



Senate Handbook

Managing Undergraduate Courses

This Handbook supplements Regulations governed by Senate.

It includes policies, procedures, advice and/or guidance that staff and students involved in undergraduate provision are expected to follow in the proper conduct of University business.

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Changes to this document since version 1.3 October 2023:

- Change from MK:U Education Lead to Director of Education (throughout)
- Addition of statement on staff responsibilities (Introduction)
- Addition of statement defining working days (Introduction)
- Reference to Office for Students' expectations added (introduction)
- Note added that not all undergraduate courses are Level 6 (2)
- Revised role description of Coach (3.3)
- Updated responsibilities for approval of course changes (7.2, Appendix A)
- Clarification added that markers should not act as sample moderators (11.2)
- Revised moderation questions (11.2)
- Clarifications added around progression at risk (15.2)
- Removal of award outcomes and classification information (16)
- Removal of admissions policy (17)
- Removal of attendance policy (18)

PART A INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

This Handbook is designed to support staff in the day-to-day management of undergraduate courses and undergraduate students. Undergraduate courses are delivered by the MK:U team, which is part of Cranfield University. Cranfield University validates undergraduate awards delivered by MK:U.

This Handbook applies to the management of all undergraduate students, including those who are studying an apprenticeship programme which leads to an undergraduate degree, however this Handbook should be read in conjunction with the Senate Handbook: Apprenticeship Students' Handbook for apprenticeship programmes.

The purpose of this Handbook is to outline to all course teams and course leads the procedures that they are required to follow in the management of their courses and their ongoing development. These procedures have been approved by Education Committee and/or the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) (on behalf of Senate) and reflect University Laws and expectations of the Office for Students and their ongoing conditions of registration and their [Sector Recognised Standards](#)¹, as well as the guidance provided in the Expectations and Practices of the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code for Higher Education². As part of its role in ensuring robust course management, Education Committee expects all course teams and staff involved in the delivery of undergraduate programmes to follow the Handbook in all respects.

This Handbook applies to a range of undergraduate awards. These include:

- Bachelor of Arts BA
- Bachelor of Science BSc
- Bachelor of Business Administration BBA
- Bachelor of Engineering BEng
- Diploma of Higher Education DipHE
- Certificate of Higher Education CertHE
- Short Courses (both accredited and non-accredited)
- Apprenticeships Levels 4-6 (including those where no academic qualification is awarded)

Throughout this Handbook timescales are referred to as measured in working days. Working days do not include any weekend days or days where the University is closed (public bank holidays or published University closure days).

This Handbook assigns responsibilities for various processes and decisions to particular postholders in the University. Where required for the operation of the University, specific responsibilities may be given to other members of the University by agreement between the relevant University Officers, such arrangements to be recorded by the Secretary to Senate until such time as the Handbook is updated.

This Handbook is supplemented by a number of other Senate Handbooks.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/53821cbf-5779-4380-bf2a-aa8f5c53ecd4/sector-recognised-standards.pdf>

²UK Quality Code (qaa.ac.uk)

Handbooks specific to undergraduate students:

[Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards](#)

This Handbook is written for staff and students and details the assessment rules, rules for progression and final award criteria for undergraduate courses, as well as details of the University's fit to sit and exceptional circumstances policies.

[Undergraduate Students' Senate Handbook](#)

This Handbook provides key information for all undergraduate students on their rights and responsibilities as a registered student. This Handbook also contains a section specifically for apprentices.

Handbooks relevant to all Cranfield students:

[Senate Handbook on External Examiners \(Taught Courses\)](#)

This Handbook covers the selection, nomination and appointment of External Examiners, conditions of appointment, key duties of External Examiners and annual reporting by External Examiners.

[Senate Handbook on Positions of Responsibility in Learning, Teaching and Assessment](#)

This Handbook outlines various positions of responsibility in learning, teaching and assessment across the University, and gives details of the key responsibilities/duties of each role and, for academic positions, details of the appointment process/requirements.

[Senate Handbook for Recognised Teachers](#)

This Handbook provides details for Recognised Teachers their conditions of appointment, responsibilities, key tasks and access to University resources.

[Senate Student Handbook on Changes to Registration \(including suspension of study and early termination of registration\)](#)

This Handbook details the University's approach to managing requested changes (from both staff and students) to a student's registration, including changes to programme of study, research degrees, mode of study, length of study and suspension or withdrawal from study, and the process for appealing against any decision made.

[Senate Handbook on Academic Misconduct](#)

This Handbook gives definitions of academic misconduct and guidance and advice for students and staff on avoidance and detection of academic misconduct. The Handbook also details the procedures for and stages of investigations into academic misconduct, including a student's right to appeal any decision made.

[Senate Handbook on Student Complaints](#)

This Handbook details the procedures to be followed by students in the event that they wish to make a complaint about an element of their course or dealings with the University, or under the University's Dignity at Study Policy. The Handbook details where students can seek advice from and the University's approach to the conduct of any investigation, including malicious complaints. The Handbook also details who is responsible for any investigation and the processes to be followed by students at each stage of an investigation, including how to make an appeal to the external regulator (OIA).

[Senate Handbook on Academic Appeals](#)

This Handbook details the procedures to be followed by all students in the event that they wish to appeal the final outcome of their Taught or Research degree. The Handbook defines appeals and the applicable grounds for appeal, the University's approach to the conduct of any investigation and the processes followed by staff and students at each stage of an investigation, including appeals to the external regulator (OIA).

Senate Handbook on Student Disciplinary Procedures

This Handbook details for students the University's procedures for the management of complaints made against their behaviour and outlines details of the procedures that will be followed, including the conduct of investigations and the stages of investigation/appeal as well as setting out examples of penalties that may be applied.

Senate Handbook on Student Welfare

This Handbook outlines the various aspects of welfare provision the University has for its students as well as relevant policies and procedures in case of issues or concerns.

2 What is an undergraduate course?

Throughout this Handbook, the term “course” is used to describe a discrete and defined combination of learning provision leading to a uniquely-named undergraduate award of the University.

Where an undergraduate award is delivered as part of an apprenticeship, the successful completion of the undergraduate award forms the academic aspect of each student’s apprenticeship. The academic course forms one part of the apprenticeship, with students required to complete on-the-job training and successfully pass their End-point Assessment (EPA) in order to complete their apprenticeship. The End-point Assessment may or may not form part of the academic qualification; where it does not form part of the qualification itself students must have undertaken the EPA before they are able to graduate from their award.

Each “course” may have a number of defined entry and exit routes associated with it (and therefore a number of associated awards). Entry and exit routes associated with any one course are outlined in the course specification document. Not all undergraduate courses are at degree level (Level 6), some may offer provision up to Level 4 and/or Level 5 only.

Each undergraduate degree course covers three levels of study, Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6. MK:U does not currently offer early exit awards from degree courses associated with an apprenticeship – students on apprenticeship courses can only receive the intended award associated with their apprenticeship standard.

Each course will be made up of a number of modules, some of which will be shared across several courses, particularly at Level 4. Some modules will be designated in course specifications as ‘core’ modules, which means that students must complete these in order to complete the named award, and others designated as ‘optional’ or ‘elective modules’, meaning that students may choose to sit some of these modules in order to complete their award. Modules will usually be worth 15 or 30 credits, with 120 credits required for each level of study.

Modules may be offered to students at multiple levels of study, with the learning and assessment adjusted to allow students to demonstrate the required knowledge and understanding associated with the level they are currently studying at.

3 Key Staff involved in undergraduate provision

A number of staff play a key role in the delivery of undergraduate programmes. This section of the Handbook provides information on some of these staff and the roles they have in delivering undergraduate provision.

3.1 Course Lead

Each course has a separate Course Lead, who has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management and delivery of their course. This role may be shared by several members of staff e.g. there may be a Cohort Lead that is responsible for an individual cohort within a course and works with the Course Lead.

The primary responsibilities of a course lead include:

- responsibility for the students' learning journey from admission to graduation;
- ensuring that students are fully inducted to the university and course;
- working with the Coaches to monitor students' progress;
- ensuring appropriate and timely feedback is given to students (both formative and on summative assessments);
- ensuring that all measures are taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the students on the course;
- ensuring that appropriate academic and pastoral tuition is provided to students to ensure successful completion of their courses;
- management of the overall course, including ensuring that each module is designed and delivered in accordance with the university's educational approach and practices; and that there is a clear, overall, narrative for the course and ensuring module contents are aligned with it;
- coordinating the input from visiting fellows, industry partners and Cranfield contributors to the course to ensure a seamless student experience;
- responsibility for the overall quality of the course, from Intended Learning Outcomes, course content to assessment procedures;
- leading the review and development of the course, paying particular regard to student feedback, feedback from the industrial advisory panel, outputs from End of Module reviews, and external market developments;
- producing and updating the course Canvas site and other key course documents/resources, in consultation with SAS;
- recommending the appointment of External Examiners to Education Committee and incorporate the Examiners feedback into the curriculum;
- representing the course at MK:U meetings;
- overseeing the academic progress of all students on the course, in consultation with SAS;
- ensuring that all students receive fair and equal opportunities to succeed;
- ensuring that the assessment elements used as part of the course are authentic, in line with the university's undergraduate assessment principles and support the learning process;
- managing requests for:
 - additional learning support, in consultation with a Learning Support Officer;
 - adjustments to the pattern of study (including changes of mode (PT/FT) and changes to elective modules or project titles), in consultation with SAS;
 - adjustments to the overall period of study (including interruptions of study: suspensions or extensions), in consultation with SAS.
- ensuring that, when students have successfully completed sufficient work, that their marks are considered and approved by the appropriate Board of Examiners;

- ensuring that, where further work is required by a Board of Examiners, that students are provided with sufficient information and support to complete that work for re-assessment.
- Ensuring that there is an External Examiner appointed for the course.

In addition, Course Leads, in line with their duties, work collaboratively with a range of other staff: academic, professional and administrative. For example:

- Delivery of individual modules, and the quality of that provision, is often delegated to individual Module Leaders.
- Administrative support is often delegated to SAS Leads (who work within Education Services).
- Advice and guidance on individual learning needs is often provided by Learning Support Officers.
- Assessment is undertaken formally by Examiners, appointed by the MK:U Director of Education, but often on the recommendation of the Course Lead. Examiners may be supported by Markers.
- Provision of feedback on assessed work within University guidelines is undertaken by individual Examiners and Markers.

Similarly, although much of the day-to-day course provision, and the support of students, may be dispersed, it remains the responsibility of the Course Lead to ensure that the overall “student experience” of students registered on their course is appropriate and of the standard expected by Senate and its Education Committee (i.e. duties may be delegated to other staff but the responsibilities for monitoring and maintaining qualities and standards are not).

