

Academic Policy and Procedures

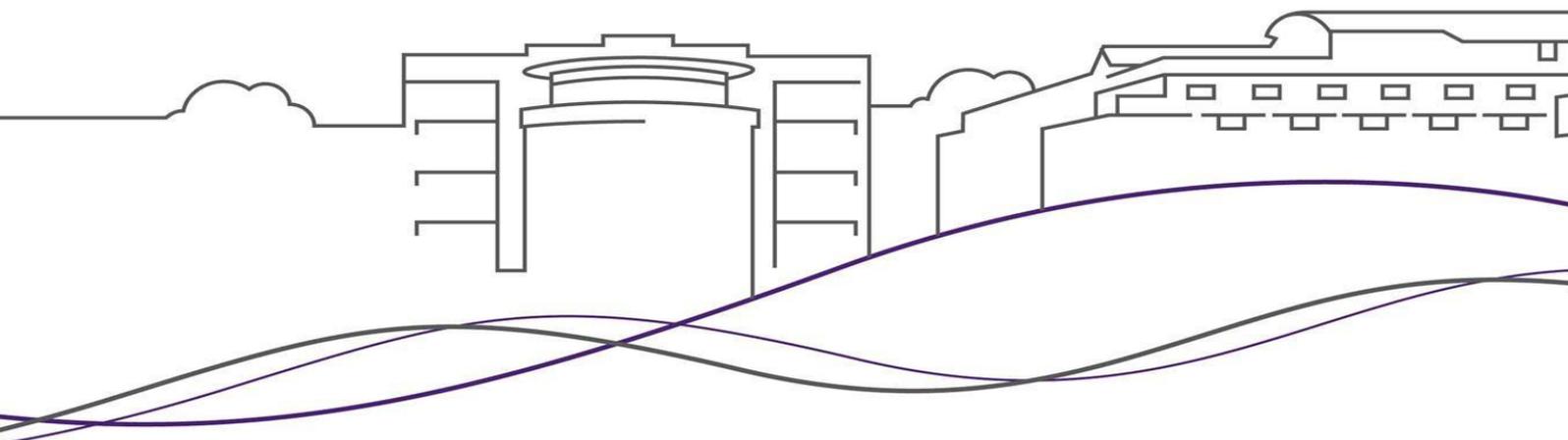


**UNIVERSITY
CENTRE**
SOUTH DEVON



HIGHER EDUCATION

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCEDURE (HEFAPP1)



Curriculum Development and Approval Procedure

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1 Contributing Stakeholders

The development of all South Devon College programmes involves contributions from several different stakeholders; in addition to the programme team and the HE Faculty there is involvement and support from other parties; their roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

EXTERNAL INVOLVEMENT

The approval of any programme by South Devon College is dependent upon contributions of individuals not directly involved with the programme; this contribution helps both set and maintain academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The College also considers that the programme approval process must include the involvement of individuals external to the College to offer independence and objectivity to the decisions taken.

a) External Academic Advisors

An external advisors role is primarily to provide the programme team with scrutiny in the (re)validation of a programme at stage two. This would generally be provided around the areas of (although is not limited to) a programme's alignment to subject and educational sector expectations such as QAA Quality Code, alignment to the higher education quality thresholds and frameworks such as the FHEQ.

The award is for a programme the external advisor(s) will sit as a member of the panel at Stage two only.

It should be noted that Stage one is very much a developmental process whereas at Stage two, the panel, including the external advisor(s), is in place to determine the validity and to approve, reject or set recommendations and conditions for the validation.

External Advisors will be appointed using the criteria provided by the QAA Quality Code, B7: External Examining - Indicator 5 which provides criteria for the appointment of External Examiners.

b) Student Participation

Students, both past and current, influence the development of programmes at South Devon College in numerous ways. Students are included on boards, committees and panels at all levels of the institution providing valuable input into the development and review of all curriculum development across the College.

Student representatives are included in the Stage two Validation Panel where it is anticipated that they will contribute to discussions around, but not limited to, programme structure, marketing and relevance to career aspirations

The Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) process provides Programme Leaders with the opportunity to reflect on the quality of a programme. One quality measure is the student's experience; all students complete module reviews at the end of a semester; these provide informative data in both qualitative and quantitative formats that inform the improvements of programmes.

c) External Industry Advisor

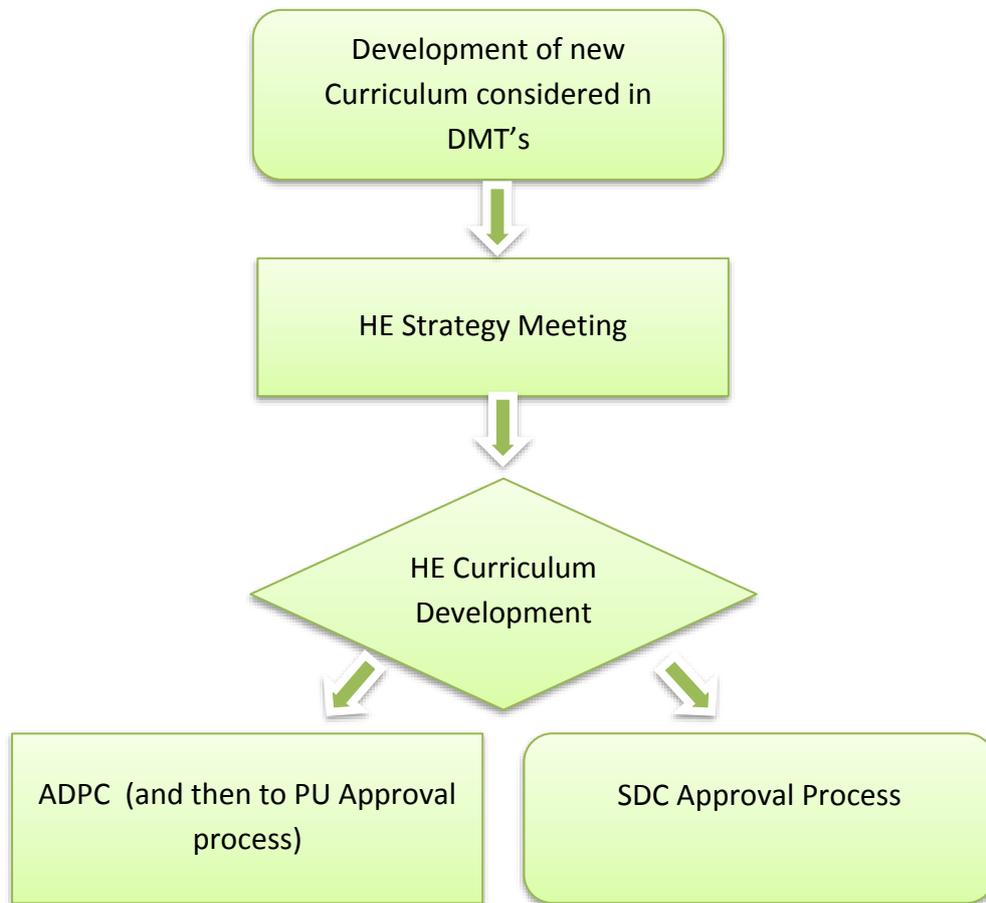
The role of employers in the (re)development of programmes is to inform on matters relating to industry such as: technical requirements, graduate skills gaps, local, national and where appropriate international demand. Employers are involved in the Stage two Panel, where they provide support for the programme team and substantiate the significance and relevance to the requirements of industry.

2 Validation

Before starting the formal stages of the process and prior to the production of an initial Approval Document, the author must initiate informal discussions with their Departmental Team and the HE Faculty to determine if the conditions for developing the new programme are favourable.

PRELIMINARY PHASE

The development of new programmes typically starts in Department Management Team (DMT's). Initial ideas are then discussed at HE Strategy Group. From here, full proposals (submitted on the standard planning form - New Programme Proposal Template) proceed to the HE Curriculum Development Group (SMT) for a formal consideration. If successful here, the proposal then enters either the formal SDC Approval process or to approval process for a Partner HEI.



