

Programme Modification Policy

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1.0	New Policy replacing Minor Modification Policy and elements of the Programme Approval Policy ("Programme Additions").	Quality Assurance	May 2022	University Education Committee
1.1	Addition of variation to Senate Regulations and intermediate award modification requirements; enhanced guidance regarding consultation required for BPC modifications.	Head of Quality Assurance	June 2022	N/A
1.2	Section 7: Addition of award title change with modifications to programme structure and content as a modification category; additional guidance on liaison with Admissions or Marketing Departments	Head of Quality Assurance	November 2022	N/A
1.3	Amendments to SASP process	Senior Quality Officer	March 2023	Pro Vice Chancellor Education

Programme Modification Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the University's processes relating to the modification of existing programmes. Programme modification includes modification of programme specifications and any block outline.
- 1.2 Modification of programmes ranges from incremental changes to assessment, to significant modifications which impact on programme aims, learning outcomes or the assessment strategy.
- 1.3 This Policy adheres to the expectations set out in the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and also the [Advice and Guidance for Course Design and Development](#).
- 1.4 There may be deviation from the defined processes associated with programme modification as approved by Quality Assurance.

2 Principles of the Programme Modification Process

- 2.1 Colleges should seek to modify their programmes 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.
- 2.2 Modifications may also be undertaken to address operational or resource changes.
- 2.3 Typically, significant programme modification, as defined in Section 8 of this Policy, should be undertaken as part of Periodic Programme Review, so that the modification may draw on the self-reflection and scrutiny process associated with that procedure.

3 Request for Programme Modification

- 3.1 A request for programme modification must be submitted using the Programme Modification Request Form (available [here](#)) and according to the guidance contained within.
- 3.2 The formal modification of programme specifications and block outlines, and by extension information contained within SITS, will only be achieved through application of this Policy.

