Programme Approval Policy

Scope:
All programmes leading to an award of City, University of London including Partnership Provision. (The equivalent for Validated Provision may be found in the Validation and Institutional Partnerships Handbook).

Senate Regulations:
Senate Regulation 15: Undergraduate Programmes
Senate Regulation 16: Graduate Programmes
Senate Regulation 17: Postgraduate Programmes
Senate Regulation 19: Assessment Regulations

Summary:
This policy outlines the process for the approval of all credited, educational provisions to ensure that the following are demonstrated: strategic fit, demand and financial viability, and high quality learning opportunities and student support to enable students to achieve robust academic standards.

Date approved/re-approved:
September 2022 & December 2023

Date for review:
To be reviewed by the end of 2028/29 academic year, with allowance for minor updates, as required.

Effective from: 2022/23

To be read in conjunction with:
Programme Approval Guidance

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.

Principles

City, University of London operates a process for the approval of all credited, educational provisions to ensure that the following are demonstrated:

- Strategic fit
- Demand and financial viability
- High quality learning opportunities and student support to enable students to achieve robust academic standards

The Vice President (Education) on behalf of EQC, advised by the City Programme Approval Committee (CPAC), is ultimately responsible for the approval of all provisions and has oversight of mechanisms for approval.

The approval process for new programmes is intended to provide rigorous scrutiny, whilst being supportive to the Project Team and helping to facilitate innovation. The core principles of the programme approval process are:

- supporting the development of high quality, coherent programmes with clear 'sensible' pathways for students
- providing appropriate challenge and depth of study for students with a broad range of learning opportunities
- aligning with the City Vision and Strategy, and with School Visions and Strategies
- providing a common process that is clear, efficient, and robust, but flexible and responsive to new market opportunities, and the development of new/innovative provision including flexible course delivery.
- being a peer review process, draws on the expertise of internal colleagues and external experts, including the professional services such as LEaD and QUAD.
- promoting constructive and challenging discussion of matters related to academic provision and the quality of the student learning experience.
- allowing for the enhancement of proposals drawing on internal and external innovation and good practice.
- having significant staff and student input and, where appropriate, employer input from the earliest stages of development.
- compatible, as far as possible, with the:
  - o Planning round
  - o PSRB accreditations
  - o Research Council requirements
- being evidence based, drawing on high quality proposals, well developed budgets, market research and employer and student feedback.

All programmes should conform to the City Curriculum model and align to City's [Quality framework](#) as set out in the Student Policies and Regulations. Proposals involving partner institutions must also be in line with the [City's Partnership Policy.](#)

Finally, the approval of all new award bearing courses by the City Programme Approval Committee (CPAC) is stipulated by the [Financial Regulations](#).

Process

The approval process is managed by QUAD on behalf of Academic Services, which will support Schools with academic development matters in relation to City, University of London's educational offer, and the internal and external quality framework.

The process is designed to be School centred, supporting and enabling Project Teams that include discipline specific knowledge and awareness of student needs to develop good quality proposals.

The process is also designed to ensure the appropriate involvement of relevant Professional Services including:

- *Strategy, Planning and Performance Unit (SPPU):* for marketing research and insight
- *Learning Enhancement and Development (LEaD):* for educational and curriculum development and technology enhanced learning
- *Quality and Academic Development (QUAD)*: to ensure policy and regulatory alignment, and in the development of collaborative provision with partners
- *Academic Operations*: for matters relating to the academic model and the SITS record system
- *Timetabling*: to ensure timetabling requirements are available
- *IT* Services: to ensure any specialist software of available
- *Library*: to ensure reading lists are supported
- *Finance: t*o ensure the programme is financially viable
- *Marketing:* to ensure the programme can attract students
- *Research and Enterprise*: for matters relating to broader research strategy
- *Careers:* to ensure employability is integral to the programme
- *Data Quality Team* consult on HECOS codes and cost codes

The process involves three main stages:

> **Stage 1 – Strategic Consideration and Resourcing by Schools:** to consider if a proposal is academically sound and strategically aligned, as well as financially viable; this will include evidence of a viable and sustainable market.

> **Stage 2 – Programme Development:** to support and facilitate development of new programmes including programme and module specifications. Project Teams should, in all instances, work with the relevant Professional Services.

> **Stage 3 - City Approval:** this is a formal consideration and sign-off of the detailed academic proposal including full programme specifications, regulations, and module descriptions.

Stage 1 – Strategic Consideration and Resourcing by Schools

The aims of the Stage 1 approval are to:

- establish that the proposed programme aligns with City's Vision and Strategy and School Plans.
- establish appropriate availability of resources to provide a high-quality academic experience.
- ensure market intelligence and information supporting the development of the new programme is robust and well evidenced
- establish financial viability alongside appropriate resourcing required for a high-quality student learning experience
- establish the proposed mode of delivery of the programme.
- agree the programme title, level, and outline structure.

Proposing Academics will write and submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) form for a new Programme proposal, along with the Market Insight report written by SPPU and a programme specification, to the School Programme Review Committee (SPRC) for scrutiny. SPRC is chaired by the Vice President Education and meetings are scheduled, serviced and programmed by School Quality Teams.

