Minor Modification Policy

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Documentation Management</u></p>

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Document Version	Amendments	Amended By	Date	Approved By
1	See Document Rollover 2017-18 Checklist Records	Head of Quality Assurance	July 2017	University Education Committee
1.1	LBIC process added	Head of Quality Assurance	November 2017	University Education Committee
1.2	Documentation Management table amended; guidance on block and programme level modifications added.	Head of Quality Assurance	July 2018	N/A
1.3	Additional guidance on modifications included.	Head of Quality Assurance	August 2018	N/A

Minor Modification Policy

1   Introduction

This Policy sets out the University's policies and processes relating to the modification of existing programmes, and study, modular and assessment blocks. The Policy is fully aligned with Chapter B1 of the QAA UK Quality Code: Programme design, development and approval, and is scheduled to be reviewed annually by the University Education Committee.

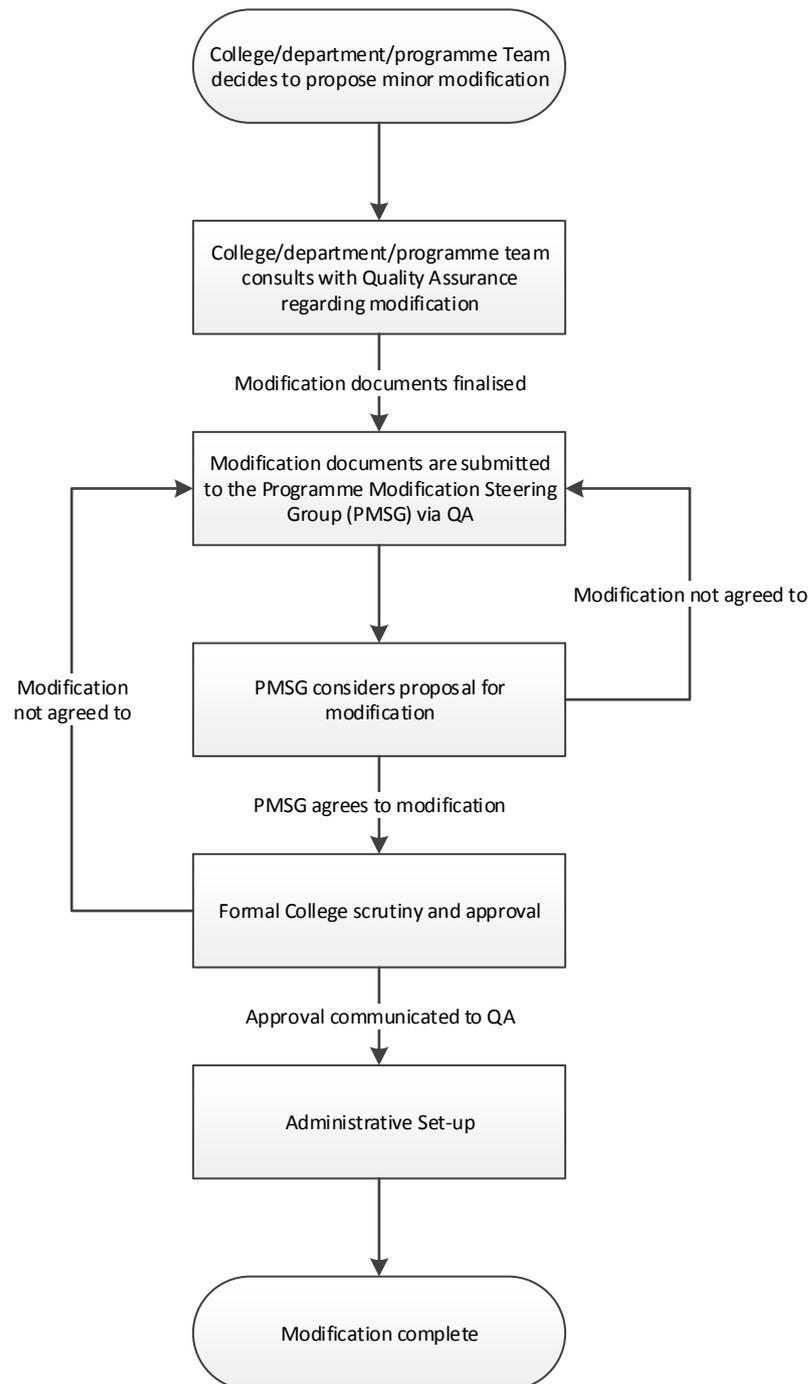This policy provides information/guidance on the:

- different Types of minor modification
- The process for modifying programmes or blocks
- The considerations when modifying programmes or block outlines

Please note that there may be deviation from the defined processes associated with minor modification. Confirmation of the process for each modification will be provided by Quality Assurance.