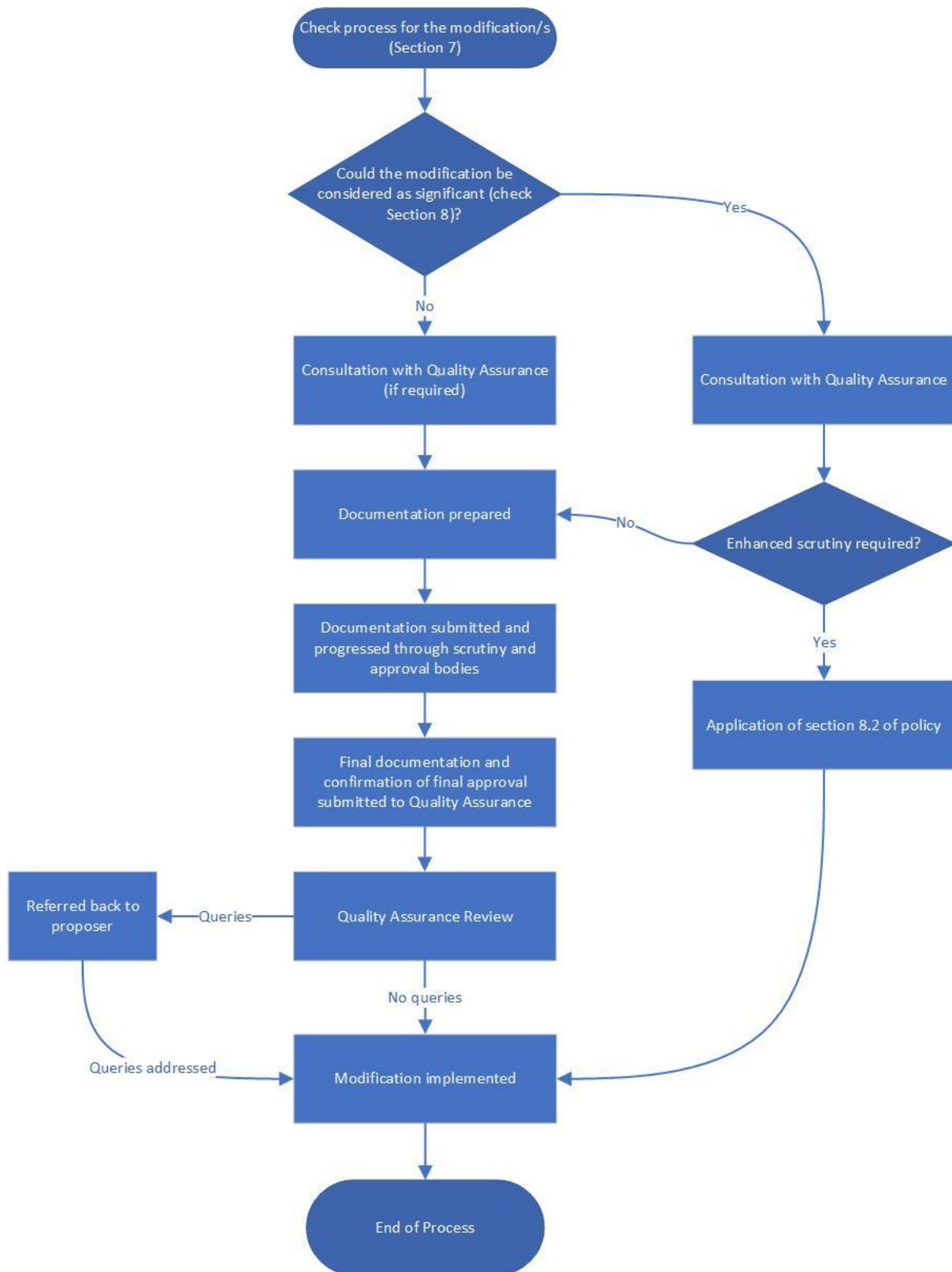
4 Modification Deadlines

- 4.1 Category 1 and 2 modifications (see Section 7) must be approved by the final scrutiny and approval body and submitted in final form to Quality Assurance no later than 2 months prior to the intake of students affected.
- 4.2 Category 3 to 9 modifications (see Section 7) must be approved by the final scrutiny approval body and submitted in final form to Quality Assurance no later than 6 months prior to the intake of students affected
- 4.3 Where required, modification requests will be referred to the relevant stakeholder for consideration and agreement.

5 Modification of Brunel University London Pathway College (BPC) Programmes

- 5.1 Modification of BPC programmes (VPES) and block outlines will be conducted as per see Section 7 of this Policy, and consideration and approval will be through the associated University Board of Studies and Department Management Boards, as required.
- 5.2 Where the proposed modification is to a generic BPC programme element or block, final scrutiny and approval will be conducted by the Chair of University Education Committee. In this instance, generic may refer to a BPC programme element which provides progression to multiple departments across multiple colleges, or a BPC block which is included in multiple programme elements.
- 5.3 Additional guidance on consultation expectations for BPC programme modifications is presented in paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4.

6 Programme Modification Process (overview)



7 **Modification Requests**

- 7.1 The following table provides details on the process and requirements for specific programme modification requests.
- 7.2 The role of a College Management Board in the programme modification process is to, where required, approve the develop of modifications with particular consideration of the strategic and /or resource implications of the proposed modification.
- 7.3 Where indicated in the table below, liaison with Admissions or Marketing is required as part of the Programme Modification process, and any comments should be recorded in the Programme Modification Form.
- 7.4 Where indicated in the table below, a programme modification must be communicated by the Department to applicants for a programme.
- 7.5 Where indicated in the table below, a programme modification that requires scrutiny by Strategic Approval Scrutiny Panel (SASP) must be provided by the Vice-Dean Education of the relevant College to quality-officers@brunel.ac.uk

Key: BoS = Board of Studies; DMB = Department Management Board; CMB = College Management Board; CEC = College Education Committee; SASP = Strategic Approval Scrutiny Panel.