Where Course Leads have concerns about the contributions of individual members of staff in relation to standards and general expectations, they have a duty to raise these concerns with the appropriate line manager and/or the MK:U Director of Education or Pro-Vice Chancellor MK:U as appropriate.

All staff, therefore, who manage course provision and/or students are expected to be aware of the information in this Handbook and:

- be aware of University Laws, and particularly Senate Regulations and Senate Handbooks;
- be aware of, and engage with, other Education Services guidance documents and policies;
- be aware of the importance of their role in the quality assurance of their course;
- proactively consult with their MK:U Director of Education and/or officers in Education Services over complex cases and interpretation of any of the above.

3.2 Module Leader

Each module has a dedicated Module Leader. The Module Leader is responsible for:

- maintaining the quality of the module in line with the MK:U approach (e.g. using Problem Based Learning) ;
- ensuring the module and its assessments function within University regulations and policies;
- ensuring appropriate and timely feedback is provided to students on the module (both formative feedback and from the summative assessments);
- overseeing the overall academic progress of students registered on the module;
- reviewing the development and content of the module on a regular basis, including the production of any formal review documentation in line with University procedures;

- conducting the End of Module Review after each iteration of the module and incorporating learnings into the next iteration;
- attending relevant course committees as required.

The Module Leader should work closely with the Course Lead(s) to ensure that all responsibilities are managed effectively. Where a module is delivered as part of more than one course, the Module Leader should ensure that they are clear on which course is considered to “own” the module and therefore which Course Lead they are primarily responsible to, and to whom they should raise issues and concerns that arise from a module being utilised by more than one course.

3.3 Coach

The Coach forms an important part of the learning experience for apprentices, and will facilitate and support each apprentice’s journey through their studies. The Coach will help support and guide apprentices through the full life cycle of their apprenticeship from enrolment to successful completion of their End-point Assessments, through facilitating discussions, exploring options, developing their decision making and aiding apprentices to become self-efficacious learners and employees. This will include helping individuals transition into the role of student/apprentice in the context of their ongoing employment.

The Coach will work with apprentices to help them transition into the role of a student/apprentice. They will provide apprentices with support as they progress through their academic and apprenticeship path, through their studies and onwards into their graduate career. The Coach will provide individually tailored support for each apprentice and their employer to enable the apprentice to translate their academic learning into demonstratable evidence that they meet the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) required by the Apprenticeship Standard.

The Coach will have a strong understanding of the degree/apprenticeship processes and the educational options available to apprentices as they progress through their course. In addition, Coaches should have a good understanding of the Apprenticeship Standards that each of their apprentices are working towards, including the assessment plan and required Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.

Coaches will focus on challenging and enhancing apprentice performance by encouraging employers to provide them with sufficient opportunities to apply their learning in the workplace. Coaches will maintain contact with apprentices whilst they are away from the University in the workplace and will act as a link for apprentices back into the University. The Coach will also work with the apprentices’ employers to ensure that the apprentice meet the aims of their apprenticeship. This may include utilising a coaching approach with employers/line managers who are not complying with the mandatory requirements of the apprenticeship programme (such as not allowing the apprentice sufficient number of ‘off the job’ hours or not offering exposure to the necessary opportunities in the workplace to evidence the KSBs). The coach will also contribute to regular employer operational meetings and/or quarterly reviews (where the progress of whole cohorts are discussed).

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Coaches will support the University’s compliance with regulatory requirements for apprenticeship provision, including OfS, Ofsted and ESFA. This will include meticulous record keeping of all interactions with employers and students.

As part of the support provided to apprentices, the Coach will:

- Provide support in use of the e-portfolio tool for students.
- Provide guidance to students and staff on the End-point Assessment (EPA) criteria.

- Identify academic skills the apprentice may require and how these can be applied in the workplace in order to meet the competencies set out in the apprenticeship standard.
- Undertake apprenticeship (tripartite) reviews with apprentices and their employers, and offer guidance on building the portfolio of evidence for the EPA.
- Facilitate and support input into the final assessment for apprentices and ensure apprentices are ready for Gateway, prior to EPA.
- utilise a coaching approach to help identify evidenced examples that best showcases the apprentice's competence against the KSBs set out in the standard.
- Support and provide guidance to apprentices with regard to the preparation of writing and collating evidence which will demonstrate competence of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) in the apprenticeship standard, in line with the apprenticeship standard assessment criteria.
- Facilitate discussions with apprentices and their employer to identify and select examples of evidence from work-based tasks to demonstrate competence against the KSBs set out in the apprenticeship standard, and to identify workstreams/projects that will allow them to develop/demonstrate their competence and result in evidence for inclusion in their EPA portfolio.
- Support apprentices to engage in all apprenticeship requirements, particularly in the development of Maths and English skills, if not already at the required level.
- Liaise with employers and apprentices to develop learning and development plans as appropriate to the relevant apprenticeship standard.
- Set and communicate targets for employers and learners, monitor progress and support learner development.
- facilitate peer support activities between different cohort levels.
- Attend reviews, in person or remotely, with apprentices and employers.
- Take part in/contribute to employer operational meetings and/or quarterly reviews (where progress of whole cohorts are discussed).
- Liaise with the End-point Assessors to understand their needs and to act accordingly.
- Undertake, in collaboration with employers, final assessment and sign off on behalf of the University of an apprentice's achievements and development against the Apprenticeship Standard prior to Gateway.
- Work with other Groups (for example Apprenticeships Office, Education Services) within the University to ensure a coordinated support service is provided to the apprentices.

3.4 Examiners

All courses will have a Board of Examiners, made up of both Internal and External Examiners. Further details of the constitution and roles of Boards of Examiners are given at section 12 of this Handbook.

All courses will have one or more External Examiner attached to it. External Examiners may be appointed at module-level for individual modules or groups of modules, however one External Examiner should have oversight of the whole course. Further details on External Examiners can be found in section 13 of this Handbook.

Internal Examiners are required to be members of academic staff or Recognised Teachers.

The key responsibilities of all Examiners are to:

- attend all meetings of the Board of Examiners, unless prevented by good cause and agreed in advance with the Chair, and declare any potential conflict of interests to the board;

- accept the collective decision of the Board of Examiners in the management of all assessment relating to the taught programme of study, and to the outcomes for all candidates;
- approve the assessment tasks (e.g. examination questions and papers, assignments and projects) for candidates, in line with the agreed structure and methods of assessment approved by Senate;
- mark, and to approve the marks of others (i.e. Markers) of, the work of candidates submitted for assessment, and to resolve any discrepancies between Examiners and Markers in line with guidance provided by Senate, including cases where Markers cannot reach an agreement on a mark;
- report or raise any concerns about the integrity of the assessment process with the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

3.5 SAS Leads

Support is provided by Education Services to both course teams and students through the Undergraduate SAS Lead(s) under the supervision of the SAS Manager. SAS Leads will support course teams and students with a variety of tasks, including:

- the internal processes for the recruitment of students to award-bearing courses;
- communications to and with students before, during and after their formal registration periods, to ensure that they have accurate and timely information in order to manage their studies;
- assisting with the proper induction of students at initial registration and at key points in the course or programme delivery cycle (e.g. study tours, group projects, individual research projects);
- assisting with timetabling and room allocations;
- maintaining an overall understanding and accurate records of the academic progression of individual students and highlighting individual or systemic concerns to senior staff, including supporting formal examination boards or meetings;
- providing key support to academic staff in the delivery of modules, group projects and individual research projects, including the arrangement of required progress review meetings and events for individual students, and groups of students;
- supporting the Course Lead and Coach in their roles.

PART B COURSE MANAGEMENT

4 Essential course documentation

Every course has a number of key documents associated with it, which require regular review and revision. In most cases, these conform to a common template defined by Education Committee (on behalf of Senate).

They include, as a minimum:

- a **course concept and business case** (a high-level description of the origins and aims of the course, written at the time of initial approval);
- a **course specification** written to a national specification (and published partially on the University website), which outlines the aims of the course, and how it is delivered; and describes in detail the structure (modules and other elements) of the course for a particular cohort intake, and what students must do to achieve any awards associated with the course;
- individual **module descriptors** for all modules associated with the course;
- an online **course handbook** on the VLE.

Compiled at course approval only

Submitted **annually** and integrated into the University's student records system (SITS)

Kept under **constant review** by the course team and updated at least annually.

Course Leads are required to review these documents on at least an annual basis, seeking advice from Education Services and the MK:U Director of Education.

5 Course Structures and Design Principles

5.1 Course Structures

In line with the QAA Higher Education Credit Framework for England, MK:U Undergraduate degrees will contain 360 learning credits, consisting of:

- 120 credits at Level 4
- 120 credits at Level 5
- 120 credits at Level 6

MK:U degrees have a standard structure, made up of a mix of compulsory and elective modules. Most modules are 30 credits, with the remaining being 15 credits.

The aim of the large 30 credit modules is to enable the students to understand the integrated and complex nature of the topics being studied. In some cases, 30 credit modules may be separated into two 15 credit stages to allow for flexibility in module sharing across degrees.

The typical layout of an undergraduate MK:U degree is illustrated below³.

| Level 4 – 120 Credits | Level 5 – 120 Credits | Level 6 – 120 Credits |
|---|--|---|
| Generalise – Compulsory – 30 Credits Module compulsory to all students in the pillar | Specialise – Compulsory – 30 Credits Module compulsory to all students on the degree | Specialise – Compulsory – either 1x 30 credit or 2x 15 credit Module(s) compulsory to all students on the degree |
| Generalise – Compulsory – 30 Credits Module compulsory to all students in the pillar | Specialise – Compulsory – 30 Credits Module compulsory to all students on the degree | Individualise – Electives – totalling 60 credits These electives will either be: “Elective – option list” – where the degree course can specify which electives the students can choose from. “Elective – open” – where the students can choose from across all pillars <i>Note: for some degree courses the level 6 split may need to be different between compulsory and electives.</i> |
| Generalise – Compulsory – 30 Credits Module compulsory to all students in the pillar | Individualise – Electives – either 1x30 credit or 2x 15 credit These electives will either be: “Elective – option list” – where the degree course can specify which electives the students can choose from. “Elective – open” – where the students can choose from across all pillars | |
| Generalise – Compulsory – 15 Credits Module compulsory to all students in the pillar | Specialise/Generalise – Compulsory – 15 Credits Module compulsory to all students on the degree (or across the pillar if relevant) | Professional Skills – Project – 30 credits All students will do a 30 credit individual or group project. This is usually required for an Honours degree and for most accreditation bodies. |
| Professional Skills – Compulsory – 15 Credits Module compulsory to all students at MK:U | Professional Skills – Compulsory – 15 Credits Module compulsory to all students at MK:U | |

³ Some courses may adapt the standard structure based on apprenticeship standards or accreditation requirements. Some courses, especially those which map to an apprenticeship standard, may not have electives.

