University of Greater Manchester

Quality Transformation Unit

PROGRAMME APPROVAL

Issued by the Quality Transformation Unit

Technical updates of this document take place on an annual basis to reflect changes to the University of Greater Manchester's organisational and management structure and to incorporate earlier, approved amendments.

Helpful Contacts & Resources

Support Area	Contact or Link
Design Sprint Methodology	Louise Ashby
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Documentation	https://greatermanchester.ac.uk/staff-area/professional-services/quality-transformation-unit/programme-design-and-approval

1. Introduction

Proposals for the development of new academic programmes of study are required to gain Strategic Approval **before** design and development begins.

Strategic Approval involves the University's Executive granting permission for the development of any new proposal. To apply for strategic approval, an **Academic Development Strategic Proposal form (ADSP)** should be completed, and in the case of apprenticeships, an **Apprenticeship Scoping Form (ASF)** should also be completed and approved by the Apprenticeships Management Team beforehand.

Programme Approval is the formal process by which Senate via the Chair of Education Committee gives permission that a programme may be offered for study. The Quality Transformation Unit (QTU) manages the Programme Approval process and reports the outcomes for ratification. The normal period of programme approval is five years or until the next periodic review and reapproval. The approval process ensures that the programme is meeting the regulatory requirements of the Office for Students. Where relevant, the approval process will consider the requirements of any relevant *Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body* and *external awarding body/organisation*.

See appendix A – for the process

2. Programme Approval

The programme validation, regulations and procedures have been reduced to four design meetings, based on Design Sprint Methodology (DSM):

- Programme Strategy Meeting
- DSM1 – Understand and Define: what a graduate from this programme should be able to do.
- DSM2 – Sketch and Define: the new programme offering based on engagement with all stakeholders
- DSM3 – Prototype and Validate: the programme.

Additional Requirements for Apprenticeship Programmes

Before a proposal for an apprenticeship can be taken forward for Academic Approval, it should first be signed off for approval by the Apprenticeships Management Team following a Scoping Meeting. Additional Programme documentation will be required including a bespoke Programme Handbook incorporating a KSB map and the accompanying Apprenticeship Programme Handbook Approval Form. See Annex 1 Sub-Section I for the additional criteria for approval.

Following the academic approval of a Skills England, integrated apprenticeship standard, the Apprenticeship team will confirm the status of the application to DfE for the subject team to become the End Point Assessment Organisation.

Additional Requirements for Online Only Programmes

A bespoke online Programme Guide as well as a Programme Landing page on the VLE is required; one fully populated Moodle (or alternative VLE) site for whole module delivery per level together with a specified sample of Module Guides should also be provided.

Additional Requirements for Off Campus Partnership Programmes

The following additional documents are required in the case of off-campus programmes:
Partnership Initial Assessment of Operations (for new partners), Partner Operations Manual, Responsibilities Check List, Equivalency check List, Contract, any Local Licence or regulatory documentation (if relevant), website/Link to CMA tracker. See Annex 1 Sub-Section K for the additional criteria for approval.

3. Design Sprint Methodology stages

The following is an outline of what will be considered at each of the stages:

Programme Strategy Meeting – this is the initial meeting, were the Programme on a Page (POP) will be introduced, the TEAMS channel library, an explanation of the DSM process and issue of a list of current live programmes. The role of the External Advisor (for programme design) and External Examiner (programme moderation) will also be clarified.

DSM1 – Understand and Define – confirmation of the programmes in scope, rationale for not including or 'retiring' programmes; programme on a page (POP) completion; confirmation of documentation required; GMW assessment design recommendations; OfS recommendations / training requirements (if required); student retention / feedback/ support and PT support.

Attendees for DSM1: Head of School (or nominee), Programme Leader(s), Quality Lead

Curriculum Design meeting – this is offered to all programme teams, in order to receive guidance and support in writing the new programme.

Attendees: Programme Leader(s), Module Tutor(s), Quality Lead.

DSM2 – Sketch and Design – the draft POP is presented to QTU and programme contributors, along with the module sequencing document, initial industry and/or employer feedback; authentic assessments, PSRB requirements, timings for agreed validation. All module tutors will be required to attend, along with the programme leader.

Before, DSM3 team to gain EA feedback, update as required and ensure the module and programme specifications on the relevant databases are populated.

At this stage Teams to source an External Examiner for the programme.

Attendees for DSM2: Head of School (or nominee), Programme Leader(s), Module tutor(s), Quality Lead.

DSM3 – Prototype and Validate – Programme Specification will be reviewed including learning outcomes, benchmarks and PSRB guidelines. Module specifications will be reviewed including – learning outcomes mapped against assessments, assessments are effectively scheduled throughout 5 weeks block duration, how feedback will be delivered

and how students will learn – before, during and after class. Timetables / delivery model will also reviewed.

External Examiner nomination will also be expected at this stage.

At this stage QTU will approve depending on reviews during DSM3.

Attendees at DSM3: Head of School (or nominee), Programme Leader(s), Quality Lead Panel will include a Chair, Internal Panel Member (nominees from outside of programme School), and External Advisor (recommended).

Throughout the process Programme Design Support will be available. University programmes are to be designed using a unique and highly effective curriculum architecture in order to:

- provide a distinctive, stimulating and flexible offer which effectively consolidates learning CHOICE, CONSOLIDATION
- allow for development of a personalized, coherent, professionally relevant and challenging student learning experience COHORT, CONTEMPORARY, COHERENCE AND CHALLENGE
- enhance student satisfaction
- improve student achievement and retention
- improve graduate employment outcomes
- enhance industry involvement
- Teaching intensive, research informed, assessment enabled strategy

4. Programme Approval Advisor Roles

The School Quality Lead and External Advisor will work with the Proposer and their team to ensure that documentation is ready for Panel scrutiny.

