**Annex A**

**Proposal for a new course/major change to an existing course**

N.B. Not all sections, or elements of each section will be relevant for proposals for major changes. This will depend very much on the nature of the change proposed. For example, for changes involving major curricula reshaping almost all sections may be relevant, but for changes to a specific element or aspect of a course proposers should focus on the sections where the change is likely to have **impact**. Proposers should be careful to **describe** both the substance of change and **explain** the reasoning behind it.

Proposals for part-time programmes (whether offered only part-time or part-time variants of existing full time programmes) must specifically tackle the points raised in the *Part-time policy framework* *for graduate provision* under the appropriate headings below.

1. Academic grounds

Explain the academic grounds for the new course/major change. This might include:

* a summary of the proposed course or change including an outline of its content and its aims;
* the context and reasons for proposing the new course or making the change at this time;
* how the proposed course or revision relates to existing provision, within the University and elsewhere; and
* the strategic fit of the new or revised programme within department/faculty, division and university.

1. Evidence of demand

Provide internal or external evidence of the anticipated demand for the new (or revised) course. As far as possible, this should be quantifiable and go beyond the anecdotal. Consultation with students and the relevant admissions office should take place and be incorporated, as should consultation with the Careers Service (where relevant).

This section might include:

* an explanation of whom the programme is intended to attract;
* benchmarking against what is offered at competitor institutions (how does the course compare in content/style/duration, how many students apply, what kind of fees do they attract);
* an explanation of what would attract students to this course at Oxford over other offerings at the University or elsewhere; and
* an exploration of what considerations there are in relation to widening participation and equality and diversity. This might include an exploration of protected characteristics and other key demographic factors in the intended applicant pool.

1. Course design

Proposers should ensure they are familiar with the following key internal reference points for course design: *Policy and Guidance on undergraduate learning and teaching* and *Policy and Guidance on postgraduate taught courses*

This section should include:

* outline information about the new course content and structure including the learning outcomes of the course (learning outcomes are statements that describe what a student will know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning in the context of the course). For proposals involving changes to course content and structure explain the context for the changes and why the specific proposals are being put forward. More detailed information should be attached to the proposal in the format of part of the draft Course Handbook;
* mapping of the proposed course against the *University awards framework,* the level and qualification descriptors in the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), the relevant subject benchmark statements and professional body or accreditation requirements (when relevant);
* description and explanation of any patterns of delivery outside the normal 8 week/3 term structure, including part-time and distance learning; and
* how the course has been designed to take into account the needs of a diverse range of learners and address obligations relating to inclusivity, equality and diversity (see immediately below).

Under the Equality Act 2010, the University has a legal duty to avoid policies, practices and criteria that would put students with a range of ‘protected characteristics’ at a disadvantage. These are: race (encompassing ethnicity, nationality, and national origin), sex, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, disability, religion or belief, and age. For disabled students, the Act also establishes an ‘anticipatory duty’ to make adjustments to policies, practices and criteria that might foreseeably disadvantage such students.

The process of designing a new course or making major changes to an existing course is an opportunity to put in place curricula, teaching and assessment methods that are as inclusive as possible, for disabled students but also other groups with potentially different learning needs or part-time students.

For postgraduate research (PGR) courses use this section to describe the particular focus and approach of the course.

For courses which are or will be seeking recognition from a professional, statutory or regulatory body, or any other form of accreditation, the brief description of the accreditation process should be included here.

1. Teaching methods (UG & PGT)/Training and supervisory arrangements (PGR)

Proposers should ensure they are familiar with the following key internal reference points: *Policy and Guidance on undergraduate learning and teaching, Policy and Guidance on postgraduate taught courses, Policy on research degrees.*

All undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) proposals should include a description of the teaching methods for the course and an explanation for the proposed balance between different teaching methods i.e. lectures, tutorials, classes or seminars, and laboratory or fieldwork, and how this supports the aims and learning outcomes of the course.

For a new joint course this section should include the arrangements for the co-ordination of tutorial arrangements and mechanisms for co-ordinated oversight.

For PGR courses this section should include a detailed description of the way the taught or subject specific training aspects of the programme are delivered (excluding generic skills training, covered below) and the supervisory arrangements which will be in place. For proposals for part-time DPhils describe the provision for the support of supervisors in the longer-term commitment required in supervising part-time students.

1. Assessment methods (UG & PGT)/Progression and assessment (PGR)

For UG courses, proposers should ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of the section on ‘Examinations and Assessments’ in the *Policy and Guidance on undergraduate learning and teaching*. For PGT and PGR proposals, the relevant sections of the *Policy and Guidance on postgraduate taught courses* and the *Policy on research degree* should be referred to.

For all taught courses, proposers should ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of section 1.2 (the ‘The University’s approach to assessment’) and Annex E (‘Good practice guide to assessment design’) in the *Policy and Guidance for Examiners*.

For PGR courses this section should cover the arrangements for transfer and confirmation of status and arrangements for final assessment of the thesis.