5.2 Course Design Principles

All courses should be designed and updated in line with the overall MK:U learning mission, being that the learning experience at MK:U for students will be:

- Live – applied to actual business and social issues.
- Integrated – developing technical, creative, commercial and professional skills.
- Flexible – to adapt to busy lifestyles and different needs.
- Exciting – future orientated, exploring new technologies.

Based on this learning mission, there are five underlying design principles for all MK:U education:

1. Informed by business need and real-world issues.
2. Integrated and versatile course and curriculum design.
3. Generalise, Specialise, Individualise.
4. Curiosity-driven with an emphasis on experimentation.
5. Widely accessible and welcoming of different learning approaches.

Principle 1: Informed by business need and real-world issues

All learning outputs will be focused on the future employment of the students. The education courses are designed and delivered with employers to meet their future needs and preparing the students to meet that need. Courses are designed to support the students to learn through practical examples that develop and grow their professional skills, as well as their technical skills, to ensure that they are ready upon graduation for employment. As such, all learning opportunities will be crafted to support and enable this 'for employment' principle to facilitate work ready graduates.

Principle 2: Integrated and versatile course and curriculum design

The curriculum design will be integrated to create a versatile structure that allows the students to build their own path through their degree. Whilst each module will have its own tools and techniques, the teaching styles and approaches will be common across the curriculum to enable the students to move between modules easily.

The pillar structures will also enable the rapid development of new courses to meet the changing needs of future learners and employers. By having a consistent approach to education and course design, the development of new degrees will be versatile and adaptable to the changing needs.

It is noted that for apprenticeship courses there will be significantly less flexibility due to the need to meet the relevant apprenticeship standard as set out by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

Principle 3: Generalise, Specialise, Individualise

The overall structure of a course generally abides by the following outline but is subject to the needs of the course:

- Generalise; a common set of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and modules for Level 4, and occasionally some Level 5, where all students in a pillar study together across degree subjects.
- Specialise; predominately in Level 5 and to a smaller extent in Level 6 students focus on their individual degree discipline.
- Individualise; to a small extent in Level 5 and predominately in Level 6 students individualise their learning journey by focusing on their own career aspirations.

The generalise element provides a grounding in the area of interest. This enables students to gain a breadth of understanding of their topic area before specialising in a degree subject in the next phase and finally individualising as they develop their personal career focus. To facilitate this approach all modules, wherever possible, will have the ability to be electives for students on other degree courses from across all pillars. This structure enables the students to gain a breadth of knowledge before gaining an in-depth understanding creating a 'T-shaped' graduate.

Principle 4: Curiosity-driven with an emphasis on experimentation

The students will be expected to develop through curiosity, through active learning and experimentation. The students will be required to try different approaches to problem solving, to test and trial their solutions. Students will be expected to develop resilience around their learning, to understand that not every approach is successful but the learning they gain from experimenting is key to future successes. The education design of the courses should facilitate and enable this learning pattern. In parallel, students are expected to learn the lifelong skills of curiosity, experimentation and resilience.

Principle 5: Widely accessible and welcoming of different learning approaches

MK:U is inclusive with the explicit aim of being accessible for all. As part of its widening participation mandate, the learning and education design will be accessible for all regardless of, for example, physical ability, gender, age, or neurodiversity status.

5.3 Approach to Student Learning

The approach to student learning should be applicable, flexible and inclusive. Modules should utilise real-world problems at the core of their design with a focus on learning through the problem (see section 5.4 for more details). Projects should, wherever possible, be co-delivered with the organisation in focus or the industry expert. The academics and industry tutors may take the form of mentors to support the students in developing their own learning.

Module content should be designed to ensure that both experiential learning and knowledge transfer are delivered to the student in an appropriate manner, and timing, for the topic. The knowledge students' need for their future should be carefully weaved into their experiences both in the face-to-face sessions and online. Technology should be utilised effectively to ensure that the students have the appropriate access to the learnings they need.

In addition to academic-led activities, much valuable learning comes in the form of peer-to-peer learning. Modules should be designed to facilitate this wherever possible, especially where the different delivery modes - full-time, part-time and apprenticeship - may be in the same sessions, enabling and facilitating the interchange of student experiences.

5.4 Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-based learning (including project-based and enquiry-based learning) is the core type of learning for MK:U as it focuses on "learning by doing". Learners are given a problem to investigate and use that as the basis for their learning; the role of the academic is to guide and assist the students to develop their own learning.

MK:U has developed its own unique seven step model for delivering PBL. The following approach should be used:

1. The first step is the groupings and briefing stage where the apprentices are briefed on the problem that you have designed. A particularly important part of this stage is

sharing with the apprentices the relevant Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours that align with this specific problem. They are then put into appropriate groups; this can either be random or you may wish to curate the groupings depending on what you are aiming to achieve. We aim for groups of 4-5 but it should be appropriate to the problem. Each group should allocate a Chair, Scribe and Time-Keeper. You may wish to allocate different elements of the problem to different groups; this can make stage 6 more impactful.

2. They then identify the problems, explore their pre-existing knowledge and brainstorm possible outcomes or options – in this stage the group, as a team, identify what they already know of the topic and identify the underlying problem.
3. The third stage is where they identify what they don't know and what they need to research. In this stage they allocate out the workload amongst the group in preparation for the next stage.
4. Stage 4 is independent study where they undertake research to feedback into their group. They then collate the information as a group and assemble the information they have identified.
5. The apprentices then apply this new knowledge to the problem to either solve, progress or even refute the problem.
6. The apprentices will then feedback to the cohort and share their learnings, this may be in a number of ways, please see the guidance produced on end of day activities. It is important that this feedback method varies across the module and course to ensure student engagement; it may also include feedback after the session is finished.
7. Finally, and the key part of the session, they reflect on what they have learnt and then we help them to identify in-work application of their learnings from the problem. For apprentices this should also include a discussion on KSBs (either after each PBL exercise or after a group of them)

In stage 1, students will be provided with briefs on Canvas that outline the problem under consideration. These will be developed closely with industry. The briefs will cover, for example:

- Industrial background - the general background within which the industry problem sits.
- Problem to be investigated - this will outline the issue identified by industry that the students need to consider, investigate and learn from.
- Intended learning outcomes - this will clearly identify how the project links to the module and degree ILOs. Where relevant, it will also clearly identify how the project links to the apprenticeship's knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Knowledge sources - this will provide links to resources whether they are online, in class, or other formats for the students to develop their academic knowledge around this problem.
- Expected outcomes - this will identify to the students what is expected of them as they work through the project.
- Assessment - this will identify if the assessment is formative or summative, how this relates to the overall grade, and any marking rubric.

It is expected that the majority of the work students engage with will be through these briefs. The briefs may be utilised in just one session or maybe across the entire module and will focus on learning objectives of the course.

Project briefs will be developed by the MK:U team and form a core library of resources which can be reused across different courses at different levels.

5.5 Session Typologies

A key principle of the approach to student learning is that students learn through doing. Therefore, it would be expected that courses will feature very few formal lecture sessions, known as technical seminars, where the presenter is at the front of the room. In general, these should be reserved for high profile external guest speakers.

For the majority of learning sessions the academic or industry tutor should be in the centre of the room in a supportive role as the students progress through their learning journey. These sessions should be interactive sessions in multiple groups.

The majority of the students' face-to-face time should be working together on the problems set. Technology will enable these sessions to be both in-class and online simultaneously utilising a hybrid model, where practical.

Modules should also be designed to allow students to engage with online activities; these may be in two formats, self-guided or tutor guided, and may be synchronous or asynchronous. These may be in preparation for, during, or after any of the module's sessions, as appropriate to the learning journey.

5.6 Course and Module-level ILOs

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are concise statements written using descriptive language which sets out how students will demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning at the end of a programme or module.

Where relevant, ILOs should be written to align with or support any regulatory requirements associated with a particular course or module, e.g. any PSRB accreditation expected outcomes or apprenticeship standard Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs).

For courses, ILOs should be written for each award associated with a course (the Level 6 degree and Level 4 and Level 5 exit awards). Typically, degree courses should have around 12-15 course-level ILOs⁴, which cover the skills and competencies that students need to demonstrate at each level of their award (e.g. 4-5 ILOs for each level of study).

For modules, ILOs should be written specifically to the level that the module is being taught and assessed at. Where a module is being assessed at different levels relevant ILOs should be written for each level of assessment. There should normally be no more than four ILOs per module. It is not necessary for all ILOs to be assessed on every assessment instance but all ILOs should be assessable either formatively or summatively. Guidance on the creation of ILOs is provided at Appendix D.

5.7 End Of Module Reviews

At the end of every delivery of a module there should be a formal review held. This should be held after student feedback has been received via Evasys. Evasys surveys will be sent to the students once their final set of module marks have been returned to them. This review meeting is a key element to ensuring the quality of provision. It should be positive in tone and focus on improvements rather than issues.

The End of Module review attendees should include:

- Module Lead – Chair of this meeting;

⁴ Additional ILOs may be appropriate or necessary for courses which are underpinned by an apprenticeship standard or are professionally accredited.

- everyone who delivered a significant element of the module (not including guest speakers);
- Course Lead(s);
- Coaches, or a representative from the coaching team;
- other Module Leads that feed into/from this module (as appropriate);
- SAS Lead;
- other as needed e.g. Study Skills Team, LEAD B2B team.

The agenda topics are as follows:

- feedback; delivery team, student feedback, others as appropriate;
- ILO review; does it meet the ILOs? Are the ILOS still appropriate?
- KSB review: does it meet the assigned KSBs? Does the KSB mapping need to be reviewed?
- VLE page; are any updates required?
- assessments (formative and summative); appropriateness? Quality of brief/student understanding? Linkages to other modules appropriate.
- Review the grade averages and spread of marks - consider if assign were set at the correct level.
- content; what needs keeping/changing?
- what good practice has been identified for sharing?

After the review there should be a clear action plan for the Module Lead to take forward, this will likely include updates to the module descriptor. If the module is running again in the same academic year, then the Module Lead will need to work with SAS to ensure that an in-year change is approved. All other changes will be approved during the annual review process.

It is acknowledged that the End of Module Review meeting may occur after the next iteration of the module has started. Where this is the case lessons learnt should be implemented as soon as is practical.

6 Assessment Design Principles

Assessment opportunities for undergraduate degrees will be developed and designed by the MK:U team. The below provides key principles that should be followed when course teams are creating assessments for undergraduate students.

6.1 Purpose of Assessment at MK:U

Assessment at MK:U has three aims:

1. To prepare the student for the practical issues and problems they may face in their workplace.
2. To enable the students – and staff – to check their individual progress.
3. To enable the student to gain credits towards a degree.

To achieve all three aims, it is important that the assessment designs give the students a range of differing assessment activities to provide them with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate a wide range of skills that will prepare them for dealing with real challenges in the workplace.

Module Leaders are expected to work with the Course Leads and other Module Leaders to ensure that students are exposed to a range of different assessments across their studies.

6.2 Underlying principles of assessment

There are five underlying principles upon which all MK:U assessments will be set, these are:

1. integrated assessments that cover a variety of topics;
2. focused on applied project work and real-world issues;
3. same module, different assessment levels;
4. students will experience a broad range of assessment opportunities;
5. no closed-book time-constrained exams linked to credits (except where required by accrediting bodies or can be justified as in the best interest of the students).

All of this is underpinned by the principle of accessibility and inclusivity in the design of the assessment.

Principle 1: Integrated

The aim is to offer integrated assessments that cover a variety of topics to enable the student to show evidence of their technical understanding, their ability to integrate across topics and of the wider context.

Principle 2: Real-World, Authentic, Assignments

A founding tenet of the MK:U educational approach is the focus on problem based learning and this extends to assessments. All assessments should facilitate the students' learning journey; they are not separate from that learning journey. Care should be taken when designing assessments to focus on authentic, real-world, problems with the aim of assessing applied problem-solving in practice as well as the students being able to reflect on their learning journey.

Where possible, assessments should aim to develop the students' employability skills. Assessment can be either problems identified by industry partners or virtual problems as identified by the academic, including simulations, projects, company-based work and 'living laboratory' in and around MK:U. Placing problems in a real-world scenario, where possible,

will help the students to understand the context of when they may need to utilise the technical skill.

Principle 3: Same module, different assessment levels

At MK:U, we want students to be able to select their individual pathways and to engage with other subjects if they choose to. This may include undertaking modules from other degree courses; either as an elective choice or as part of their core learning (or even just to sit in, for interest). As such, this may mean that students at different stages of their studies might be taught in the same module. To accommodate this, assessments will need to accommodate students being assessed at different levels.

For example, a Level 6 student undertaking an elective which is a core Level 5 module for another degree; the Level 6 student may be required to demonstrate they can 'synthesise' a topic whereas a Level 5 student may only need to evidence that they can 'analyse' the same topic.

To meet our regulatory requirements, learning gain at each of the appropriate levels (Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6) must be demonstratable. This will require a clear assessment design and a clear associated marking scheme. For example, students at different levels may be set the same case study but have to answer different questions for Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 that enable them to illustrate that they meet the appropriate Intended Learning Outcome (ILO) level.

Principle 4: Range of Assessments

MK:U students will experience a broad range of assessment opportunities. Over the course of their studies students will have the opportunity to engage in different types of assessments including, for example, both group and individual assignments as well as written, verbal, digital and practical delivery options. It is important that the assessments are creative and varied to enable students to develop different skills; this enables students to develop a wider range of work-based skills. It also enables the assessment process to be more inclusive by design.

Principle 5: No closed-book Exams

A principle of MK:U is that there are no summative, time bound, closed books exams unless there is evidence of an industry need or accrediting body requirement.

Course teams can use other exam styles, especially where these replicate real-world pressures e.g. the use of an open book time limited assessment such as the assessment of a case study over a short time period (e.g. 48 hours). Course teams are encouraged to think widely and beyond traditional approaches when designing potential assessments.

Where traditional exams are used as summative assessment, the feedback to students must be in line with the level of feedback the students would usually receive i.e. written feedback on their answers as well as their grade.

6.3 Formative Assessments

Formative assessments do not count towards the grade received by the student. However, for apprenticeship students they may form part of their KSB evidence at their End-point Assessment.

Formative assessments are a core tenant of the educational design at MK:U. The aim of formative assessments is to enable the student to evaluate their own progress and understanding of a particular topic. Formative assessments can also be useful for the course

team to understand the progress of the class as a whole and, if necessary, adjust their teaching focus.

Formative assessments can vary hugely, for example; in-class group discussions; online discussion forums; multiple choice questions; in-class debates; mind-map creation; reflective videos, to name just a few. At MK:U we want our academic team to create regular opportunities for the students to have a variety of formative assessments.

It is expected that for every 15 credits there should be approximately two opportunities for students to have formative assessments with related feedback either individually, as a group or as a cohort, as appropriate to the formative activity. This feedback may include discussions at the end of a PBL session.

All formative assessments should be followed by some form of feedback to students. Feedback on formative assessment can vary hugely, from individual written feedback (e.g. comments on asynchronous blog post) to a group debrief after a class-based activity; from formal to informal feedback. It is important to be clear with the students when formative feedback will be provided and the feedback should be coaching in nature to enable the student to progress their learning.

6.4 Summative Assessments

Summative assessments do count towards the student's final grade.

The role of summative assessments is to provide evidence that the student has mastered a specific, or set of specific, competencies as identified by the ILOs and/or KSBs. The overall grade received will be formally recorded on their transcript.

6.4.1 Summative Assessment Design

Summative assessments at MK:U should be designed for learning and form part of the student's learning journey. Feedback on the assessment should enable them to understand their grade and to assist them in developing their learning and improving their performance – so, feedback needs to show them what to do better next time as well as what they did not do so well this time.

All summative assessments must be designed with a marking rubric to identify clearly to students how the assessment will be marked. The rubric should be based on the ILOs, with the Active Verb level (e.g. critique) being at the pass mark level of the assessment rubric.

All summative assessments should be presented to the students using the MK:U Assessment Briefing Template. As well as outlining the task, the template must reference the ILOs/KSBs that are being assessed and include a marking rubric.

6.4.2 Summative Assessment Quantity

All modules should be designed to avoid over assessment. The MK:U approach with respect to the quantity of summative assessments is that:

- every 15 credits will be assessed i.e. in a 30 credit module there will be at least two distinct assessments;
- for 30 credit modules there will be a maximum of three individual assignment elements but two is the norm and three will only be approved in exceptional circumstances by the MK:U Director of Education;

- 15 credit assessments must not exceed the equivalent of 2,000⁵ essay words of assignment workload, and 30 credits not exceeding 4,000, using the equivalence table below;
- there will be no 'single jeopardy'⁶ assessments unless suitable⁷ formative assessments are in place that directly relate to that assessment;
- no module will be assessed on 100% group work; there must be at least one element of the assessment that is individual. The individual assessment must be weighted at 30% or more of the overall module grade.

The weighting between the elements does not have to be equal but it should be appropriate to the ILOs of the module.

6.4.3 Summative Assessment Indicative Equivalence

The following are **indicative** assessment equivalence. It is important that these are all placed in the context of the topic being assessed and the following is provided as a starting point for assessment quantity. The below table does not cover all of the different assessment options available, however, the table provides a broad guide to the workload norms for a student. Consideration should also be given to the timing of assessments, especially in relation to other modules and assessments the students are taking.

| Assessment Type | Equivalent to 1,000 essay words/ 7.5 credits |
|---|---|
| Blog/Newspaper article | 800 words |
| Business Plan/Feasibility Study | 3-4 pages |
| Case study – assessment of | 3 short answer questions (c250 words) or 1 long answer question (c 1,000 words) |
| Case study – development of | 1,000 words |
| Coursework including substantial use of equations, table, diagrams or similar elements | 3-4 pages |
| Data Analysis | 5-10 individual questions on a data set |
| Debate - group | 0.5 hour |
| Examination – closed book | 1 hour |
| Examination – open book | 1 hour 15 mins |
| Engineering test report | 3-4 pages |
| Gap analysis | 1,000 words |
| Guest lecture summary | 500 words |
| Illustrated Essay/Storyline | 10-15 images |
| Infographic | A3 |
| Laboratory Practical Assessment | 1 hour |
| Laboratory Report | 3-4 pages |
| Laboratory/Fieldwork Notebook including substantial use of equations, table, diagrams or similar elements | 5-6 pages |
| Literature Review | 5 articles reviewed |
| Multiple Choice Quiz | 50 questions |
| Observational Assessment | 10 minutes |

⁵ This is based on industry norms

⁶ i.e. only one piece of assessment upon which the student will be assessed and that will decide whether they have passed/failed the module

⁷ For example, students might be asked to critique a previous similar assignment; or they might be able to present their draft design for a peer group to feedback on; or a tutor might give feedback on the storyboard for a video log.

| Assessment Type | Equivalent to 1,000 essay words/ 7.5 credits |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Peer Assessment | 500 words |
| Pitch Document | 5 PowerPoint slides |
| Podcast - group | 5 minutes per member |
| Podcast - individual | 10 minutes |
| Poster | A3 |
| Poster presentation | 5 minutes |
| Presentation - group | 5 minutes per member |
| Presentation - individual | 10 minutes |
| Project - proposal | 3-4 pages |
| Project - report | 3-4 pages |
| Prototype | 1 iteration |
| Reflective journal or log | 1,500 words |
| Report - individual | 1,000 words |
| Report - group | 750 words per member |
| Technical drawing | A3 |
| Technical specifications | 5 PowerPoint slides or 3-4 pages |
| Video log (Vlog) - group | 5 minutes per member |
| Video log (Vlog) - individual | 10 minutes |
| Viva | 20 mins |
| Website/Wiki – individual | 1 page |
| Website/Wiki – group | 1 page per member |

6.4.4 Summative Assessment Feedback

Students should be provided with feedback for all summative assessments within 20 working days of submission (see section 20 of this Handbook). Where there is more than one summative assessment in a module and they link, feedback should be provided in enough time for students to be able to learn from the feedback before the next element wherever possible.

Consideration must be given to ensuring that the submitted assessment is the student's own work. Where there is group based summative assessment consideration should be given to individual's contribution and an individual assessment element must be incorporated into the module's overall assessment design (weighted at no less than 30%).

Feedback must also be fair to all students. Whatever the assessment style (including exams), feedback must be provided in equivalent quality and quantity⁸; it must also be accessible and inclusive. It must include not only a grade but also constructive feedback on the students' individual answers. Like formative feedback, it should enable the student to understand their grade and to assist them in developing their learning and improving their performance.

⁸ For example, an essay might have, completed rubric with one paragraph of feedback per criteria, an overall comment and a numerical grade; a poster might have a completed rubric, 2-minute verbal feedback (recorded) and a numerical grade; a technical drawing might have a completed rubric, notes on the drawing, an overall comment and a numerical grade.

