes or nature of a large part of an entire programme.</p> <p><b>Examples include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to the title of a programme of study</li> <li>• Change to the educational purpose of a programme which results in substantial change to the programme aims, learning outcomes, teaching and learning and/or assessment strategy as set out in the Programme Specification e.g. addition of a mode of study, curriculum redesign, increase or decreases in the total number of credits for the programme.</li> <li>• Substantive change to a number of modules which would impact on the overall programme learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Any change that will fundamentally alter the outcomes of a programme, the way a student would experience a programme, or reasonably change the students' expectations of a programme. Such as systematic change of the assessment strategy which impacts on a number of modules across the programme. For example moving from predominantly coursework based assessment to examination.</li> <li>• Changes to entrance requirements (which require the oversight of ExCo).</li> <li>• The introduction of new entrance/exit points for the programme.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Approval:</b></p> <p>Major amendments should first be submitted and approved by PARC on the Programme Amendment Form. Major amendments will be agreed by the Deputy President and Provost, advised by Student and Academic Services or UPAC. Following approval, Student and Academic Services will liaise with the relevant professional services for the SITS record, website and other systems to be updated.</p> <p>Any amendments that Programme Teams consider could be Major Amendments must be discussed with their School Quality Team in the first instance.</p>

## 5. Timing of Programme Amendments

It is important that programme teams are able to make adjustments to programmes to ensure that content is up to date and to respond to student or External Examiner feedback. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance on how consumer law applies to higher education recognises that most changes are made to provision for the benefit of students. However, such changes need to be considered at an appropriate point to ensure that adjustments or innovation on a programme do not negatively impact on current students, or applicants, who intend to accept an offer from City.

The deadline for amendments to be received by Student and Academic Services is 30 April each year, for implementation from the following academic year. Schools should schedule PARC meetings sufficiently in advance of this deadline to ensure that there is time for any adjustments required by PARC to be made, and approved, prior to the amendments being submitted to Student and Academic Services by 30 April.

Amendments can only be agreed after this deadline with the approval of the Deputy President and Provost in the following exceptional circumstances:

- to respond to unavoidable permanent staff changes leading to a lack of appropriate expertise to deliver a module from the following academic year.
- other significant unforeseen circumstances.

In such cases the proposed amendment must first be considered by PARC, together with the rationale for why the amendment has been submitted after the deadline - the changes should be considered in conjunction with any amendments already approved. Following PARC approval, the form should be submitted to Student and Academic Services who will then liaise with the Deputy President and Provost to seek formal approval.

Where a late amendment is being proposed, careful consideration of the impact of the change(s) must be considered and consultation must be undertaken with all affected students, and applicants where appropriate, and evidence of this consultation included with the amendment submission.

## 6. Communicating with students

City has a legal responsibility to provide clear and accurate information to students and applicants on their programme of study, as well as any material changes which may occur before the commencement of, or during their studies. The Programme Approval Policy articulates that students should normally be consulted on changes through Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs). However, there are several changes types of change which would mean that a more formalised consultation is essential:

- change in course title
- replacement of a core module or significant changes to a core module
- replacement of, or changes to, one or more elective modules that are substantially different to those advertised.
- composition of the course: number and type of contact/self-directed study hours
- methods of assessment
- the award received for completion of the course
- location of study

Detailed guidance can be found below:

### (i) **Change in course title**

A change to a course title will affect the award that a student receives and is therefore a material change. If it is proposed to implement a course title change for current students, the affected students should be consulted in writing and their explicit agreement sought for the change. A template letter can be found in Appendix 1.

The proposed change should only be implemented where all students within the affected cohort agree to the change. Students within a cohort cannot elect which title they would prefer to receive. Current students should be informed in writing if the change is approved for implementation.

Where the application cycle has opened for future affected cohorts, offer-holders and applicants must be advised of the change to the course title as soon as it is approved and the website has been updated. A template letter can be found in Appendix 2.

### (ii) **Replacement of a core module with another module (core or elective) that is substantially different; substantial changes to content within core modules; making a module that was previously an elective a core module**

These types of changes to core modules could be considered to be a material change by a student. This is because core programme content is likely to have informed their choice to accept an offer to study on a programme.

Consultation with the student body must take place and students' views taken into account before these amendments are implemented. All affected students should be consulted individually in writing about the proposed change (see Appendix 1 template). It is not sufficient to seek the views of students via student representatives or through SSLC only. However, initial discussion with these groups may inform and support a formal proposal for change.

The change should only be implemented for current students where a significant majority of those who provide feedback during the consultation are in support of the change. Where the proposed amendment is implemented and some affected students are not supportive of the change, reasonable endeavours should be made to offer them a suitable choice, e.g. running the original modules in parallel with their replacements. Current students should be informed in writing of any changes that are approved following the consultation process.

The exception to the above is where the change is as a requirement of a professional, statutory, or regulatory body, and must be made to maintain a programme's accreditation status. In this case, affected students should be informed in writing of the change, and the reasons for it, at the earliest possible opportunity

Where the applications cycle has opened for future affected cohorts, offer-holders and applicants must be advised of the changes as soon as they are approved and the website has been updated using the template in Appendix 2.

**(iii) Replacement of, or changes to, one or more elective modules that are substantially different to what was advertised**

Replacement of elective modules should be considered in the context of the programme to determine whether the change is material.

This will be dependent on, for example, the number of electives being replaced at any given time, their relevance to the overall programme aims and learning outcomes, and the likely student demand for the modules being replaced.