The decision to proceed is made on the basis that the proposal:

- is in keeping with College curriculum strategy, goals and mission;
- is compatible with strategic academic and resource plans;
- has taken due account of existing College provision;
- represents an academically valid body of knowledge;
- has sufficient evidence of demand to suggest that the programme would recruit and sustain adequate student numbers;
- can be expected to operate economically;
- has a reasonable expectation of having sufficient resources - at an institutional and programme level - to be delivered effectively;
- has identified critical resource requirements that are not covered by the normal business planning process have been identified, and that there is a reasonable expectation that these resources will be made available should the programme be validated.

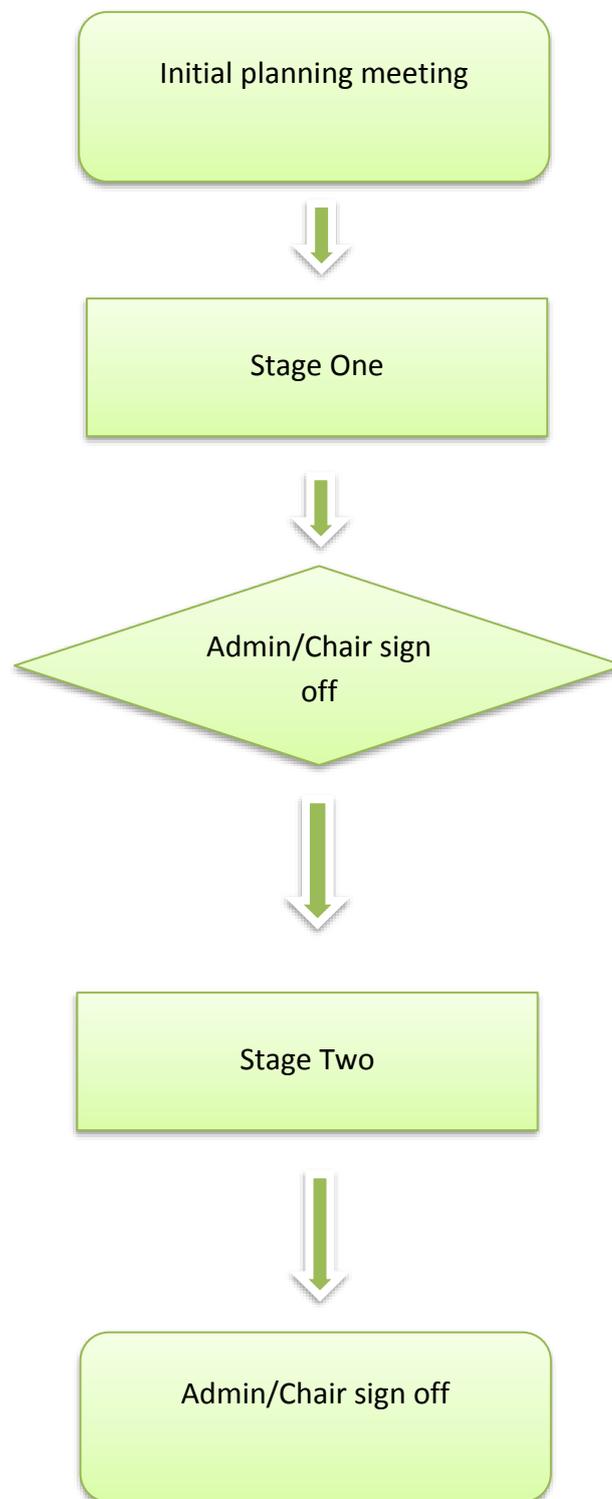
HNC and other Pearson Provision

Programmes being considered by SDC which are awarded by Pearson, will follow this procedure in all cases. However they are not required to have a stage 1 meeting, and no academic advisor is required for the stage two meeting.

