

Annex N Guidance note on types of course changes

Examples of course changes: categorisation in relevant University policy documents and approval level required

Very minor changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorisation in <i>P&G new courses</i>: n/a • Categorisation in <i>P&G new courses - Annex I (Vested Interests)</i>: Type 1 (Changes with no impact or only benefit to students) • Description in web text about course changes on Admissions websites: n/a 					
Example of change	Approval required if:		Is there a requirement to engage with <u>current students</u> about the changes before they are decided/agreed?	What communication of the change (once decided/agreed) is required with <u>applicants</u> ?	What communication of the change (once decided/agreed) with <u>current students</u> ?
	change being made to affect <u>current students</u> ¹	change being made for <u>next cohort of students</u>			
Small change to the wording in the Examination Regulations, e.g. to correct a minor error or to improve the understandability.	Divisional approval (because all Reg changes go to divisions for approval) ²		No requirement, but if Regs or handbook are being redrafted to improve understandability, getting student input would be good practice.	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should be informed of the change. • Communication to students can be via existing channels (e.g. by email/newsletter). • Changes to handbooks should be made clear through the version control table.
Small change to the way the course is described in the course handbook, e.g. to correct a minor error or to improve the understandability.	None				
Revision to the title (but not the substance) of a paper (e.g. 'The anthropology of medicine' to 'Medical anthropology').	Divisional approval if Regs changing.		Discussion at the JCC would be good practice.		
Extension of a submission deadline (unless it causes deadlines to become clustered).					
Addition of reading time in an examination.					
Formal or cosmetic change to Regulations or course handbook to reflect current practice (e.g. overdue correction to the prescribed edition of a set text).			None		
Confirmation of available options where students and applicants are clearly advised that not all options will be offered in all years.			None		

Minor changes applicable to students who have not yet started the examination, applicants in the cycle or future intakes					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorisation in <i>P&G new courses</i>: Minor changes • Categorisation in <i>P&G new courses - Annex I</i> (Vested Interests): Type 2 (Changes with a material or negative impact for students) • Description in web text about course changes on Admissions websites: “material change” <p>N.B. multiple changes of this type are likely to be considered a ‘Major change’; changes of this type made for students currently studying, but not for the examination concerned, should be made with caution.¹</p>					
Example of change	Approval required if:		Is there a requirement to engage with <u>current students</u> about the changes before they are decided/agreed?	What communication of the change (once decided/agreed) is required with <u>applicants</u> ?	What communication of the change (once decided/agreed) with <u>current students</u> ?
	change being made to affect <u>current students</u> ¹	change being made for <u>next cohort of students</u>			
Addition of ‘option’ papers where this takes before the relevant deadline given in course handbooks or the subject-specific Exam Regs.	Division	Division	None	None	Students should be informed of the available options.
Addition of specific ‘option’ papers where this is proposed to take place after the deadline given in course handbooks or the subject-specific Exam Regs.	Division	n/a	None	n/a	Students should be informed of the available options.
Removal of specific ‘option’ papers (whether or not this requires a change to the relevant Exam Regs)	n/a (see below)	Division	None	None	n/a (see below)
Addition or deletion of an element of the syllabus (i.e. material change to the course content)	Changes to assessment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase, decrease or rebalancing of assessment workload • Change in assessment schedule (e.g. movement of submission deadlines) • Change in assessment methodology (e.g from timed examination to submitted essay or vice versa) as long as not novel form of assessment 		Yes, to be undertaken through normal mechanisms, i.e. discussion at JCC or equivalent – this is to gather student input on the proposal, not because the actual students will be affected, exercise greater caution where students would be affected in a later part of the course.	Applicants in the cycle should be notified and given the option to withdraw if the change affects information applicants have already been provided with e.g. on the graduate admissions or department website, prospectus, brochures, open days etc. Check all this information before you decide whether you will need to contact applicants.	n/a (see below)
Creation of an option exit award, e.g. students can choose to leave after Y3 with a BA but there is no new progression hurdle for continuation to Y4					
Change in assessment or teaching methodology if a novel form (i.e. one not used on other courses at the same level (UG/PGT) in the University already) is planned.	n/a	EdC			n/a