All new programme proposals should be accompanied by a course costing which will be prepared by the Assistant Director (Financial Performance). The guidance for preparation and approval of the course costing can be found here https://staffhub.city.ac.uk/finance/financial-performance-management/activity-costing This includes guidance for the actions required should the programme require any changes to the estate.

There should also be some discussion with timetabling, so they are aware of any specific requirements you have.

Approval and sign off by the Chair of SPRC (*Vice President Education*) and the School Dean is required before the proposed Programme can move into stage 2 (*Programme development*). If it is a joint School proposal, in addition both Dean's must sign off before the proposing Academic can continue the work.

For all joint school proposals, the documentation should be shared at every step between the two schools and sent to both the ADE's and Deans. Quad will share any documentation sent to them but those leading the programme development should ensure this is done.

Programmes can be advertised after Stage 1 approval is granted. Upon receipt of approval, marketing of the programme may commence. However, the following caveat must be included: "*This programme is currently under development and is subject to final approval. For further information, please contact the [name of School/Department]*", subject to any pre-marketing conditions being met and approved by the Chair of SPRC by the date agreed.

Stage 2 – Programme Development

The aims of Stage 2 Programme Development are:

- to design competitive programmes that align to City's ambitions for business, practice and the professions whilst maintaining alignment to external regulatory bodies
- ensure programme development is strategically and pedagogically led
- establish a collaborative environment across Schools encouraging cross-disciplinary programme design
- being evidence based, drawing on employer and student feedback
- actively engage students in the designing of new programmes promoting a high-quality, enriched education
- to design assessments more holistically, aligning to learning & teaching principles

The Project team's core responsibility is to design and develop all information pertaining to the new Programme. Membership of this team is made up of the following core members: -

Senior Academic (*designing programme)*
Representative of PARC who will lead the group (agreed by Chair of PARC)
LEaD academic team representative
School Head of Academic Services
Academic Staff designing core modules
Student Representatives
Other Associate Dean's as appropriate *(Student Experience and Employability*)
Representative from a department outside of the department designing the programme
Representative from another School *(where it is an interdisciplinary programme)*

Consultation and updates for the ADE should take place regularly before the submission of the programme documentation to the ADE for review and sign off.

These representatives are from Professional Services across City and will need to be involved as the programme is developed, including:

Library services   Finance
IT   Timetabling services
Research and Development *(where applicable)*   Marketing
QUAD   Careers

Once the programme is nearing completion the programme team should send the documentation out to the agreed external advisor so they can complete the form in time for submission to CPAC. Documentation should be sent to the external advisor three weeks in advance of the CPAC submission deadline. It is possible the external advisor may have been invited to one of two of the project teams meetings.

The finalised version of the new Programme documentation will be reviewed and signed off by the Associate Dean Education before being submitted to CPAC for Stage 3 approval.

A date for the programme information to be sent to CPAC should be agreed at the beginning of the programme development process.

Stage 3 – City Approval

The aims of the Stage 3 approval are to undertake a rigorous oversight of the academic detail of the proposed programme, in particular the:

- appropriateness of standards relating to the level and title of the proposed award, with reference to City's academic regulations and external regulatory requirements

- academic coherence of the programme including:

    o Curriculum design which enables the learning outcomes of the programme (including verification that the core modules enable all students on the programme to meet the set programme learning outcomes).

    o Appropriateness of assessment methodologies and strategy in accordance with the learning outcomes and discipline.

    o The role and nature of placement provision and student mobility opportunities on the programme (where appropriate)
- ensuring learning opportunities of the programme are inclusive and will enable students from diverse backgrounds to engage and achieve the learning outcomes.
- the relationship between current research in the field and proposed programme and modules.
- ensuring the robustness of the content of the programme specification for publication.

The Stage 3 proposal is submitted to CPAC for scrutiny and approval. The Project Team lead will be invited to attend the meeting to provide clarification and discuss the programme in detail.

A programme will be considered fully approved upon receipt of confirmation from the Vice President (Education), including the approval of the responses to any conditions and recommendations made by CPAC. It is at this point that any marketing caveats may be removed and offers may be granted to applicants.

QUAD will liaise with the relevant Professional Services to ensure the approved programme is appropriately recorded on the City's systems and full marketing and recruitment can commence.

Reporting

QUAD will provide an annual report to Educational Quality Committee and Senate on the outcomes of the programme approval process.

Policy Title	
Programme Approval Policy	
Policy Enabling Owner and Department	**Responsible for Implementation and Department**
Academic Services	Academic Services
Approving Body	**Date of Approval**
Senate	December 2023
Last Reviewed & Version	**Review Due Date**
V2.0	June 2028
Publication of Policy *(tick as appropriate)*	
For public access online (internet)? ☐	**For staff access only (intranet)?** ☒
Website Link:	**Intranet Link:** https://staffhub.city.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-and-guidance/quality-manual/programmes-at-city
Storage of Policy *(Previous versions of the policy must be stored in the drive by the author)*	
Drive Address: Z:\QUAD\Quality Manual\3. Programmes at City\Programme Approval	
Queries about this policy should be referred to	
QUAD@city.ac.uk	