Role of the School Quality Lead

An Internal Advisor will be the School Quality Lead within the School (or nominee).
The role of Internal Advisor is as follows:

1. To provide expert advice and leadership from within the proposing School/Centre about University requirements for programme design, development and approval.
2. To ensure they have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the University's process for Programme Design, Development and Approval and to ensure the programme is developed according to QTU guidance.
3. To ensure that the proposing team consult stakeholders (employers/ students) and use their views in the design and development of the proposal.
4. To ensure that the proposal is fully documented in the POP ready for external scrutiny by the External Advisor.
5. To ensure that the programme proposer and team consider and respond, as required, to the comments within the Consultation Report from the External Advisor.
6. To complete a Consultation section on the POP.

Role of the External Advisor

An External Advisor will be a subject specialist nominated by the Programme Proposer and approved by QTU.

The role of External Advisor is as follows:

1. From the perspective of their subject specialist knowledge, industrial role and/or professional expertise to understand the broad nature of the proposal and to advise the Proposer and University on the suitability of the proposal.
2. To provide feedback to the Proposer and their team in a supportive, collegiate and transparent manner.
3. To complete the External Advisor Consultation Report and to provide feedback on the POP.
4. To attend the Validation approval panel (if applicable).

Role of the Chair

The Chair of the validation panel will be a nominee from a School outside of the programme that is to be validated.
The role of the Chair is as follows:

1. Review the approval documentation
2. Facilitate / Lead the meeting
3. Ensure due process is followed – QAA / OfS / PSRB / UGM
4. Ensure there is constructive questioning of the programme team:
   Academic rationale; Learning outcomes and assessment; student experience; staffing and resources; progression and graduate outcomes (to name a few)

Role of the Internal Panel Member

The Internal Panel Member of the validation panel will be a nominee from a School outside of the programme that is to be validated.
The role of the Internal Panel Member is as follows:

1. Review the approval documentation
2. Check for University requirements
   - UGM way – relevant LO's, authentic assessments
   - QAA / OfS / PSRB requirements
   - Student support

5. What happens after approval

Once the programme(s) have been approved by QTU the following steps are to be taken:

1. Module and Programme specifications are progressed by Academic Teams
2. QTU approves new programmes on SITS
3. Programme Teams identify when modules should run in which semesters, and in how many groups, and set up the MAV (module availability) through eVision (Module Details) – a list of modules which are running in order with dates.
4. Following the creation of MAVs, teams to forward their timetable request forms (with MAV codes) to timetables@greatermanchester.ac.uk
5. Course Block and Occurrence (CBO) record on SITS is generally updated by bulk by SDM following request from Admissions (for September and January intakes). For ad-hoc requests outside of the September and January intakes please contact cbo@greatermanchester.ac.uk to request these.
6. External nominations to be passed through to QTU for approval.

6. Appendix

A – FAQs

B - Programme Approval flowchart

C – DSM presentation

D – Programme on a Page

E – External Advisor nomination form

A - FAQ

1. What is the purpose of Strategic Approval?
It grants permission from the University Executive to begin developing a new programme and ensures alignment with strategy and regulatory requirements.

2. How long does programme approval normally last?
For five years or until the next periodic review and reapproval.

3. What forms are required to seek Strategic Approval?
The Academic Development Strategic Proposal (ADSP) form, and for apprenticeships, the Apprenticeship Scoping Form (ASF).

4. Who manages the Programme Approval process?
The Quality Transformation Unit (QTU), reporting to Senate via the Chair of the Education Committee.

5. What is the Design Sprint Methodology (DSM)?
A four-stage design process: Programme Strategy Meeting, DSM1 (Understand & Define), DSM2 (Sketch & Decide), DSM3 (Prototype & Validate).

6. What additional requirements exist for apprenticeship programmes?
They need Apprenticeship Management Team sign-off, a bespoke Handbook with KSB map, and confirmation of DfE End Point Assessment status.

7. What extra documents are needed for off-campus partnership programmes?
Initial Operations Assessment, Operations Manual, Responsibilities Checklist, Equivalency Checklist, contracts, licences/regulatory documents, and CMA tracker links.

8. What role does the School Quality Lead play?
They guide the programme team through University requirements, ensure stakeholder consultation, and prepare documentation for scrutiny.

9. What happens after a programme is approved?
Specifications are progressed, MAVs are set up on SITS, timetable requests submitted, CBO updated, and external nominations passed to QTU.

10. What principles underpin programme design at the University?
Distinctive and flexible offer, coherent and challenging student experience, improved retention and graduate outcomes, strong industry involvement, and a teaching-intensive, research-informed, assessment-enabled strategy.

11. How long does the entire programme approval process (from Strategic Approval to DSM3 sign-off) usually take?
The whole process will normally take around 6 months, this is dependent on the urgency and workload of programme teams.

12. What criteria are used to determine when an existing programme should be "retired" during DSM1?
If a programme is to be retired, this is highlighted at DSM1. This will be annotated on the list of programmes available in the Teams Library and relevant databases updated.

13. Are students directly represented in the DSM meetings, or is their input collected through other mechanisms?
Feedback from students will be included within the DSM process, following stage 1 student feedback will be sought from programme teams.

Summary – Programme Approval Handbook	
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Responsible person	
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