Minor changes applicable to students who have started the examination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorisation in <i>P&G new courses</i>: Minor changes • Categorisation in <i>P&G new courses - Annex I (Vested Interests)</i>: Expedited Type 2 (Changes with a material or negative impact for students) • Description in web text about course changes on Admissions websites: “material change” 					
Example of change	Approval required if:		Is there a requirement to engage with <u>current students</u> about the changes before they are decided/agreed?	What communication of the change (once decided/agreed) is required with <u>applicants</u>?	What communication of the change (once decided/agreed) with <u>current students</u>?
	change being made to affect <u>current students</u>¹	change being made for <u>next cohort of students</u>			
A change like those in the first four rows of ‘minor change applicable to students who have not yet started the examination, applicants in the cycle or future intakes’ above where the change is to be made for students who have already begun studying for the examination concerned (see Annex I of <i>P&G new courses</i> for more details)	EdC	n/a	Consultation with individual students must occur, and the results be reported to EdC when requesting the change.	n/a	Students should be informed of the change and the department should take additional measures to ensure that students are aware of the change.

Major changes					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorisation in <i>P&G new courses</i>: Major Changes • Categorisation in <i>P&G new courses - Annex I (Vested Interests)</i>: Type 3 (Fundamental change) • Description in web text about course changes on Admissions websites: “very substantial changes” 					
<i>Note: the two lines marked * have been moved from Type 2 to Type 3 in revisions to the Vested Interests guidance during summer 2015.</i>					
Example of change	Approval required if:		Is there a requirement to engage with <u>current students</u> about the changes before they are decided/agreed?	What communication of the change (once decided/agreed) is required with <u>applicants</u> ?	What communication of the change (once decided/agreed) with <u>current students</u> ?
	change being made to affect <u>current students</u> ¹	change being made for <u>next cohort of students</u>			
Change of course title	n/a (such changes will not be made to affect current students)	EdC	Through normal mechanisms, i.e. discussion at JCC or equivalent – this is to gather student input on the proposal, not because the actual students will be affected.	Preferably such changes would be agreed for implementation only for the next application cycle. If the changes are to apply to applicants already in the cycle, all applicants should be notified and given the option to withdraw.	n/a (such changes will not be made to affect current students)
Significant restructuring or change in the course content					
Addition or removal of a core paper *					
Change of a paper from core to option or vice versa *					
Introduction of, or raising of, a programme hurdle, e.g. only students achieving a 2.1 are allowed to progress to Y4					
Multiple changes of the type described as ‘Minor changes’ above, of which the combined effect is such that you judge that applicants and students would perceive the total change as substantial.					
Closure of a current course	n/a	EdC	Through normal mechanisms, i.e. discussion at JCC or equivalent – this is to gather student input on the proposal, not because the actual students will be affected.	EdC will not approve changes less than 3 months before applicants are due to start their course.	n/a
Brand new course				n/a	

Notes:

1: ‘current students’ in this context means those who have already started the first term of the course of study *for the examination concerned*. See paragraphs 6 and 7 of Annex I of the *P&G new courses*. While changes are permitted to later parts of a course which has multiple Parts (or to the FHS for students currently on the FPE), this should be undertaken with caution, given the reliance which students are entitled to place on the original description of the course that they have been given by the institution.

2: the General Regulations of the *Examination Regulations* (e.g. Section 2 paragraph 3.4) say that all Special Regulation changes are subject to approval by or on behalf of Education Committee. This approval responsibility is in some cases delegated to Divisions and this is stated in Education Committee’s Standing Orders (EdC(HT17)006):

Education Committee has agreed to delegate authority, subject to periodic reports to the committee as appropriate, to make, amend or repeal regulations concerning courses and examinations for undergraduate, graduate or other students, under regulation 2.4.(1) of Council Regulations 15 of 2002 as follows:

- Regulations for a new course, together with the course proposal itself, may be approved by the PVC (Education). Further minor amendments to regulations for a new course previously approved by the committee may be approved by the PVC (Education) or officers of Education Policy Support¹;
- Major changes to the special regulations for existing courses may be approved by the PVC (Education) or officers of Education Policy Support;
- Minor changes to the special regulations for existing courses may be approved by divisional boards or individuals with delegated authority of the board²; and
- Changes to the general regulations may be approved by the PVC (Education), subject to prior discussion as appropriate with the relevant Panel of Education Committee and the Proctors.

¹ In practice, draft *Examination Regulations* for a new course are provided by a division alongside the course proposal when it is submitted for consideration by or on behalf of Education Committee. The actual draft regulations are not presented to the committee or the PVC (Education), but scrutinised by EPS officers on behalf of Education Committee once the course proposal has been approved.

² This means that departments and faculties must seek divisional approval for all changes to the *Examination Regulations*.