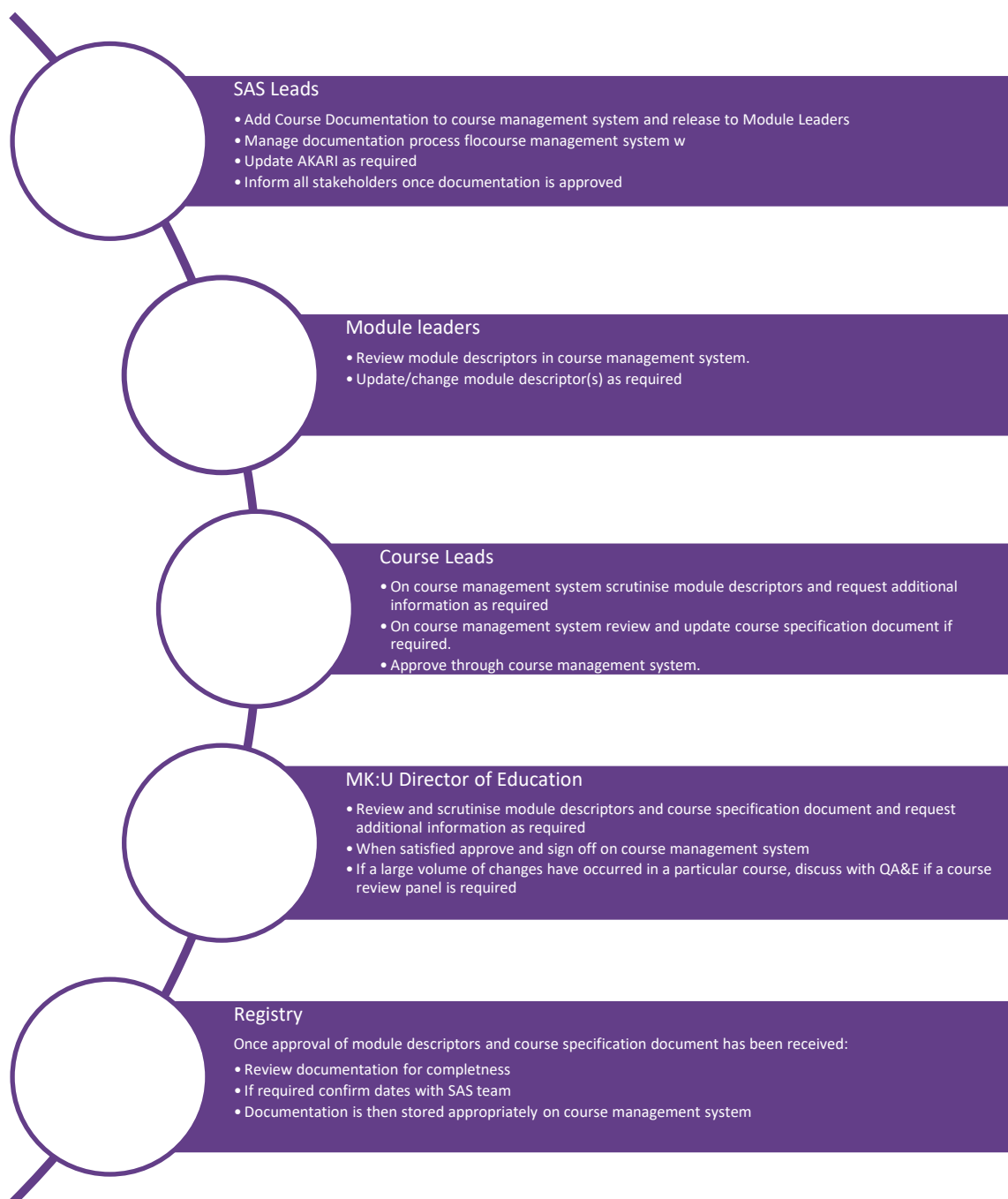
7 Management of changes to courses

7.1 Overview

All proposed changes to the structure and content of taught courses are approved by Senate. In practice, Senate delegates detailed consideration of such proposals to its Education Committee, or to individual Directors of Education.

This section of the Handbook outlines the current powers of delegated approval agreed by Senate. It also outlines the documentation that is required to evidence or support any proposal.

7.1.1 Course change roles and responsibilities



7.1.2 Course Design Principles

When changes to existing courses are proposed, course teams must ensure that any changes are made in line with the course design principles and principles of assessment set out in Sections 5 and 6 of this Handbook. Any changes that do not meet these principles must be explicitly approved by the MK:U Director of Education.

7.2 When does a change to a course make it a “new course”?

Whereas changes to existing courses require the approval of the MK:U Director of Education and/or Education Committee, the introduction of new courses involves a two-stage process also requiring the approval of the University Executive and Senate (see the Senate Handbook: Setting Up A New Taught Course for more details of the approval process for new courses). The University Executive has defined a number of circumstances where it would wish to see early sight of any proposal to change, expand or amend existing provision, and which would deem the proposal to be a “new course” requiring full consideration of the proposal.

If any of the following conditions apply to a proposed change to an existing course, a short proposal document, along with a (revised or new) course concept and business case⁹ (where appropriate) needs to be approved by the MK:U Executive and forwarded to the earliest meeting of the University Executive or Education Committee, depending on the approval level. The University Executive/Education Committee will consider the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit (QA&E) recommendation on whether the proposal should be referred to a full Course Validation Panel or to a Course Review Panel.

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Change of course title | proposal document only | University Executive approval |
| Additional entry and/or exit award routes | proposal document only | Education Committee approval |
| Addition of a new named pathway within an existing course | proposal document only ¹⁰ | University Executive approval |
| | | |
| Merging of existing courses into a new named Programme | proposal document only | University Executive approval |
| Introduction of a new mode of course delivery novel to the Faculty | proposal document only | Education Committee approval |
| Delivery of existing (or modified) course in a new location [^] | proposal document and course concept and business case | Education Committee approval |
| Delivery of existing (or modified) course with a new or additional academic partner [^] | proposal document and course concept and business case | University Executive approval |

[^] these changes should be approved by the Faculty Executive prior to University Executive/Education Committee consideration.

⁹ Further details on the content of a course concept and business case are outlined in the Senate Handbook: Setting Up A New Taught Course.

¹⁰ The introduction of a new pathway within an existing course will require a Course Review Panel

7.3 Requesting changes to existing courses

7.3.1 Pedagogic and practical considerations for updating a course

Changes to courses may result from either pedagogic or practical reasons. Irrespective of the cause, consideration should be given to the overall structure and cohesion of the course. The impact of change on PSRB accreditation or apprenticeship standards should also be taken into account.

7.3.2 When can changes be proposed and implemented?

Changes to courses should only be made prior to students commencing the course. At the point of registration, the University, under CMA legislation, is essentially committed to delivering the advertised and published programme (usually as it is articulated on the course VLE site).

Course teams should therefore plan to ensure that all proposed changes are considered and approved before the start of the academic year, and should ideally only apply to a new intake of students, so that students already on their course are unaffected by the changes.

In exceptional circumstances or cases of force majeure, the University's Education Committee may instruct or permit course teams to make adaptations to their courses at short notice, or without following the normal process. Such changes should only be made with the explicit permission of and following any guidance issued by Education Committee, and be approved by the MK:U Director of Education.

Approved courses are subject to change as a result of annual or periodic review. Such changes may be designed to improve the student learning experience or to respond to feedback from students, external examiners, accreditation bodies and industrial advisory panels. Occasionally, changes are needed because of changes in the university's capacity and capability to offer a component of a course.

If a change is proposed it is a requirement that the course team consults with all registered students (including those in suspension) who will be impacted. This includes students who will become impacted when they move into the level in which the change is taking place. The need for the change, the potential impact on the students and the way that the impact will be mitigated must be explained. Where necessary, individualised transition plans must be put in place for affected registered students, including those studying part-time or suspended students to ensure a feasible pathway to completion of the intended award under the new arrangements.

The consultation must provide the opportunity for students to raise concerns regarding the proposals. Student feedback must be taken into account before proceeding with the change and all reasonable steps must be taken by the course team to ensure that issues arising are dealt with where feasible. The course team must respond in writing to the student cohort(s) affected to communicate the final arrangements demonstrating due consideration of student feedback.

In-year or in-Registration changes require the approval of Education Committee, via the MK:U Director of Education. Ultimately, Education Committee retains the right to approve the change if it believes these are reasonable and have given due consideration to the best interests of the student cohort in general.

Evidence of the consultation with and responses from students should be provided with the submission of the proposed changes.

7.3.3 Documentation required

Any proposed change to a course requires a **Rationale for change**, which should include:

1. a clear outline of all of the changes being proposed;
2. an explanation of why *each* change is being proposed;
3. an explanation of why this *particular* solution or proposal satisfies the reasons for any change;
4. an explicit indication of when the proposed changes are to take effect;
5. any impact on current students (and in particular part-time students).

The rationale will be noted on the relevant University proforma available on the intranet.

The University process for MK:U Director of Education approval of changes is through Akari for all taught courses. This process is coordinated by the SAS team.

In addition to the change proposal, the course team should review and revise the implication of the changes on the course specification, and individual module descriptors. This review and revision will be carried out in Akari. Attention should also be given to revising the course handbook for future years of the course.

Course teams are reminded that **all** changes to courses will require amendments to course handbooks (or the online equivalent). Amended course handbooks are not required as part of the approval process, but course teams will need to consider carefully when such amendments are needed and published. Careful consideration will also be needed in the review of marketing materials (including prospectus information and public webpages) and the timing of changes and notifications to prospective students.

7.3.4 Who is authorised to approve changes to courses?

Senate has approved a range of delegatory powers for the approval of changes to existing courses.

Where a change represents entirely new areas of provision, changes to named awards, or the introduction or withdrawal of existing exit routes, Senate is notified of the changes after full consideration at Education Committee. These changes will normally be coordinated by QA&E.

Annual and in-year changes at module level are delegated down to individual Directors of Education for approval through Akari (although in all cases, Education Committee are to be notified of changes to maintain an oversight of the stability of the academic portfolio).

The MK:U Director of Education may refer complex or multiple course changes to an internal Course Review Panel; which should include at least 3 academic staff from within MK:U plus one member of Professional Services Staff (if appropriate) trained in reviewing new course proposals. Where an apprenticeship standard has been changed through the IfATE review processes and the changes lead to a full review of the course, it is likely that a Course Review Panel will need to be held. The panel will:

- review the paperwork and contribute to questions for the course team;
- ensure threshold standards are met and ensure the quality of the student experience;
- make a formal decision to approve (no conditions; subject to conditions; with/without recommendations) or fail to approve.;
- ensure that there is a clear and sensible transition plan to enable existing registered students to complete their course where these students are impacted by the changes.

The panel should utilise the Course Review Panel: Course Review of an Existing Course aide-memoire document during the review which provides advice and guidance on the conduct and outcomes of the review, together with a list of indicative questions that the panel may wish to use. The document is available on the Education Services intranet pages <https://intranet.cranfield.ac.uk/EducationServices/Pages/Registryforms.aspx>.

The MK:U Director of Education will receive the Scrutiny Panel report for validation and forward to Education Committee, via QA&E, for noting.