INITIAL PLANNING FOR THE FORMAL APPROVAL PROCESS

The programme approval process will involve three stages:

- Initial planning meeting
- Stage One Approval event
- Stage Two Approval event



The preliminary **Initial Planning meeting** sets the administrative parameters for the approval process, including the schedule of the Stage one and Stage two meetings, membership of each of the panel meetings, and the requirements for external and student representation. Responsibility and deadlines for the production of final approval documents are also allocated. Programme approval will involve appropriate academic staff, external advisers, cognate subject representatives, relevant HE Faculty representatives and a representative from the student body.

STAGE ONE APPROVAL PANEL

Dates for the Stage One approval event will be timetabled at the Initial Planning meeting. For each programme or cluster of related programmes proposed a Stage One approval event will be organised by the HE Faculty. The Stage One meeting will be chaired by a HE Manager/Academic Registrar. The panel will include the Section Heads from the relevant and a Section Head from a non-related curriculum area. At the Stage One approval event the Panel will meet with the Programme Team to consider the programme approval documentation as set out in Section 6 of this document. This meeting will also confirm that external advisors (academic and professional/industrial) nominations have been put forward by the Programme Team to the HE Manager for approval by the College. If nominations have not been received it will be a condition of progression to Stage Two that they must be received by a date set by the chair of this meeting. In any case, all nominations should be approved at least 3 months prior to the Stage Two approval event. Submission of late nominations could result in the approval being postponed.

One of the following outcomes will be agreed at the Stage One approval event:

- Proceed
- Proceed with amendments
- Not proceed

The outcome will then be communicated to the Programme Team by the HE Faculty.

- Formal minutes of the Stage One Approval Event must be submitted within two weeks of the meeting
- Following the Stage One meeting the approval documentation, amended where required, must be signed off the HE Manager/Academic Registrar **at least three weeks** before the scheduled Stage Two approval event. Failure to produce documentation by the deadline could result in the approval event being postponed.

STAGE ONE APPROVAL PANEL MEMBERS

- Higher Education Manager & Academic Registrar (Chair)
- Secretary
- Section Head (of Curriculum or proxy)
- Section Head or HE Programme Co-ordinator (non-related curriculum area)
- Research and Scholarly Activity Coordinator
- Higher Education Employability and Enterprise Co-ordinator
- Higher Education Academic, Resource and Employability Officer

In attendance

- Programme Team in attendance

STAGE TWO APPROVAL PANEL

- The Stage two approval event will be organised by the HE Faculty office.
- The Chair of the approval panel will be the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Performance and Quality). The membership of the Panel will include: HE Manager/Academic Registrar, two external advisors (Academic and Industry/Professional), the Secretary (Senior Quality Coordinator), the Section Head (or proxy) or the curriculum area where the proposal sits, a Section Head or HE Lead from a non-related curriculum area, the HE Employability and Enterprise Co-ordinator, the HE Academic, Resource and Employability Officer, the Assistant Principal for the relevant area, a member of the student body, and the relevant programme team.
- A report will be produced following the Stage two event by the HE Faculty Officer; where approval has been given the report will confirm that academic standards have been met and provide the deadline for receipt of the external examiner nomination and the revised documentation to be forwarded to HE Faculty Office. Once confirmed as final an electronic copy of the final documentation will be sent to the Programme Team. Confirmation must be sought from and provided by the Chair of the Approval meeting when all conditions of approval have been met.
- The criteria for approval will be:
 - The proposal complies with South Devon College Academic Regulations;
 - The proposal reflects South Devon College strategies and all relevant policies;

- The aims of the award are appropriate and reflect the FHEQ;
- The programme learning outcomes are appropriate to aims of the award the award and in keeping with the QAA Quality Code and QAA guidance for the award and subject area;
- The module structure, curriculum content and module learning outcomes will ensure that students completing the programme will have met the programme learning outcomes;
- The assessment process proposed is appropriately inclusive and rigorous, and allows students to demonstrate the achievement indicated in the learning outcomes;
- The assessment methods are appropriate to the award and target student group;
- The assessment criteria allow different levels of achievement to be clearly distinguished;
- The staff contributing to the delivery of the award are sufficient in number and suitably qualified;
- Any specific resources required to support the programme have been identified and will be provided;
- The requirements of disability legislation and institutional disability policy have been considered and complied with;
- Due consideration has been given to the equality impact of assessment and how the reasonable needs of disabled students can be accommodated
- In cases of revalidation, that the previous period of validation has been evaluated in a forensic manner, and that the proposal responds to identified issues.

The Stage two panel may recommend one of the following criteria:

- (i) The programme is approved without amendment
- (ii) The programme is approved subject to specific conditions including the dates by which they should be satisfied
- (iii) The programme is approved under either (i) or (ii) above, with a recommendation that the programme team consider certain matters on which they would report back to the meeting
- (iv) Reject the programme with advice to the programme team as to the reasons for doing so.

STAGE TWO APPROVAL PANEL MEMBERS

- VP Curriculum, Performance & Quality (Chair)
- Higher Education Manager & Academic Registrar
- Externals (Industry & Academic)

- Secretary (Senior Quality Coordinator)
- Section Head (of Curriculum or proxy)
- Section Head or HE Lead (non-related curriculum area)
- AP (of Curriculum area)
- Student Panel Member

In attendance

Programme Team in attendance

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS

Recommendations will not prevent a validation from either progressing or from being approved. If however a panel has made a recommendation(s) to the development team that is not implemented the team must provide a rationale for their decision.

Conditions are defined as either:

- Academic- these must normally be addressed satisfactorily before the proposal can be approved and students enrolled
- Documentary - these would not normally preclude approval and delivery of the proposal and the deadline set for them would usually reflect this position. There are also specific administrative requirements to be met subsequent to the event.

FINDING APPROPRIATE EXTERNAL ADVISORS

Programme Teams must identify nominations for appropriate Industry/Professional and External Academic advisors using:

- Members of Industry Liaison Panels for relevant degree cluster
- Employer forums, regional and local business organisations
- Contacts from other institutions with similar programmes
- Contacts from curriculum areas within the College (providing the nominee is not disqualified from nomination because of previous contact with the College)
- UCAS website to identify other institutions offering similar programmes who may provide academic advisors
- Other colleges in the region offering similar programmes

All external adviser nominations should be approved at least 3 months prior to the Stage Two approval event. The College's Industry and Academic Advisor Nomination forms should be used for this.

PROGRAMME DOCUMENTATION FOR APPROVAL

The documentation for programme approval will comprise:

1 *Approval Document* produced on the College template including, inter alia:

- History and context of programme
- Key drivers for programme design
- Relevant external and internal regulations/policies/procedures
- Programme delivery (including Equality & Diversity)
- Work-based learning, preparation for employment and personal development
- Currency, scholarship and resourcing to support the programme.
- Staff Curriculum Vitae

2 *Programme Specification* for each award produced on the College template and including, inter alia:

- Programme Details
- Brief Description of the programme
- Details of Accreditation by a Professional/Statutory Body (if appropriate)
- Exceptions to South Devon College Regulations
- Programme Aims
- Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)
- Distinctive Features
- Student Numbers
- Progression routes
- Admissions Criteria
- Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement
- Programme Structure
- Explanation and Mapping of Learning Outcomes, Teaching & Learning and Assessment

3 *Module Records* - which contain further details to support the Programme Specification. These align with recommendations within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

4 *Operational Specification* document - this document is important at the point of approval as it aids to assure that appropriate operational activities, to deliver and further enhance the standards and quality defined within the Programme Specification, are planned for.

There is guidance for the completion of these documents in Approval Document Guidance.

FURTHER DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

Subsequent to Stage two, a review of both the programme handbook and the work placement handbook (if applicable) is undertaken by the programme team. The review as these documents rely on the contextualisation of standard College templates the nature and content of the documents will therefore not alter dramatically.

3 Minor and Major Changes

Any changes to modules and programmes are in normal consequence of the Annual Programme Monitoring and comments from all stakeholders.