Proposals for taught courses should include a detailed description of the proposed assessment methods involved in the course, and explain:

* why the particular assessment methods have been chosen over other forms of assessment;
* how the assessment methods relate to the content and learning outcomes of the course;
* the balance of assessment across the duration of the course;
* how considerations relating to inclusive and alternative assessment have influenced the assessment design;
* how the assessment has been designed to minimise plagiarism and other forms of cheating (see Annex B of the *Policy and Guidance*);
* for courses involving dissertations, extended essays, project work and other examined assignments, proposals should include a statement describing the appropriate role of the tutor or supervisor(s).

A sample or specimen exam papers should be included for the new UG courses or options.

1. Examination arrangements and resources

Describe and quantify the examining resources required for the new course or new options or modes of assessment in existing courses and explain where those examining resources will be drawn from.

Proposals for which only one examiner is available will not be approved by the Education Committee. Proposals which rely on only two examiners will be approved by the Education Committee only in exceptional circumstances.

All PGT courses and final honour schools should have at least one external examiner and in larger courses there should be more than one external to cover the full breadth of the examination; in joint honour schools each panel of examiners, drawn from the parent school, should include at least one external.

*Special arrangements for students who will require to take a course under old regulations*

If a student’s normal course of study for an examination has been extended on account of illness or other good cause, students are entitled to take the course under the regulations that originally applied to them within prescribed limits (category A). These are:

• For FHS candidates, within six terms of the original assessment date;

• For FPE candidates, within three terms of the original assessment date;

• For PGT students, so long as the time elapsed since they were originally due to be examined is not greater than the maximum time permitted for completion of their course.

A student who is admitted to be examined outside the prescribed limits (category B) shall normally be examined in accordance with the regulations which apply currently.

Indicate what special arrangements would be made for the candidates in category A and B (having consulted examiners as necessary). Where the arrangements proposed do not involve the normal procedure, as set out above, a detailed description should be provided.

1. **Learning development and skills training (UG)/skills training (PGT/PGR)**

For UG courses, proposals should indicate the different types of study skills and subject-specific skills that students will need to develop across the duration of their course, and the main providers for those skills (reference should be made to the relevant section of the Course handbook).

For PG courses, the course proposal should indicate the arrangements in place for skills training for PG students.

*IT skills*

Indicate any IT competencies that should have been attained by the end of the course, with an indication of the provision which will be made available to promote their achievement.

*Language teaching*

For any programme incorporating foreign language competency the Language Centre should be consulted and can advise on scoping the extra teaching load required, methods of assessment etc. The outcome of that discussion should be given here and an explanation of how the language provision fits with the overall course aims and design.

1. **Employability**

Describe and explain the approach taken to the embedding of employability within the design of the course – both within the curriculum and activities specific to the course which sit outside of the curriculum.

Proposers might find it helpful to have the views of employers at an early stage in the process of course revision/development, and may wish to seek comment and support from the Careers Service

1. **Recruitment and admissions**

Describe and explain the criteria for admission to the course (the GAF Course Page Template can be used to guide what information should be included in this section).

Consideration should be given to whether the course will allow international students (non-EEA nationals) to obtain the correct immigration permission to be able to study in the UK. This will relate the following factors:

* course delivery – full time, part-time, distance learning or online courses;
* duration of course and residency in Oxford; and
* the aim of the qualification;

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they hold the correct immigration permission. However, if the course structure means they will not be eligible for a Tier 4 Student visa the visa options could be more limited and this should be explained in advance through the course marketing material and offer letter.

For major changes to existing courses, the same criteria should be applied. The Student Immigration team can provide further clarification on immigration aspects for a new or existing course.

1. **Student numbers**

The proposal documentation should set out the proposed cohort size for the course, including any proposed changes in cohort size during the first few years of the course’s operation. By the time the proposal documentation reaches Education Committee, detail should be included about:

* whether the student numbers for the proposed course are already included in the division’s SNP figures as submitted to PRAS in the most recent planning round, or, if not
* the division’s plan for accommodating the student numbers for the proposed course within its current agreed SNP figures (e.g. by viring the numbers from other courses).

For a new course the outcome of the initial discussion with individual colleges regarding interest in offering places for the course should be included in this section.

1. **Tuition fees and additional course costs**

The *Justification for proposed University Fee form* (available as Annex G of the *Policy and Guidance*) should be completed, giving the level of university fee proposed and the justification for this, in the light of benchmarking, the departmental business case, and admissions, on which relevant information should be given on the form as indicated. The form should be submitted to PRAS once it has been considered by the division.

Indicate on the form whether there are any course-related costs that fall on students (over and above University fees and any college fees). Where this is the case, the department and division are encouraged to consider whether these costs, especially where they relate to compulsory course elements, could be absorbed into the fees that are payable, and/or what support is available to help cover these costs so as to ensure that no student is unable to participate due to lack of funds. Where costs do fall on students, please provide a statement covering the following, for publication on the University website for the information of applicants:

* whether the purpose identified is compulsory or optional;
* the cost, or range of costs, estimated to fall on students for course-related purposes (over and above University fees and any college fees);
* the support available to all students on the course (where relevant); and
* discretionary funds available from the department, trust funds, colleges or other sources, with an indication of the grounds on which such support may be available (e.g. means-tested).