Appendix A provides a summary of change requirements, and the process to consider a change proposal.

7.4 Borrowed modules

A large number of undergraduate modules are shared across a range of courses. Each module are owned by a specific course, meaning that an individual Course Lead manages all aspects of teaching and quality assurance associated with it. Modules, therefore, should always have a primary course – and other courses may then “borrow” that module from it. The Module Leader is then responsible to the Course Lead of the primary course/pillar.

Borrowed modules may include:

- where students from one course attend the module of another course as an elective module;
- where an entire course cohort join an existing module being run as part of another course;
- where a module owned by another course is re-run in its entirety and without change as part of a different course.

Where a module is borrowed, in whichever of the above cases, consideration should be given to:

- (a) whether the borrowed module represents a key element of the secondary course, and the implications if that module is withdrawn or changed by its “owner” (with or without notice);
- (b) how “remote” the Module Leader is from the owner course and what checks will then be necessary to ensure it meets – and continues to meet – the needs of the secondary course;
- (c) what mechanisms are in place to ensure that any changes to the borrowed module will be notified to the secondary course team (e.g. representation on the relevant “home” course committee).

In practice, most undergraduate modules which are ‘borrowed’ have been integrated into courses from the point of course design, and most instances of borrowed modules occur between closely linked courses/pillar.

Borrowed modules must be “lifted and dropped” directly into the secondary course; there must be no changes to the content, assessment types or submission dates of the module¹¹. The module must retain the same title across all courses that use it, as well as the same module code.

For the avoidance of doubt borrowed modules have a single Module Leader, a single title and a single module code, used by each course borrowing the module.

¹¹ Borrowed modules that are run concurrently across courses must have the same assessment and submission dates, however subsequent iterations of the same module within the same academic year should have a different assessment and submission date.

7.4.2 Shared aspects of a module

Where a course team chooses to take some elements of an existing module and re-purpose it for their own course, the module should be viewed as a new and separate module (even though there are elements of shared teaching/assessment/ILOs). The Module Leaders will be required to provide separate module descriptors, as the aims, assessment and curriculum will necessarily be different. The course creating the new module is the owner of that new module.

As the new module is a different and separate module from the existing module it shares aspects with, it must have a different module title and module code. There is no requirement to align content, assessment or learning outcomes of the existing module to the new module. Where an assessment is being shared, the shared module should use the same assessment dates as the existing module.

For the avoidance of doubt modules with shared aspects have separate Module Leaders, separate titles and separate module codes, as defined by each course running the module.

7.5 Additional Course Intake request procedure

Additional intakes may be added to previously validated courses through agreement of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (MK:U) following consideration and confirmation that they are satisfied as to resource availability to include academic staff resources.

Once a decision to approve an additional intake of a course is made by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (MK:U) then it should be noted by Education Committee.

The process

- The Course Lead should consult with Education Services and complete the Additional Taught Course Intake Proposal Form which can be found on the Education Services intranet pages:
<https://intranet.cranfield.ac.uk/EducationServices/Pages/Registryforms.aspx>.
- Data should be gathered regarding:
 - anticipated numbers;
 - course delivery dependencies (i.e. which elements of the course are borrowed or share elements with other provision; which elements of the course are also offered as short courses);
 - contractual obligations relating to the course (e.g. formal partnerships).
- The Course Lead should ensure that relevant Services (and Faculties if applicable) have been consulted where the proposed change impacts on additional resources in order to support the course.
- The completed form and a revised course timetable (where applicable) should be signed by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (MK:U) to confirm that they are satisfied that sufficient resources are available to support the additional intake
- The completed form and a revised course timetable (where applicable) should be sent to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure it is noted at Education Committee and the information is distributed to relevant parties.

8 Course Closure, Suspensions and Intake Deferrals

8.1 Overview

Withdrawing, suspending or deferring an intake of a course is a matter for careful consideration. The needs of existing learners and applicants must be catered for and any liabilities in respect of potential learners or partnerships involving academic provision thought through. Senate delegates detailed consideration of withdrawal or suspension proposals to Senate's Education Committee.

There are four categories:

| Category | Definition |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Intake Deferral (no impact) | <p>The course wishes to defer a particular intake.</p> <p>Continues to recruit for the next defined intake.</p> <p>Either the course has not previously run or there is no impact on delivery to registered students and/or formal constraints (i.e., contractual obligations to include formal partnerships / sponsorships).</p> |
| Intake Deferral (impact) | <p>The course wishes to defer a particular intake.</p> <p>Continues to recruit for the next defined intake.</p> <p>Continues to deliver the course for registered students to enable them to progress and complete the course but where changes will impact students and/or formal constraints (i.e., contractual obligations to include formal partnerships / sponsorships).</p> |
| Course Suspension | <p>Course ceases to recruit, there is no intake during the suspension period and there is an impact on delivery.</p> <p>Course suspension may or may not result in the suspension of related modules.</p> <p>Those students already registered on the course will continue to progress and complete the course ('teach out'), or where this is not possible, be offered transfer to an alternative course.</p> |
| Course Closure | <p>Permanent closure of a course with or without impact on registered students (for example, the closure of a course that has never run).</p> <p>Closure of a course means that there are no further intakes to the course and it will no longer be offered by the University.</p> <p>Course closure may or may not result in the closure of related modules.</p> <p>Those students already registered on the course will continue to progress and complete the course ('teach out'), or where this is not possible, be offered transfer to an alternative course.</p> |

This section of the Handbook outlines the process and documentation that is required to evidence or support any proposal to permanently withdraw, temporarily suspend (for up to one year) or defer the intake (for up to one year)¹² of a course from the University's academic portfolio (which includes non-award bearing apprenticeship provision).

8.2 Course Closure, Suspension or Intake Deferral process

8.2.1 Practical considerations

The University is required to have an agreed and planned procedure for managing the closure of a course or programme, which includes protecting the academic interests of **all** students already studying on the programme (including those who have taken an agreed break from their studies) and those who have applied to study on it. The quality of the learning experience must be safeguarded during the period in which the programme is being withdrawn. The University is expected to take account of the effect on partners, delivery organisations and support providers with whom it works to offer the programme, and of the students studying with those organisations.

The University has outlined criteria to aid the consideration of the temporary or permanent closure of a course. It includes consideration of the student experience, as well as the financial and strategic sustainability of the course going forward.

In the case of a *force majeure*, the PVC (Education) and Quality Assurance and Enhancement can approve variations to this process.

8.2.2 When can the course closure, suspension or intake deferral process be implemented?

The process for course closure, suspension or intake deferral can be made at any point, however, it is recommended that the portfolio is reviewed regularly and that the course closure, suspension or intake deferral process is ideally started before any offers are made to students for the following academic year. At the point of offer, the University is considered to have made a contractual obligation to the student. Intake deferral, suspension or closure of the course after this point will need to consider how applicants can be compensated (which may include offering them an alternative cognate course or programme).

The Intake deferral, suspension and course closure process can be activated by a number of factors (relating to the financial, strategic or student experience sustainability of a course). The University has designed a process to inform participants in making the decision to close, suspend or defer intake of a course. The process should not be used as a post-rationalisation of any decision.

8.2.3 Intake deferral request procedure

Intake deferral is defined either as; Intake Deferral (no impact) or Intake Deferral (impact) – see table above for details.

Once a decision to defer the intake of a course has been approved by the MK:U Director of Education and Pro-Vice Chancellor (MK:U) then it should be noted by Education Committee.

¹² Academic provision may only be suspended or intake deferred for one year at a time: courses which are suspended for consecutive periods of more than two years will most likely be viewed as formally withdrawn. "Re-activation" of a course after this time will normally require undertaking the full new course approval process, as outlined in the Senate Handbook for Setting Up a New Taught Course.

The process

The Course Lead should consult with the relevant Assistant Registrar and complete either the:

- Taught Course Intake Deferral (**no impact**) Proposal Form, where there is no impact on registered students and/or formal constraints (i.e., contractual obligations to include formal partnerships / sponsorships).
or
- Taught Course Intake Deferral (**impact**) Proposal Form, where there is an impact on registered students and/or formal constraints (i.e., contractual obligations to include formal partnerships / sponsorships).

Both Forms can be found on the Education Services intranet site

<https://intranet.apps.cranfield.ac.uk/EducationServices/Pages/Registryforms.aspx>.

- Data should be gathered from Registry/Assistant Registrar, (the level of data required being dependent on the level of impact) regarding:
 - student numbers (registered students (where there is impact), applicants, offers and acceptances);
 - course delivery dependencies (where there is impact), (i.e. which elements of the course are borrowed or share elements with other provision; which elements of the course are also offered as short courses);
 - contractual obligations relating to the course (where there is impact) (e.g. formal partnerships or sponsorships; intellectual property restrictions).

Full details of requirements can be found on the relevant Form.

- Where there are applicants, full details should be given regarding communication plans for those at different stages of the application process. Communications should be sent to applicants from the Admissions Office.
- Where there are registered students who are impacted, full details should be given regarding communication plans for those at different stages of their registration to include approved breaks in learning.
- The Course Lead should ensure that relevant Services (and Faculties if applicable) have been consulted where the proposed change impacts on additional resources in order to support the course.
- The relevant completed form and a revised course timetable (where applicable) should be signed off by the MK:U Director of Education to confirm that the measures in place to protect the student experience for applicants and students are sufficiently robust.
- The form should also be signed off by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (MK:U) to confirm assent for the business decision to defer the start of the course.
- The completed form and a revised course timetable (where applicable) should be sent to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure it is noted at Education Committee and the information is distributed to relevant parties.

8.2.4 Course Suspension or Course Closure Procedure

There are a number of reasons why the University may suspend or close a course, as defined in the table above. These may include but are not limited to the following:

- The demand for the course is insufficient to cover the cost of delivery.

- External bodies (such as professional, statutory and regulatory bodies) require changes that result in significant change or a course being closed.
- Updating of the University's portfolio has led to a change in the range of courses the University wishes to provide.
- Staff involved in delivery of the course are temporarily or permanently unavailable and it is unduly difficult or impossible to replace them.
- Changes in location meaning that uneconomic new investment costs would be required to transfer the course to a new location.
- Changes in the mode of delivery meaning that the previous delivery approach is untenable.
- Replacing an existing course with a new one.
- Changing strategic priorities at Subject, MK:U or University level.
- Concerns about the quality and academic standards of the course.
- Closure/termination of collaborative partnership which results in the closure of a course.
- External funding changes.

Note: Where the decision is taken to suspend or close a course which is also approved for delivery by a partner organisation the decision as to whether the course will continue to be delivered by the partner organisation will need to be considered.

