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| **Qualifier Approval Form** |  |
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| **What is a qualifier?** |

**A qualifier is a combination of modules that students can take that lead to a different course title being awarded by the Board of Examiners**. For example, if students on the BA Liberal Arts take a defined number of credits in Politics they can opt in to be awarded a BA Liberal Arts (Politics). Qualifiers are typically awarded by an Exam Board at the end of the final year.

**Qualifiers appear in brackets after the master course title**. Qualifiers follow the same rules as our existing course titles; they cannot contain ampersands or abbreviations.

Whilst these qualifiers can be advertised to students, **students are not directly enrolled onto a qualifier and have to ‘opt in’ to have the qualifier added to their course title** **via eNROL**. In the above example, students would be enrolled onto the master course associated with the qualifier, BA Liberal Arts. **There must be a master course title available** **which does not include the qualifier.**

If you wish for students to be admitted directly onto the different title, then this is an **admitting pathway** and would need to go through the new course approval process. Students would then need to submit change of course requests if they wished to receive a different course title.

Generally, **learning outcomes will not change for qualifiers**. Rather, qualifiers are highlighting that a student has studied a certain number of credits in a particular subject area.

**Qualifiers are considered core-CMA information because it affects the course title. The opportunity to achieve the qualifier may also form part of a student’s decision to apply for the course. Therefore, a longer timeline applies for making changes.** For example, any changes made to qualifier structures in the Curriculum Update period to 1 March 2025 will be implemented in the academic year 2026/27. Changes to qualifier structures also **only apply to the student cohort starting in the year that the change takes effect.**

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| **Considerations** |

**Marketing**

For all new programmes, but especially for courses with qualifiers, the aim should be attracting new applicant pools rather than cannibalising existing pools.

Look at your programme specifications and compare module make-up of existing courses versus any new programme with a qualifier that you’re planning. Make sure you aren’t simply re-arranging core/compulsory/optional elements such that students could build the same programme with different titles.

Take the time to explore what is already offered within other departments. Sometimes ‘generic’ themes or topics appear in course titles in surprising departments. If there is too much overlap within the University, we’ll simply saturate existing applicant pools rather than extend into new pools.

Some qualifiers are market-driven and reflect the demands of the graduate labour markets, for example quantitative marketing programmes.

The link between the parent course and the qualifier needs to be logical and clear. It also needs to be authentic and reflect where we have clear expertise or reputational advantages.

Generally the more simple and self-explanatory the qualifier, the better. PGT programmes can tolerate a higher level of specialisation than UG. It can be valuable to test interest through (optional) modules first of all and seek student feedback to inform your plans for extending the content into a new programme.

Contact the Market Intelligence Team (miquery@essex.ac.uk) if you want to explore what competitors are doing – we should be able to draw some conclusions from sector data around what works and what doesn’t work. There aren’t as many hard and fast rules around what’s the right approach – there are variations by course, product and target market – so we’re always happy to help.

**Rules of Assessment**

The requirements of each qualifier should be documented as a Rules of Assessment variation.

**Operation of qualifiers**

Currently, qualifiers have to be manually monitored and added to a student’s record as part of the post-Exam Board process. However, it is anticipated that future systems will be able to automate a significant proportion of workload carried out by Departments.

**Making changes**

If changes need to be made to the Master course structure to enable modules associated with the qualifier to be included and/or if learning outcomes need to be changed then it is the Department’s responsibility to submit Curriculum Update tickets by the 1 March deadline.

**Completing the form**

Please fill out all relevant boxes in each of the sections. Further guidance on course design and the course approval process can be found on the QUAD [webpages.](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/course_design_approval_and_modifications/new_courses_pages/default.asp)

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| Section | Information gathered |
| **SECTION A: Overarching information** | Key information and qualifier title |
| **SECTION B: Strategic fit** | Rationale for introduction of the course and its strategic fit. |
| **SECTION C: Qualifier structure** | Qualifier structure and published information |
| **SECTION D: Consultation** | Consultation undertaken by the Department |
| **SECTION E: Approval** | QUAD consultation and approval status of the qualifier |

**Consultation**

Where a box indicates that you need to consult with another team or the external examiner, please do this prior to submission of the form to the Quality and Academic Development (QUAD) Team. This helps to avoid possible subsequent delays to the approval process.

Departments will need to consult the current external examiner for the master course and ask them to confirm that they approve the introduction of the qualifier and its proposed structure.

The department putting forward the proposal is responsible for ensuring that the submission addresses all relevant issues. **All proposals must be authorised by every Head of Department contributing to the course prior to submission of the form to QUAD.**

Once submitted, the form will be considered by the Faculty Executive Dean in conjunction with recommendations from Communications and External Relations and Quality and Academic Development. The Faculty Dean will determine if approval can be given to introduce the qualifier.