2   Principles of the Minor Modification Process

Each minor modification should have a sound pedagogical or academic standards related reason. Colleges should seek to modify their programmes or blocks in the interests of: the student academic experience; maintaining academic standards; the requirements of their professional, statutory or regulatory bodies; or developments in the relevant academic or professional field.

3 Minor Modification Process (overview)

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  College/department/programme   │
│  Team decides to propose minor  │
│         modification            │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  College/department/programme   │
│  team consults with Quality     │
│  Assurance regarding            │
│  modification                   │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
       Modification documents finalised
                │
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Modification documents are     │
│  submitted to the Programme     │
│  Modification Steering Group     │
│  (PMSG) via QA                  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │                      Modification not agreed to
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  PMSG considers proposal for    │
│         modification            │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
       PMSG agrees to modification
                │
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Formal College scrutiny and    │
│          approval               │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
       Approval communicated to QA
                │
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│      Administrative Set-up      │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│     Modification complete       │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```

Modification not agreed to

Key

QA = Quality Assurance

PMSG = Programme Modification Steering Group

Modification Documents = Minor Modification Request Form (available on the Quality Policies and Guidelines A-Z); modified programme specification and/or block outlines, with track changes (current versions available on the Programme Documentation Repository)

4   Types of Minor Modification Initiatives

Modification Type	Initial Scrutiny Body	College Scrutiny Bodies	Final Approval Body
Programme Level Modification e.g. amendments to: programme level learning outcomes; module diet; mode of study; entry points; progression or award rules.	Programme Modification Steering Group	BoS & DMB	DMB
Block Level Modification e.g. amendments to: main aims or learning outcomes; assessment; indicative content; teaching and learning strategy information; student learning hours.	Programme Modification Steering Group	BoS	BoS (DMB to note)

5   The Minor Modification Process

The minor modification process involves five distinct stages.

Stage 1 – Concept
The first stage in this process is the decision by a college/department/programme team that there should be a modification to a current programme specification or block outline. This could be the result of: student feedback; external examiner feedback; PSRB requirements; developments in the sector or academic discipline; changes in college/department strategy; college or University requirements. Once the details of the modification have been agreed in principle, the relevant member of staff within the College should contact Quality Assurance to begin the minor modification process.

Stage 2 – Initial Scrutiny
Initial scrutiny is undertaken by the Programme Modification Steering Group (PMSG). This group, composed of Quality Assurance staff and chaired by the Vice-Provost (Education), considers all minor modifications in the context of consumer law, specifically the guidance provided by the Competition and Markets Authority. PMSG may also consider the modification from an academic standards or student experience point of view.

Stage 3 – College Scrutiny
Formal Scrutiny at College level will vary depending on the type of modification. In all cases full scrutiny should not take place until PMSG has confirmed that there are no issues with the modification. Boards of Studies are required to scrutinise all modifications. Department Management Boards are only required to scrutinise programme level modifications. To undertake appropriate scrutiny, members of a

Board of Studies or Department Management Board should be provided with the minor modification form and the relevant modified block/programme documentation (with track changes).

Stage 4 – College Approval
Formal approval of a block-level modification is the responsibility of a Board of Studies whilst all programme level modifications require DMB approval. Formal approval should be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting and the decision communicated to Quality Assurance for implementation.

Stage 5 – Modification Implementation
Following approval of the minor modification, Quality Assurance will manage the implementation of the modification. This includes:

- Ensuring that the Timetabling and Awarding Group implements the amendments to SITS
- Uploading of amended programme specifications or block outlines to the Documentation Repository and Programme Specification Portal
- Informing marketing of any changes that need to be made

Quality Assurance will inform the College once the modification has been fully implemented.

6   Minor Modification General Guidance

Minor Block Modification
This refers to a modification to a block which has **no** impact on the programme specification in any way. Examples (not an exhaustive list) include:

- Change in block leader;
- Change in expression of block aims or learning outcomes (but see below – in many cases this will result in a change to the programme* specification);
- Change in contact hours;
- Change in block assessment (elements, duration or weighting) (but see below – in some cases this may affect the programme* specification);

The above changes can be approved at Board of Studies level and reported to Quality Assurance.

Please note that block outlines cannot be changed for the current instance of the block

Minor Programme Modification

This is a modification to a block or blocks which does have an impact on the programme specification(s), or a direct minor change to the programme* specification. Examples (not an exhaustive list) include:

- Change in block name or code;
- Change in block learning outcomes that impact on the programme* learning outcomes or Level learning outcomes;
- Minor change in programme* structure necessitated by minor block changes.
- Minor change in description of programme learning/teaching/assessment strategies and methods necessitated by minor block changes ('learning/teaching strategies and methods' and 'summative assessment strategies and methods' sections of the programme specification);
- Minor change in expression of programme aims;
- Minor change in expression of programme learning outcomes;

The changes above can be recommended at Board of Studies level, approved at Departmental Management Board and reported to Quality Assurance for publication and implementation on SITS. Approval cannot be confirmed to students until this stage.