The process

The Course Lead should consult with the relevant Assistant Registrar and complete the Course Suspension or Course Closure Proposal Form

The Form can be found on the Education Services intranet site

<https://intranet.apps.cranfield.ac.uk/EducationServices/Pages/Registryforms.aspx>.

- Data should be gathered from Registry/Assistant Registrar regarding:
 - student numbers (registered students, applicants, offers and acceptances);
 - course delivery dependencies (i.e. which elements of the course are borrowed or share elements with other provision; which elements of the course are also offered as short courses);
 - contractual obligations relating to the course (e.g. formal partnerships or sponsorships; intellectual property restrictions).

The Course Lead must provide as part of the proposal:

- the rationale for the request;
 - teach-out plans (where applicable);
 - communication plans for both registered students and applicants;
 - evidence of consultation in relation to course delivery dependencies and where there are contractual obligations.
- The relevant completed form and teach-out plans (where applicable) should be signed off by the MK:U Director of Education to confirm that the measures in place to protect the student experience are sufficiently robust. The MK:U Director of Education can instigate a meeting of relevant parties to discuss the proposal prior to signature at their discretion depending on the level of impact to the student experience.
 - The form should also be signed off by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (MK:U) to confirm assent for the business decision to either suspend or permanently close the course.
 - Once a decision to suspend or close a course has been approved by the relevant Executive, the Form should be submitted for Education Committee approval who will

either support the decision (and instruct Education Services to implement) or refer the decision and will report in either case to the University Executive. Where a referral takes place, the decision of MK:U is put in abeyance until confirmation to proceed is confirmed by the Senate's Education Committee.

- The completed form and a teach-out plans (where applicable) should be sent to Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will ensure it is presented to Education Committee for consideration and approval and who will ensure that the outcome is distributed to relevant parties.

9 Annual reflective reviews

9.1 Background and context

Regular and periodic review of teaching provision is a well-established principle across the higher education sector. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has worked with the sector to develop Guiding Principles, Expectations and Practices set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and provides advice and guidance on how these can be met.¹³

The review of teaching provision should be at the core of the University's mission in delivering high-quality relevant education opportunities to its students. Review of teaching provision should take into account good practice in learning and teaching, the introduction of and experimentation with new teaching methods and pedagogic tools, and feedback from staff, students, industrial advisors, external examiners, employers/potential employers and other interested parties.

All review activities will involve the course team, but should be scrutinised by the MK:U Director of Education or a delegated group of academic staff, in order to pick up emerging concerns or issues (either particular to that course or more systemic across the University's undergraduate provision) and to identify or highlight innovative or good practice for wider circulation.

9.2 Purpose of Annual Reflective Reviews

The purposes of regular review of courses are broadly:

- to provide course teams with a clear opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their courses;
- to review whether courses remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge and application in the subject area;
- to evaluate whether students are achieving the stated intended learning outcomes;
- to evaluate the relevance of the curriculum and the modes of teaching and assessment; and
- to provide a clear structure for continuous enhancement of the provision, by identifying any shortcomings in provision or opportunities for improvement.

Routine monitoring is considered most effective when undertaken by those delivering the course, with input or scrutiny in a local setting. Section 9.3 outlines the template and provides guidance on the documentation to be submitted for the regular review.

9.3 Annual reflective review content

Regular review is undertaken on an annual basis, led by the Course Lead, and in line with a standard MK:U template, sent out annually by Education Services. The focus of the template is to provide a series of headings and questions for Course Leads to provide a reflective commentary on the course as a whole.

The purpose of the exercise is not to provide an extensive description of the operation of the course, but to outline how recent experience has helped inform necessary developments or suitable enhancements to the provision to students. Under each heading on the form, Course Leads are asked to comment on major developments in course structure and

¹³ [UK Quality Code \(qaa.ac.uk\)](https://www.qaa.ac.uk)

delivery, and findings and/or recommendations arising from feedback, and any actions undertaken or proposed.

This annual exercise includes a prompt for Course Leads to review the currently stored course specification document, and either confirm that no changes are needed for the next academic year, or take forward course amendments through the formal channels (see section 7 of this Handbook).

In summary, Course Leads will be requested to:

- **update and revise** the course specification, to outline how the course will run in the next academic year and allow for timely approval of any changes through the committee structure;
- **complete** the annual reflective review template, to be received by the MK:U Director of Education.

In most cases, it is expected that the course specification will not change significantly.

9.4 Consideration of annual reflective review reports

Once completed, reports should be submitted to the MK:U Director of Education. They may delegate consideration and review of the report to other academic staff.

The MK:U Director of Education (or staff on their behalf) consolidate issues or concerns that emerge, either relating to individual courses or relating to undergraduate provision as a whole, and report these to Education Committee. Reports are also reviewed by Education Services, and Learning and Development, with a focus on identifying innovative or good practice for wider dissemination across the University.

9.5 Timing of the annual reflective review exercise

In order to provide a comprehensive review of a taught course, Course Leads need to take account of assessment performance, feedback from students (received in course and in post-course satisfaction surveys), End of Module Reviews and from External Examiners and yet still make timely changes to the structure and/or content of their courses (reviewing and updating course specifications if necessary). Full reflection of the teaching provision may need to take into account experience from more than one cohort of students.

In order to accommodate the gathering of all of this information, the annual reflective review exercise takes place annually between December and March, to allow for information to be collated as follows:

- **previously-completed academic years:** External Examiners' reports, completed student surveys (including the University's satisfaction survey and any national survey results);
- **the current academic year:** feedback from current students, staff and external advisors;
- **future years of the course:** ideas for changes to the course, impact for marketing.

9.6 Other types of review

Other periodic reviews of taught course provision occur as agreed by Senate, including Focussed Reviews, which may be undertaken on a planned or ad-hoc basis.

The purposes of more periodic monitoring of teaching provision (i.e. on a 3-6 year cycle) are:

- to assess the continuing validity and relevance of courses, in the context of the University's strategy for educational provision;
- to reflect upon changes in student demand, employer expectations and employment opportunities, and to provide context for the development of any future University strategy for teaching provision and student support;
- to review the impact of changes (both cumulative and those made over time) on the design and delivery of the courses, and on provision of student support;
- to ensure the continuing availability of staff and other resources for the effective delivery of learning opportunities; and
- to reflect upon the impact of external changes and influences, including the requirements of any accrediting bodies or national or international stakeholders.

Periodic monitoring necessarily takes a broader view of the teaching provision, and would normally include advice and input from external participants of high calibre and with academic and/or professional credibility.

The Senate Handbook: Senate Reviews outlines the periodic review mechanisms adopted by the University for all learning and teaching provision.

10 Assessment Processes

Assessments for undergraduate students may take place in many forms, as set out in section 6 of this Handbook. In principle, the process for the management of assessments should be consistent, regardless of the type of assessment used.

10.1 Assessments

Course teams should ensure that all pieces of work required as part of the formal assessment of the course are outlined clearly in the course handbook and module descriptor. Students should be provided with clear information of the general requirements and timing of submission and reassessment to enable them to plan their studies effectively. This should be done using the MK:U Assessment Brief Template to ensure consistency across the student experience.

Submission times for assessments must be within working hours; for MK:U this is usually 1400; on rare occasions this may be moved to accommodate group work (e.g. 17:00 submission time were in-class time has been allocated to completing the assignment). Should a student be unable to submit their work **due to technical difficulties only** immediately before a deadline they are instructed to email the work, with an explanation of the issue and screenshots showing the problem faced to their SAS Lead using the appropriate course SAS email address.

Senate permits full-time and part-time submission dates for the **same** assessment to be no more than 10 working days apart (to provide time for marking for all assessments so that feedback is not returned to some students prior to the submission of the work of others). Where this is not practicable, submissions dates of more than 10 working days apart can be set, providing that **different** assessments be issued for full-time and part-time students. Where multiple iterations of a module run concurrently (e.g. for open and closed cohorts) this 10 working day rule also applies.

The course and/or module VLE site should detail any and all instructions they will need to comply with. These instructions should include:

- how, when and to whom work should be submitted;
- the rubric, containing the criteria against which the work will be marked (i.e. what is expected of the candidate);
- the penalties that may apply if work is submitted late without good cause in line with the policy in the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards;
- the penalties that will apply if the work does not meet the specified brief e.g. is over the word count (see section 10.6.1);
- the reassessment method (i.e. a new assessment or a revise and represent opportunity).

10.2 Creation and approval of the piece of work for summative assessment

- a) Where a piece of work is set in its entirety by one Examiner, they are responsible for:
- the production of the instructions and their accuracy and appropriateness;
 - the production of any outline solution, rubric and/or marking schemes;
 - retaining evidence that the instructions have been proof-read.

Where a piece of work is set by several Examiners, the Module Leader (as appropriate) will take on this responsibility.

- b) A complete list of members of staff responsible for the instructions for assessed pieces of work relating to a particular course will be held by the Course Lead, or their nominated deputy, and this must include a list of Casual Teaching Assistants where utilised.

For all summative assessment types, consideration should be given to the appropriateness of questions/task being re-used from previous years. There will be instances and types of assessment where re-use would be expected (e.g. self-reflective assignments) and instances (for assessment security reasons) where re-use would be highly discouraged. For examinations (both open and closed book – see section 10.5), previous examination questions should not normally be reused within a three-year period. Coursework based assignments should also be suitably different between iterations.

Once a piece of assessment has been drafted the Module Leader should submit the assessment to their SAS Lead at least 8 weeks prior to the assessment date.

The SAS Lead will then send the assessment to the Course Lead, or their nominated deputy, for the following checks/approval:

- Does the assessment match the assessment type on the module descriptor?
- Is it set at the correct FHEQ level?
- Does it assess the correct ILOs/KSBs?
- Check spelling and grammar
- Has this question/task been used in the last 2 years? (if applicable and regular question/task rotation is required)
- Is there sufficient stretch and challenge for more able students?
- Are the marking criteria and rubric specified?

Once checked, the Course Lead will approve the assessment and return it to the SAS Lead, who will forward it to Registry with the completed and signed assessment checklist.

10.3 External Examiner Review

Once received by Registry, all summative assessments will be sent to External Examiners prior to their release to students, with an appropriate timeframe allowed for comments or feedback. The University will take no responses (within the appropriate time frame) as an endorsement of the assessment. As a general principle External Examiners should aim to return any comments or feedback within ten working days – see section 13.9 for more details.

10.4 Assessment security

Before preparing instructions for work to be submitted for assessment, the originators need to be clear on whether the drafting of these require confidentiality and security, to prevent candidates being aware of them.