Modification	Category	Documents to be provided	Scrutiny Bodies	Final Scrutiny and Approval Body	Liaison with Admissions or Marketing	Modification communicated to Applicants
Change to Block Leader or Additional Tutors	1	None - TPO to update information via eVision and inform Quality Assurance of the details.	N/A	N/A	No	No
Block hours	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programme Modification Form• Amended Block outline	BoS	BoS	No	No
Block HECoS code	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programme Modification Form• Amended Block outline• Where required, programme specification	BoS	BoS	No	No

Modification	Category	Documents to be provided	Scrutiny Bodies	Final Scrutiny and Approval Body	Liaison with Admissions or Marketing	Modification communicated to Applicants
Block prerequisites or corequisites	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Where required, programme specification 	BoS	BoS	No	No
Block main aims	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Where required, programme specification 	BoS	BoS	No	No
Block learning outcomes	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Where required, amended programme specification 	BoS	BoS	No	No
Block indicative content	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Where required, amended programme specification 	BoS	BoS	No	No
Block teaching and learning strategies and methods (not including changes to hours)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Where required, amended programme specification 	BoS	BoS	No	No

Modification	Category	Documents to be provided	Scrutiny Bodies	Final Scrutiny and Approval Body	Liaison with Admissions or Marketing	Modification communicated to Applicants
Block assessment (elements, duration or weighting)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Where required, amended programme specification 	BoS	BoS	No	No
Block title	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Amended Programme specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Block credit value	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Amended Programme specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Which programmes a block applies to	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Amended Programme specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	Yes
Programme structure - addition or removal of a block	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Amended Programme specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	Yes

Modification	Category	Documents to be provided	Scrutiny Bodies	Final Scrutiny and Approval Body	Liaison with Admissions or Marketing	Modification communicated to Applicants
Programme structure - Which blocks are compulsory or optional	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Amended Programme specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Block Code Change	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Block outline • Amended Programme specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Programme HECoS Code	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Programme educational aims	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Programme learning/teaching strategies and methods detail	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Programme summative assessment methods detail	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No

Modification	Category	Documents to be provided	Scrutiny Bodies	Final Scrutiny and Approval Body	Liaison with Admissions or Marketing	Modification communicated to Applicants
Programme level learning outcomes and/or mapping of learning outcomes	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Programme - which blocks or assessments are core or not core	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification • Amended Block Outlines 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Change to length of programme	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	Admissions	Yes
Amendments to information regarding sequencing of blocks	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	No
Programme progression or award rules (with no variation to Senate Regulations)	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	No	Yes – if relevant

Modification	Category	Documents to be provided	Scrutiny Bodies	Final Scrutiny and Approval Body	Liaison with Admissions or Marketing	Modification communicated to Applicants
Amendments to admission or entry requirement information contained within a programme specification.	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB	DMB	Admissions	Yes – if relevant
Addition of an existing BPC Foundation or Pre-Masters Validated Programme Element to an existing Brunel programme	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specifications (BUL and BPC) 	CMB – BoS – DMB – CEC	CEC	Admissions	No
New intake month	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	CMB – BoS – DMB – CEC	CEC	Admissions	No
Change to maximum period of registration	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB – CEC	Senate (via CEC report to Senate)	No	No
Variation to Senate Regulations	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB – Independent Scrutineers – CEC	Senate (via CEC report to Senate)	No	Yes – if relevant

Modification	Category	Documents to be provided	Scrutiny Bodies	Final Scrutiny and Approval Body	Liaison with Admissions or Marketing	Modification communicated to Applicants
Addition/removal of intermediate award	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	BoS – DMB – Independent Scrutineers – CEC	Senate (via CEC report to Senate)	No	No
Award title change	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	CMB – BoS – DMB – SASP – CEC	Senate (via CEC report to Senate)	Admissions Marketing	Yes
Award title change with modifications to programme structure and content	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	CMB – BoS – DMB – SASP – Independent Scrutineers – CEC	Senate (via CEC report to Senate)	Admissions Marketing	Yes
Addition of an existing BPC alternative level 4 to an existing Brunel Programme	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Mapping document • Amended Programme Specifications (BUL and BPC) 	CMB – BoS – DMB – Independent Scrutineers – CEC	CEC	No	No
New mode of study (part time or full time)	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form • Amended Programme Specification 	CMB – BoS – DMB – Independent Scrutineers – CEC	CEC	Admissions Marketing	No
New mode of delivery (online)	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Modification Form 	CMB – BoS – DMB – Independent	CEC	Admissions Marketing	No