Under the University Statutes, ‘No member of the University shall be required to pay any fee or other charge (except one required by way of penalty or fine imposed under the authority of a statute or regulation) unless it is required by statute or regulation’ (Statute II, section 3(2).

1. **Facilities and other physical resources**

Where the new course involves additional student numbers, or where a change may have an impact on space and facilities, describe the proposed accommodation for students on the course, in particular:

* study or working space
* library provision (including space, books and other learning resources)
* laboratory provision (where relevant)
* access to specialist facilities
* common room provision;
* opportunities to work with staff and other graduate students (for PG courses);

Also, detail any other resources implications of the new or amended course, including IT, specialist equipment, accommodation or regular requirement for special tuition.

1. **Teaching resources**

In relation to both new courses and significant new options or other changes in existing courses, the following should be addressed.

* How will the new or altered teaching be provided?
* Have those expected to supply such teaching been consulted and indicated their willingness and availability to do so in the timescales which are proposed?
* Will it be necessary to make any adjustments in other parts of the course or syllabus in order to release teaching resources for the proposed new course or option?
* Will existing provision have to be given up in order to allow the new course or new option to be offered?
* Are there any implications for the availability of resources for other courses within the division?
* Are there sufficient resources to allow for programmed absences i.e. as a result of sabbatical leave? How will unanticipated absences be addressed?

For major changes to UG courses, there are likely to be implications for tutorial teaching and so Senior Tutors’ Committee will have a significant interest in the proposal. Early discussions with colleges, as the proposal is developed, should be undertaken. (This is in addition to consultation with the relevant Conference committee during the divisional approval stage.)

This section should clearly explain the potential impact of any proposed change on tutorial provision requirements.

Questions which colleges are likely to consider in relation to a new or amended UG course include:

* Is the college likely to admit students to the proposed course?
* Does the college consider that it has sufficient resources to provide tutorial teaching, including specialist teaching?
* Does the college consider that it can provide the necessary framework for organisational oversight of each student’s studies in the proposed course?
* Does the college consider that tutorial teaching and departmental teaching will be satisfactorily integrated?

1. **Course organisation, administration and oversight**

Identify the course leadership and the body (e.g. organising committee, standing committee) that will be responsible for organising and supervising the new course and detail its:

* composition (including student representation); and
* reporting lines to the relevant faculty/department(s) and division(s).

There is the expectation that courses should have at least two full-time members of academic staff involved in their running.

Explain how the administrative support for the new or amended course will be arranged. Where a change of structure or mode of delivery of an existing course is proposed explain the impact of the changes on administrative requirements. This is of particular importance where a new body is required to administer the course, but should also take account of the existing responsibilities where the course is to be offered by an existing body.

A thorough description of the course oversight, organisation and administration is of particular importance in relation to any sort of joint course or course drawing on resources outside of the home department or faculty.

For proposals for part-time research programmes a member of academic staff should be nominated as having an overall responsibility for the academic well-being of research students studying on a part-time basis.

Identify the arrangements for student representatives and representative structures associated with the course, and articulate their integration into course management and oversight.

For part-time and distance learning courses describe the arrangements for matriculation or matriculation in absence.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. **Consultation undertaken**

Describe and provide evidence of the consultation process undertaken with:

* students (see section 7.13 of the *Policy and guidance*)
* with other departments and faculties which may have an interest in the proposal (the Department for Continuing Education should be consulted for all part time course proposals)
* with services: all relevant libraries (see below), Student Registry (see below) language centre (when relevant)
* with individual colleges
* with external advisors (see section 7.16 of the *Policy and Guidance*)

The librarians of all relevant libraries must have been consulted and must provide a written statement concerning the provision of books and other learning resources and the resource implications (recurrent and/or non recurrent, staff and/or non staff), which should be attached to the proposal.

For any new course, or major change proposal which has an impact on assessment, or on the structure of the student records, the Student Registry (which incorporates, amongst others, the Academic Records Office and the Exams and Assessments team) should be consulted at the proposal stage. A written statement from the Director of Student Registry confirming that sufficient discussions have taken about implications of the course structure and assessment arrangements should be attached to the proposal.

1. **Documentation to be attached**

* Course Handbook (in draft)
* Examination Regulations (in draft)
* Examination conventions (in draft)
* Documentation relating to consultation undertaken
* Tuition fee form (Annex G)

1. In Trinity Term 2016 Education Committee agreed that matriculation in absence should be possible for courses where students’ attendance in Oxford did not fit with existing matriculation ceremonies (paper reference EdC(TT16)072). If permission for matriculation in absence is sought, this should be made clear in the course proposal document. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)