Consultation with students should take place via the SSLC and the views expressed taken into account prior to the implementation of the changes.

Where the applications cycle has opened for future affected cohorts, offer-holders and applicants must be advised of the changes which impact on what has been advertised as soon as they are approved and the website has been updated using the template in Appendix 2.

**(iv) Composition of the course: number and type of contact/self-directed study hours**

Minor changes to the balance between contact/non-contact hours and the type of contact within modules would not normally be considered to be material.

Where it is proposed that the balance between the elements (contact/placement/self-directed study) changes by more than 10% for the programme overall for current students, or there is substantial change to the type of contact, consultation should take place via the SSLC and the views expressed taken into account prior to the implementation of the change.

Where the applications cycle has opened for future affected cohorts, offer-holders and applicants must be advised of changes which impact on what has been advertised as soon as they are approved and the website has been updated using the template letter in Appendix 2.

**(v) Methods of assessment**

Minor changes to the balance between the assessment types (e.g. coursework, exams, practical assessment) across the programme would not normally be considered to be material.

Where it is proposed that the balance between the elements changes by more than 10% for the programme overall for current students, consultation should take place via the SSLC and the views expressed taken into account prior to the implementation of the change.

Programme Teams should also consult with the academic for LEaD linked to their School regarding any proposed changes to assessment.

Where the applications cycle has opened for future affected cohorts, offer-holders and applicants must be advised of changes which impact on what has been advertised as soon as they are approved and the website has been updated using the template letter in Appendix 2.

**(vi) The award to be received on a successful completion of the course**

A change to an award (e.g. from PG Dip to MSc) for successful completion of a course should not be made for current students. Such a change would be considered to be a major change under the Programme Amendment policy due to it being a significant change to the outcomes of the programme and would require University level approval.

Where the applications cycle has opened for future affected cohorts, offer-holders and applicants must be advised of changes which impact on what has been advertised as soon as they are approved using the template letter in Appendix 3.

**(vii) Location of Study**

Delivery at a site away from the University is managed as a collaborative arrangement (off-site partnership delivery).

The establishment of a new delivery location is managed through the Partnership Approval process. The removal of an off-site delivery location is managed by the Agreement Termination Process. Both processes are supported by Student and Academic Services from whom advice should be sought.

Advice should be sought from Student and Academic Services if it is proposed that current students, or offer-holders and applicants, be required to move to a location which is different to that advertised when they applied.

## Appendix 1: Template letter for consulting with current students on programme changes.



[Address]

[Date]

Dear [student name]

### Consultation with students on changes to the [Programme title]

We review our provision each year and from time to time it is necessary for us to update or change aspects of programmes. Changes are made to enhance the overall offer by responding to: current trends in the sector or in research, the requirements of a professional body, feedback from students and other experts and to reflect the expertise of our staff. Our regulations set out the procedure that we will follow when we need to make such changes.

We are proposing to make the following amendments to your programme and are writing to you to seek your views on the proposed changes.

Feature to be amended	Reason for the change	Change from 20XX/XX
[Programme title, replacement of core module(s), replacement of electives, composition of the course, method of assessment, change of award, location of study]	[Add details for the reasons for the proposed change, e.g. in response to student feedback, professional body requirements]	[Add specific details of ALL the proposed changes and set out any implications clearly]
[Add more rows as appropriate]		

We believe that the changes we are proposing will enhance your programme but welcome your views to inform the final proposals. [Highlight any specific benefits and any feedback (e.g. from SSLC) that has informed the proposal to students here].

You may have some questions about the proposed changes before you provide feedback and we would encourage you to contact [contact name and contact details] to discuss them.

If you would like send us any feedback on the proposed changes including whether or not you support the proposals, please do so by writing to [contact name and contact details] by [deadline for response].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Role]

[Department]

City, University of London

## Appendix 2: Template letter to applicants and offer-holders regarding programme changes



[Address]

[Date]

Dear [applicant name]

### Confirmation of changes to an advertised programme of study

You have [Delete as appropriate: recently applied to/accepted an offer] study on the [Programme title] at City, University of London. We review our provision each year and from time to time it is necessary for us to update or change aspects of programmes. Changes are made to enhance the overall offer by responding to: current trends in the sector or in research, the requirements of a professional body, feedback from students and other experts and to reflect the expertise of our staff. Our regulations set out the procedure that we will follow when we need to make such changes.

We are writing to let you know that City has approved changes to [Programme title]. The changes will be implemented from [Date]. This means that the amendment(s) will be in place if you join the programme in [Date].

The change(s) that have been approved are set out below along with any implications that you need to be aware of.

Feature to be amended	Reason for the change	Change from 200XX/XX
[Programme title, replacement of core module(s), replacement of electives, composition of the course, method of assessment, change of award, location of study]	[Add details for the reasons for the change, e.g. in response to student feedback, professional body requirements]	[Add specific details of ALL the approved changes and set out any implications clearly]
[Add more rows as appropriate]		

The updated information for the programme can be found on our website [include URL for programme entry in online prospectus].

You may have some questions about the change to the programme and we would encourage you to contact us to discuss them. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact [Programme contact].

### [TEXT TO INCLUDE FOR APPLICANTS WHO HAVE ACCEPTED AN OFFER:

We believe that the changes set out above will result in an enhanced programme for students. However, we know that choosing the right course to study at university is a very

important decision. If you would like to withdraw your previous acceptance of our offer to study on the programme, please do so in the next 14 days by writing to [contact details.]

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Role]

[Department]

City, University of London