Modification	Category	Documents to be provided	Scrutiny Bodies	Final Scrutiny and Approval Body	Liaison with Admissions or Marketing	Modification communicated to Applicants
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amended Programme Specification 	Scrutineers – CEC			
Introduction of a staged model to an existing programme	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Modification Form Amended Programme Specification 	CMB – BoS – DMB – Independent Scrutineers – CEC	CEC	Admissions Marketing	No
Award type change (e.g. MA to MSc)	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Modification Form Amended Programme Specification 	CMB – BoS – DMB – Independent Scrutineers – CEC	Senate (via the College Education Committee Report)	Admissions Marketing	Yes
Addition of a placement element (and by extension an award title change)	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Modification Form Amended Programme Specification 	CMB – BoS – DMB – Independent Scrutineers (PDC) – CEC	Senate (via the College Education Committee Report)	Admissions Marketing	Yes

Consultation regarding BPC Programme Modifications

- 7.6 As Validated Programme Elements of University awards, any modification to a BPC programme and/or its blocks require appropriate consultation with the associated Brunel Subject/Department. Consultation will be carried out by BPC, and the outcome, including the explicit record of approval, will be submitted to Quality Assurance alongside the final documentation set. Expectations regarding consultation are as follows:

Programme Modification	Consultation Requirements
Block	Approval by the associated Brunel discipline, through the Board of Studies
Validated Programme Element (VPES)	Approval by all associated Brunel disciplines directly impacted by the change, through the Board of Studies and then Department Management Board

- 7.4 At the commencement of each academic year, BPC should provide an overview of a VPES' newly implemented modifications to each programme/subject listed in section 7 of the specification.

8 Proposals for the Significant Modification of a Programme

- 8.1 Where a programme modification request is to result in one or more of the following, it will be considered significant:
- substantial reorganisation or restructuring of the programme, for example the move from modular blocks to study and assessment blocks (or vice-versa), or the reorganisation of block credit sizes;
 - significant change to programme aims or programme level learning outcomes;
 - fundamental and significant change to the programme's assessment strategy; or
 - changes to more than 25% of the programme's content, as represented by the number of credits affected. For example, for an undergraduate degree, a change that impacts on 90 credits would trigger enhanced scrutiny.
- 8.2 In this instance, approval by the relevant Deputy Dean Academic Affairs will be required in order for the programme modification to be accepted by Quality Assurance and progressed to the next stage.
- 8.3 Where Quality Assurance receives a request for significant programme modification, and the approval of a Deputy Dean Academic Affairs is not provided, the request will be referred to the relevant Deputy Dean Academic Affairs.
- 8.4 Where the proposal for a significant programme modification is accepted, Quality Assurance will agree with the relevant Associate Dean (Quality Assurance) on the level of "enhanced scrutiny" required. This may include:
- the scheduling of the modification as part of an upcoming Periodic Programme Review;
 - application of the University's procedure for the approval of Programme Variations (see Programme Approval Policy) which includes the convening of a Panel to consider the programme/s; or
 - review of the modification request by one or more internal staff, and one external academic, typically the programme's external examiner. In this instance the programme team will need to provide the programme modification form and the amended documentation. Approval by the reviews will be communicated to the College Education Committee which will have formal responsibility for final scrutiny and approval. Appointment of reviewers will be managed by Quality Assurance.

9 Multiple Instances of Programme Modification

- 9.1 Category 4 to 8 modifications may be undertaken on three separate occasions between approval events¹ before triggering the requirement for the programme/s in question to undergo a formal review. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the programme aims and learning outcomes continue to be appropriate and are achievable through the associated block outlines.
- 9.2 Where a review is required, the University will apply the procedure used for the approval of Programme Variations (see Programme Approval Policy) which includes the convening of a Panel to consider the programme/s.

10 Support from Quality Assurance

- 10.1 Approval by Quality Assurance prior to the formal scrutiny and approval of a programme modification by a Board of Studies and/or Department Management Board is not required.
- 10.2 Quality Assurance Managers should be contacted in the development stage of a programme modification proposal if there are any queries about the process or for clarification of the type of modification (for example, whether it is purely a block level change or if there is an impact at programme level).
- 10.3 Where the proposed modification is significant (see Section 8) or is considered complex, Quality Assurance must be consulted at the earliest stage.
- 10.4 Quality Assurance may provide feedback on modifications at any stage of the process, including at meetings of Boards of Studies or following final submission, and may highlight issues in relation to:
- incomplete proposals, which may require re-submission of, or additions to, documentation submitted;
 - the need for further clarification of the proposal/associated documentation;
 - the need for further discussion as to whether block or programme level learning outcomes can be met by an assessment change/new module/removal of a module;
 - the need for the college to discuss the modification with Timetabling, Awarding or SDM regarding timing of implementation;
 - mapping of programme level learning outcomes;
 - implications for existing cohorts;

¹ Approval events are defined as initial approval, periodic programme review, or an instance of enhanced scrutiny as defined in this Policy.

- CMA requirements (such as the need to consult student cohorts affected by the change);
 - the impact of the modification of on other associated programmes;
 - whether the modifications proposed constitute the need for enhanced scrutiny (see section 8).
- 10.5 Queries raised by Quality Assurance regarding a proposed programme modification request will need to be addressed before the modification can be implemented.
- 10.6 Where required, Quality Assurance will require confirmation from Timetabling, Awarding or SDM regarding the agreed implementation date for a proposed modification before formally processing it.

11 The Programme Modification Process

- 11.1 The programme modification process involves five distinct stages.

Stage 1 – Concept

- 11.2 The first stage in this process is the decision by a college, department, or programme team that there should be a programme modification. 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; or other college or University requirements.

Stage 2 – Consultation with Quality Assurance

- 11.3 Quality Assurance may be consulted with to clarify the process for a programme modification. Where the proposed modification is significant (see Section 8) or is considered complex, Quality Assurance must be consulted at the earliest stage to determine if enhanced scrutiny is required. Where the latter is not required, the following stages will occur.

Stage 3 – College Scrutiny and Approval

- 11.4 Once the details of the modification have been agreed in principle by the relevant stakeholders, the relevant member of staff within the college should proceed with seeking approval by the relevant college body (see Section 7).
- 11.5 Formal Scrutiny within a College will vary depending on the type of modification (see Section 7). To undertake appropriate scrutiny, the relevant body must be provided with the programme modification form and the relevant modified block/programme documentation (with track changes). Formal approval should be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting.

- 11.6 Where approval by a College Management Board is required at the beginning of the modification process, the CMB may define what information should be provided at that stage.

Stage 4 – Modification Implementation

- 11.7 Following approval of the programme modification, the finalised programme modification form and associated documents must be submitted to Quality Assurance for implementation. This involves:
- communicating the details of the modification to the Timetabling and Awarding Group; and SITS Data Management Team as required;
 - uploading of amended programme specifications or block outlines to the Documentation Repository and Programme Specification Portal;
 - informing Marketing of changes where appropriate.

12 Programme Modification General Guidance

Information to Support Category 5 to 9 Modifications

- 12.1 Where a category 5 to 9 modification is being proposed, the Explanation and Rationale section of the Programme Modification form should be sufficiently detailed to enable effective scrutiny. Information which may be required, depending on the modification being proposed could include:
- marketing information;
 - detailed delivery plans including;
 - Reference to external discipline of quality benchmarks
 - Reference to accrediting body requirements;
 - Student outcomes and student feedback data;
 - consultation with appropriate University services/experts where appropriate (e.g. Digital Education Team; Professional Development Centre etc).

Assessing the Impact of a Proposed Programme Modification on Specific Student Groups

- 12.2 All programme modification requests must include consideration of the potential equality impact on students who have protected characteristics or priority areas such as age, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion/belief, pregnancy/maternity, students with caring responsibilities and those from more deprived social economic backgrounds. This assessment is undertaken through completing the Programme Modification Request Form. For support in conducting this assessment, please contact the University's Student Equality and Diversity Manager, Henrietta Spalding.

Communicating with Current Students and Applicants

- 12.3 In some instances, Departments may need to consult with current students, or inform applicants, regarding a programme modification. The requirement to do this, and the method by which communication or consultation should take place, will be advised by Quality Assurance. Departments are responsible for communicating modifications to current students and applicants.

Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) Coding

- 12.4 All programme documentation submitted as part of a programme modification request must include HECoS codes where relevant. For guidance on HECoS codes, please see the [Programme Approval Policy](#).