The minor and major change features are distinct:

Minor Change

A Minor change is defined as a minor change to the subject matter, method of delivery, teaching learning or assessment strategy of an existing validated module or programme of study, that does not affect the programme Learning Outcomes and has no significant resource implications. This may include:

- Minor changes in assessment strategies and weightings for modules; e.g. 100% exam to 50% exam: 50% coursework
- The introduction of a new optional module (i.e. not part of the core modules) of up to 20 credits in size
- The introduction of a new delivery mode for a single module of to 20 credits in size; e.g. Move from face-to-face to distance learning. NB: the introduction of a new delivery mode greater than 20 credits is classed as a Major Amendment
- A change to the title of an individual module

Note:

- A change to the title of a degree programme or award is classed as a Major change
- A change should not be considered in isolation; if a combination of other previous Minor changes impacts greatly on the original philosophy of a programme, a Major change or Revalidation must be considered.
- Significantly changing the Programme Learning Outcomes. A major change can at its maximum change up to one quarter of the credit value of the award.

Major Change

A Major change is defined as a major change to the subject matter, method of delivery, teaching learning or assessment strategy of existing validated modules or programme of study. Changes can affect the programme Learning Outcomes to less than one quarter of the credit value of the award and may have resource implications. This may include:

- Changes to the programme structure
- Development of a new pathway
- Change or introduction of a new delivery mode for a programme
- Change to the title of a programme

Within the category of Major change, there are different levels of change and the amount of information required shall depend on this, i.e. change of title would require a rationale but no details or programme structure if it is the same.

Note: a change should not be considered in isolation; if a combination of other previous Major changes impacts greatly on the original philosophy of a programme, a revalidation must be considered.

MINOR CHANGE PROCEDURE

A Minor Change Form should be completed with guidance from the HE Faculty Office. Any change must have the approval of the External Examiner. The proposed change must be cross referenced to the Annual Programme Monitoring or Programme Committee Meeting.

The Minor change will be presented by the Programme Leader. A virtual Committee (which can be virtual) which is chaired HEMAR along with two members agreed by HE Curriculum Development Group. The committee will assure itself that the proposed amendment is appropriate, timely, not changing the Programme Learning Outcomes and has the support of the External Examiner.

The Committee will evaluate the impact of the change on the students' experience and where appropriate will assure itself that the students most likely to be affected have been consulted.

Approval may be given subject to conditions and/or recommendations which once met will allow the application to be reported to the CHEBOS for information.

MAJOR CHANGE PROCEDURE

The Major Change form should be completed with guidance from the HE Faculty Office and requires proof of consultation with the External Examiner regarding the proposed changes.

The Major Change is presented by the Programme Leader to CHEBOS. The Programme Leader will attend the meeting to defend the proposed change. The committee will assure itself that the proposed change is appropriate, timely, cross referenced does not change the programme learning outcomes and has the support of the External Examiner. Once the Committee has approved the change in principle, a date will be agreed for Part Two: Major Amendment Validation.

Part Two requires the amendment of the main validation document and programme specification to include the approved changes. It is vital that the document presents a well-formed programme which clearly integrates the all the approved changes.

The CHEBOS will establish a suitable panel of experienced HE Staff and the HEMAR.

The panel will assure itself that the major amendment:

- Does not invalidate the programme title
- Does not create an imbalance in the assessment loads
- Does not negatively impact on staff workloads
- Is designed to enhance quality and student experience and does not compromise academic standards

The proposed major amendment must be consistent with any specific conditions from the validation panel and/or accrediting body. The minutes of the validation meeting including the panel decision will be reported CHEBOS.

REVISION HISTORY			
Ver	Date	Author	Description
1.0	May 17	A Wilson	Conception
2.0	4 th May 2018	A Wilson	Additional of Pearson process

APPROVAL			
Ver	Committee	Date Approved	Comments
1.0	CHEBOS	19 th May 2017	Approved
2.0	CHEBOS	24 th May 2018	Approved