**Submission**

Please return this form to the relevant Quality and Academic Development Manager via quad@essex.ac.uk. If you have any questions or queries, please contact the QUAD Team

# SECTION A: Overarching information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Level of course** | [ ]  UG [ ]  PGT  |
| **Title of Master course**  |  |
| **Qualifier title** |  |
| **Campus** | [ ]  Colchester [ ]  Southend [ ]  Loughton |
| **Faculty** |  |
| **Department** |  |
| **Key Contact** |  |
| **Proposed date of introduction** | dd/mm/yyyy |

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| **Professional accreditation** |
| **Will the qualifier be accredited by a professional, regulatory, or statutory body?** | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No*If yes, please complete the questions on below.* |
| **Will accreditation be dependent on the modules taken?** | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| **Name of professional accrediting body** |  |
| **Accreditation type** |  |
| **Expected accreditation start date** |  |
| **Process for accreditation approval** |  |

**SECTION B: Strategic fit**

**Rationale**

Please set out why this qualifier should be introduced and any objectives that you hope to achieve with its development and introduction.

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| *Please provide a brief outline of the reasons for introducing the course(s) and any observations about possible demand.* * *Where similar courses exist, either within the department’s current portfolio or at other universities, identify in what way this course is distinctive*
* *Include reference to employer needs and/or professional development*
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|  |

# SECTION C: Qualifier structure and public information

Please provide details of the qualifier requirements below. This should be a brief overview of the amount (in credits) and type of modules that students will need to undertake and pass in order to be considered for the award of the qualifier.

If the qualifier requires specific modules to be taken, then please use the following tables to provide the details of these modules and if a mark requirement also needs to be introduced. Please delete tables as necessary.

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| **Qualifier requirements** |
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| **Year One** |
| **Module Code**  | **Module Title** | **Credits** | **New Module** | **Mark requirement?** |
|  |  |  | [ ]  |  |
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|  |  |  | [ ]  |  |
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| **Year Two** |
| **Module Code**  | **Module Title** | **Credits** | **New Module** | **Mark requirement?** |
|  |  |  | [ ]  |  |
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| **Final Year** |
| **Module Code**  | **Module Title** | **Credits** | **New Module** | **Mark requirement?** |
|  |  |  | [ ]  |  |
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| **Qualifier statement** |
| *Departments need to provide a brief overview of the qualifier that can be published on eNROL, programme specifications and on CourseFinder. Please complete this box with a statement that is tailored towards students and provides key information about the qualifier, including how students achieve the qualifier.*  |

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| **Do any changes need to be made to the Master course structure to facilitate the introduction of the qualifier?** | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No*(if yes see below)* |
| **Do any changes need to be made to the Master course learning outcomes to facilitate the introduction of the qualifier?** | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No*(if yes see below)* |

It is the Department’s responsibility to make sure that any changes that need to be made to the Master course structure and/or the course learning outcomes to facilitate the introduction of the qualifier are submitted via Curriculum Update in accordance with the stated deadlines for the type of information being changed.

# SECTION D: Consultation

This consultation needs to be carried out by the Department prior to the form being submitted to QUAD.

**External Examiner Recommendation:**

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| **For completion by the external examiner of the Master course:** |
| **Please comment on the curriculum for the qualifier and its currency**  |
|  |
| **How does the qualifier compare with similar awards at other UK Higher Education Institutions and national reference points?**  |
|  |
| **Name** |  | **Date** |  |

**CER Recommendation**

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| **For completion by Marketing and Student Recruitment (MaSR):** |
| **Please provide an analysis of market demand and feasibility below:** |
|  |
| **MaSR Recommendation***For areas to be further clarified, please indicate in the comments above at what stage these need to be addressed* |  |
| **Name** |  | **Date** |  |

**Department Support**

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| **Proposal supported by the Head of Administering Department** |
| **Department** |  |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |
| **Proposal supported by the Head of other department(s) contributing to the qualifier** |
| **Department** |  |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |

# Once all the sections above have been completed, please forward this form and any accompanying information to the QUAD team (quad@essex.ac.uk)

# SECTION E: Approval

**CRT Comments:**

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| **Comments to be addressed during the approval process** |
|  |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |

**QUAD Manager Comments:**

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| **If needed, have changes been made to the Master course structure or learning outcomes?** | [ ]  Yes [ ]  [ ]  No |
| **Does a check need to be undertaken with the EBS Accreditation Team or a PSRB?** *If yes provide comments from below* | [ ]  Yes [ ]  [ ]  No |
|  |
| **Does a RoA variation need to be submitted?***If yes provide comments from Assessment Team below.* | [ ]  Yes [ ]  [ ]  No |
|  |
| **Comments to be addressed during the approval process** |
|  |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |

**Faculty Dean approval:**

|  |  |
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| **Faculty Dean Approval given?** | [ ]  Yes [ ]  [ ]  No |
| **Comments** |  |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |