

University of Essex

CHANGES TO VALIDATED PROVISION

1. Introduction

It is understood that courses are dynamic and are subject to modifications from time to time. It is expected that course teams will regularly review their programmes and make minor updates, for example to indicative content, reading lists and references. Such small changes do not normally require approval from the University.

A more significant change to a validated course (for example affecting learning outcomes or assessment methods) may not be made without the prior consent of the Dean or Deputy Dean of Partnerships, acting on behalf of the Partnerships Education Committee, which should normally be obtained at least three months before the expected implementation of the change.

Some modifications requiring Dean's approval are regarded as minor whereas others are more major in character. In essence, minor modifications do not alter the substantial character of the course, whilst major modifications are those which fundamentally alter the character of the course. The decision as to whether a proposed change to a validated course constitutes a minor or a major modification is made by the Dean or Deputy Dean of Partnerships.

Where a temporary modification to a course is needed to meet the needs of an individual student or a small group of students, the course team should complete the ['Special Syllabus Request' form available on the Partnerships webpages](#).

2. Minor modifications

Minor modifications are dealt with through the course variation procedure. Details of proposed minor modifications to validated awards are submitted to the Dean and Deputy Dean of Partnerships, who may approve the variation under Chair's action on behalf of the Partnerships Education Committee.

Documentation regarding the proposed change(s) will normally include a summary overview indicating where the change lies. Examples of minor course variations include:

- a change in the balance of components of assessment within a module
- adjustments to module learning outcomes
- modest changes to the mode and content of assessment

The documentation should detail the name of the award undergoing change, the nature and rationale behind the proposed change, the expected date of implementation, any delivery or resource implications, and evidence of consultation with the relevant external examiner(s) and students. Where the proposed change affects the programme specification and module map, these documents should be included as appendices. The documentation should be signed by relevant senior member(s) of staff at the partner institution, and should normally be submitted to the Dean and Deputy Dean of Partnerships, via the Partnerships Team (partnerships@essex.ac.uk), at least three months prior to the implementation date. The Dean or Deputy Dean of Partnerships signs the document to formally record approval of the change, and this is reported to the next meeting of the Partnerships Education Committee.

[The Course Variation Form can be found on the Partnerships webpages](#).

3. Major modifications

Major modifications normally require further action and the Dean may consult with an internal and/or external academic with relevant subject expertise before deciding whether the proposed change should proceed through the course variation route or would require re-validation.

Examples of major course variations include:

- a change in course title
- adjustments to course outcomes
- key changes to the course structure
- key changes to delivery methods (e.g. to VLE)
- a change in the language of delivery and assessment (for international partnerships)
- introduction of a new module
- a significant number of minor changes.

Documentation regarding the proposed change(s), including evidence of consultation with the relevant external examiner(s) and students, should be submitted to the Dean and Deputy Dean of Partnerships via the Partnerships Team (partnerships@essex.ac.uk), for consideration at least three months prior to the implementation date, using the Course Variation Form. An updated programme specification and module map should be included as appendices. [The course variation form is available on the Partnerships webpages.](#)

4. Temporary Suspension of validated courses

A course team may request a suspension of a validated course, usually for a period of one academic year. The reasons for the suspension will need to be provided, with details any implications for students currently completing the course, including how reassessment or requirements for students to repeat a year will be managed.

A course suspension form should be approved internally at the Partner Institution and submitted to the Dean and Deputy Dean of Partnerships via the Partnerships Team (partnerships@essex.ac.uk), for approval. The [course suspension form is available on the Partnerships webpages.](#)

5. Discontinuation of validated courses

Discontinuation of a validated course is normally agreed after discussion between relevant staff at the University and the partner institution. The University is notified of the decision to close a course in two stages, to enable oversight the student experience during the withdrawal process.

Once a decision to close a course to new applicants has been taken, the partner institution should complete the [Course Discontinuation Form, available on the Partnership webpages.](#) As part of the withdrawal process, the course team will be expected to detail an exit strategy for students completing the course to ensure that the quality of their experience is not compromised.

It is expected that students enrolled on the course will follow it to completion. In exceptional circumstances (for example for students returning from a period of intermission), students may be asked to transfer to a comparable course. In these cases, discussions with students and evidence of student agreement must be fully documented.

The Course Discontinuation Form should be signed by a relevant senior member of staff at the partner institution and submitted to the Dean and Deputy Dean of Partnerships via the Partnerships Team (partnerships@essex.ac.uk), for approval.

On an annual basis in the Autumn Term, consultations will take place between the University and the partner institutions to check the number of students remaining on the course. Once all enrolled students have completed the course it will formally be closed.