Where, subsequent to its approval or re-approval, a programme has undergone a significant number of minor modifications, the relevant College Education Committee (CEC) or the University Education Committee (UEC) may require the programme* to undergo the major modification process. The accumulation of minor modifications to a programme will be monitored by Quality Assurance, which will make recommendations to the Chair of UEC.

Modification Documentation
The documentation requirement for a minor modification is as follows:

1. Minor Modification Request Form is available on the Quality Assurance [Web Page](.).
2. Current programme specification and/or block outline amended to reflect the modification, with track changes, available on the on the [Programme Documentation Repository.](.)

Communicating with Current Students and Applicants
In some instances, Departments may need to consult with current students, or inform applicants, regarding a minor modification. The requirement to do this, and the method by which communication or consultation should take place, will be confirmed by Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

Timescales
In year changes are not normally permitted and programme level changes must be approved by the relevant Department Management Board no later than 6 months prior to the intake of students affected. Block level changes must be approved by the relevant Board of Studies no later than 2 months prior to the intake of students

affected.

Record Keeping/Monitoring

Quality Assurance and Enhancement maintains records of all minor modifications and their progress. Modifications are not implemented until there is evidence of the appropriate level of scrutiny and approval by the relevant college and University bodies.

7   Minor Modification of LBIC Provision

The minor modification process for LBIC programmes or block outlines is outlined in Appendix A.

Suggestions for modifications will arise from a number of different arenas (but particularly from Annual Monitoring), and the Affiliate College Liaison Tutor should facilitate and take full part in discussions between appropriate Department/Division and Affiliate College staff in order to agree the modification proposal.

It is important for Departments/Divisions to note that any proposed amendment to a Brunel delivered module that has an LBIC equivalent must trigger a formal discussion with colleagues in LBIC regarding potential impacts upon LBIC-delivered provision.

In the modification process, the relevant Brunel College/Department will be responsible for:
- Ensuring that appropriate LBIC staff are notified of the meeting(s) where the proposal is to be considered,
- Progressing the proposal through the relevant BoS and/or DMB, and communicating the outcome to Quality Assurance.
- The Affiliate College Liaison Tutor in the Department/Division should take full part in the consideration of the proposed modifications by the BoS and/DMB.
- Once approval or otherwise is gained, Quality Assurance will, in addition to initiating the normal administrative processes (including updating of the Programme Documentation Repository and SITS records), notify LBIC of the approval outcome.

Where a modification is proposed to either an LBIC provided Level 1 module or to the equivalent Level 1 Brunel-provided module, or both, both module outlines in their proposed final versions should be considered together.

Where the proposed modification relates to purely generic modules or generic validated programme element specifications, the University Education Committee shall be responsible for approval, in consultation with relevant Departments/Divisions where appropriate.

Appendix A   LBIC Minor Modification Process (overview)

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        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
        │ College/department or LBIC    │
        │ decides to propose minor      │
        │ modification                  │
        └──────────────┬───────────────┘
                       │
        ┌──────────────▼───────────────┐
        │ LBIC Learning and Teaching    │
        │ Committee, AND Navitas QSO    │
        │ Sign-off                      │
        └──────────────┬───────────────┘
                       │ Modification documents finalised
                       │
        ┌──────────────▼───────────────┐
        │ Modification documents are    │◄─────┐
        │ submitted to the Programme    │      │
        │ Modification Steering Group   │      │
        │ (PMSG) via QA                 │      │ Modification
        └──────────────┬───────────────┘      │ not agreed to
                       │                        │
        ┌──────────────▼───────────────┐       │
        │ PMSG considers proposal for   │───────┘
        │ modification                  │
        └──────────────┬───────────────┘
                       │ PMSG agrees modification
                       │
              ◇ Generic module or VPES?  ──Yes──► Formal scrutiny by
                       │ No                        University Education
                       │                           Committee
        ┌──────────────▼───────────────┐
        │ Formal College scrutiny and   │
        │ approval                      │
        └──────────────┬───────────────┘
                       │ Approval communicated to QA
                       │
        ┌──────────────▼───────────────┐
        │ Administrative Set-up         │◄── Approval communicated to QA
        └──────────────┬───────────────┘
                       │
              ( Modification complete )
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(Modification not agreed to — return to "Modification documents are submitted to the Programme Modification Steering Group (PMSG) via QA")

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