Where security of assessments is required, staff should:

- ensure that instructions and questions are not produced while students are likely to enter the office where the work is being carried out;
- where possible stored only in the appropriate SharePoint folder and with only links sent (not the file). Where this is not possible, to password protect any electronic copies, and provide any password separately;
- store/transmit any physical copies in envelopes marked 'Confidential' with no indication of the contents;
- ensure that physical copies are not left unattended in unlocked offices;
- ensure that physical copies are not left with anyone other than the intended recipient;

- securely lock away all hard copy and disks containing instructions at all times except when being worked on;
- ensure that all waste resulting from the production of instructions is shredded or otherwise securely destroyed;
- release dates on VLE versions of the assessment should be monitored to ensure the assessment is available to students in a timely manner, usually two weeks prior to the start of the module.

10.5 Examinations

Formal closed book examinations should not normally be used as part of the assessment portfolio for a course, however there may be instances where such an examination is included in a course due to a regulatory, apprenticeship or industry requirement. The processes outlined above should be followed for all assessment types, including examinations.

The management of written examinations is governed by Registry who issue guidance on the following topics:

- guidance to course teams on the scheduling of examinations;
- instructions to Examiners on the preparation, production and approval of examination papers;
- instructions to Examiners on the conduct of examinations;
- instructions to Examiners and invigilators on the management of the examination, including adjustments for individual candidates, and the management of candidate absences;
- instructions to invigilators on how to manage and report examination incidents;
- procedures for the application to run examinations off-campus (for cohorts of students);
- arrangements for the sitting of an examination for an individual candidate off-campus.

Course teams and Examiners are encouraged to contact the relevant department of Education Services if they have any questions or queries about any of the above topics.

10.6 Assessment rules relating specifically to work submitted for assessment (including examinations)

Boards of Examiners are required to adhere to University regulations outlined by Senate as follows.

10.6.1 Failure to follow assessment instructions

Where a candidate fails to follow the instructions for a piece of work submitted for assessment, the Board of Examiners may at its discretion award a mark of zero for the piece of work, or apply any penalty outlined by the course team in advance.

In order to receive the credits for an assessment, candidates will be required to demonstrate that they have made an attempt to follow the assessment specification. The Examiners should use their academic judgment to determine whether candidates have made sufficient attempt to be awarded the credit.

10.6.2 Late submission of work

Where a candidate fails to submit an assessment by the specified deadline (without prior approval) this will result in the mark being capped at 40% if submitted within one week of the specified deadline, and thereafter a failure to complete the assessment being recorded.

Where a candidate submits work late or fails to submit an assessment due to exceptional circumstances, the candidate should submit an exceptional circumstances request in accordance with the process outlined in the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards for consideration by Education Services. Requests require a statement from the Course Lead. If agreed, mitigations may include that the student would be allowed to re-take the assessment at the next available occasion as a first attempt (unless they are already submitting as a second attempt) or that the late submission penalty will be removed.

If exceptional circumstances are not submitted or not agreed, a mark of zero will be recorded (with or without the opportunity to re-take the assignment, with a capped mark).

10.6.3 Re-submission opportunities

A candidate who has satisfied the examiners in a particular piece of work may not re-submit it to improve their mark, unless required to do so as the outcome of a formal appeal.

Where students are required to re-submit a piece of work as a result of failure, they will be marked on the re-submission in accordance with the marking criteria, but the recorded result will be capped at 40%. Exceptionally, Boards of Examiners may at their discretion override this capped mark, but must record the rationale leading to this decision.

11 Anonymity of Candidates and Moderation of Assessed Work

11.1 Anonymity of candidates in the assessment process

Course teams and Examiners, wherever practicable, are encouraged to consider and implement mechanisms to allow for the anonymity of candidates during the marking process. This anonymity need not extend to consideration of the individual candidate's overall performance by Boards of Examiners (which is often precluded because of the need to consider exceptional circumstance recommendations from Education Committee).

It is common for written assignments and examination scripts to be identified by the students' student number (rather than candidate name). While this does not guarantee anonymity, it provides a reasonable barrier to unintended consideration of the candidate for reasons other than the quality of the completed assessment.

In considering mechanisms of anonymity for work submitted for assessment throughout the course, course teams and Examiners need to consider the relevant benefits of providing assurance to students of objective assessment against the effectiveness of providing formative feedback and support to students in their ongoing learning.

11.2 Moderation of marking^{14 15}

Course teams and Boards of Examiners are required to ensure that all elements of summative assessment in a course are subject to some form of moderation to ensure that Examiners and Markers are applying assessment criteria consistently.

Examiners and Markers are encouraged to use the full spectrum of marks available, avoiding wherever possible the allocation of borderline marks.

In order to facilitate moderation, it is common convention across the University for all pieces of work to be marked out of 100. Marks for individual assessments should be rounded to the nearest integer or to one decimal place before summing or averaging. Overall module marks will be rounded and recorded as integers on transcripts.

All pieces of summative assessment should be subject to moderation, normally using one of the methods outlined below. Where individual courses do not use sampling moderation (as prescribed in Section 11.2.1) or double-marking (as prescribed in Section 11.2.2), approval for alternative methods of moderation must be given by Education Committee.

Two forms of moderation are recommended; 'sampling moderation' or 'double-marking'. The below table sets out the appropriate uses for each type of moderation¹⁶.

¹⁴ The procedures outlined in section 11.2 have been approved across all courses of the University.

¹⁵ Modules that form part of the End-point Assessment for an apprenticeship may need to differ from the standard assessment rules; as such the EPA guidance should take priority in these cases.

¹⁶ Sample moderation is the minimum expected level, however courses may choose to use double-marking in any of the instances listed under sample moderation if they choose to. Sample moderation cannot, without the permission of Education Committee, replace double-marking.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Sample Moderation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All individual assessments worth <30 credits • Live assessments (presentations etc.) worth <30 credits (see 11.2.3) • Re-sit assessments worth <30 credits (where a sample of at least 5 pieces of work is available) |
| Double Marking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All assessed work worth ≥30 credits • All live assessments (presentations etc.) worth ≥30 credits (see 11.2.3) • Individual, bespoke pieces of work • Re-sit assessments worth <30 credits (where a sample of at least 5 pieces of work is not available) • Re-sit assignments worth ≥30 credits • Final output of Level 6 Professional Project module |

11.2.1 Sampling moderation

Sampling moderation is considered to be appropriate for most assessments (e.g. assignments, examinations and other small pieces of coursework worth <30 credits), where students are expected to produce work against common or similar questions. Section 11.2.3 sets out the process for sample moderation of live assessments such as presentations.

Where sampling moderation is used, Examiners are expected to comply with the following minimum expectations:

- 1 The **first Marker** will apply their marks in accordance with the assessment rubric and any model answers/marketing schemes provided by the Examiners or the person appointed to set the assessment.
- 2 A **sample** of submitted pieces of assessed work should be selected. The sample should be selected to ensure the full range of marks awarded by the first Marker is represented, and account for at least 10% of the total number of assessments for the piece of work, or 5 pieces of work, whichever is the larger number. The sample should additionally include all pieces of work receiving 42% or less by the first Marker, to ensure that underperforming students' work has been scrutinised fully.¹⁷

Where the module is shared between courses, the sample should be taken from all students taking that assessment in a single sitting (i.e. separate samples for each course cohort need not be taken; it is advisable, however, to ensure any sample includes students from each cohort where students' work has not been anonymized).

- 3 A **Moderator** is appointed by the Examiners to review the sample of the work submitted for assessment. For examinations, the moderator should not have acted as a marker for any of the questions they are moderating (they may moderate questions they have not been involved in the setting or marking of). For all other assessments, the moderator may not have acted as a marker. In addition to the sample of work, the Moderator should have access to:

¹⁷ Where, exceptionally, there are large numbers of assessments which receive a mark of ≤42%, an initial sample of at least 5 pieces of work may be used instead.

- access to all assignments so as to gauge the spread and distribution of marks;
 - the marks and comments made by the first Marker for all of the sample.
- 4 The Moderator is not expected to re-mark the work independently, but should review the marks, range of marks and comments and answer the following questions:

a) Is there an appropriate range of marks and comments as measured by the marking scheme?

If the answer is “yes”, no further action is required (but comments may still be made).

If the answer is “no”, the Moderator is required to submit detailed comments to an “arbitrator”,¹⁸ along with a recommendation to increase or decrease the marks for all students by a fixed number. The Arbitrator will then discuss the Moderator’s comments and recommendation with the first Marker and the Chair of the Board of Examiners¹⁹, and either:

- accept the Moderator’s recommendation;
- reject the Moderator’s recommendation;
- arrange for the work in question of all students to be re-marked by a new Marker.

b) Have the stated learning outcomes been assessed?

If the answer is “yes”, no further action is required (but comments may still be made).

If the answer is “no”, the marks are permitted to stand, but the Moderator is required to submit detailed comments to the relevant Course Lead. They will then discuss the Moderator’s comments with the Chair of the Board of Examiners, and decide whether any further remedial action is required and/or a formal report is required to the Board of Examiners.

c) Have the stated Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours been assessed? (apprenticeship courses only)

If the answer is “yes”, no further action is required (but comments may still be made).

If the answer is “no”, the marks are permitted to stand, but the Moderator is required to submit detailed comments to the relevant Course Lead. They will then discuss the Moderator’s comments with the Chair of the Board of Examiners, and decide whether any further remedial action is required and/or a formal report is required to the Board of Examiners.

d) Was the quality and detail of feedback appropriate?

If the answer is “yes” to all questions, no further action is required (but comments may still be made).

If the answer is “no” to any question(s), the marks are permitted to stand, but the Moderator is required to submit detailed comments to the relevant Module Lead and rectification of all affected assignments is required prior to the release of the feedback to the students. Where the Moderator continues to have concerns, this must be raised with

¹⁸ The “arbitrator” may be the Course Lead, the chair of the Board of Examiners or a senior member of academic staff appointed for this specific purpose.

¹⁹ In cases where a marker or moderator is the Course Lead or Chair of Board of Examiners a suitable deputy to fulfil these roles for discussions with the arbitrator should be identified.

the Course Lead. They will then discuss the Moderator's comments with the Chair of the Board of Examiners, and decide whether any further remedial action is required and/or a formal report is required to the Board of Examiners.

11.2.2 Double-marking

Double-marking refers to at least two Examiners or Markers independently reviewing the work and providing a mark (and ideally without having reference to each other's marks or comments on the work – usually referred to as “blind double-marking”). Double-marking is considered to be appropriate for large (≥ 30 credits) pieces of assessed work. Section 11.2.3 sets out the process for double-marking of live assessments such as presentations.

Where double-marking is used, the following rules are adopted to manage discrepancies between Markers²⁰ once all marks have been converted to a percentage:

- a) **If the marks are $\leq 10\%$ of the total available marks apart, and the marks do not fall either side of the pass/fail boundary**, the final agreed mark is the average of the two marks.
- b) **If the marks are $> 10\%$ of the total available marks apart or $\leq 10\%$ of the total available marks apart where one mark is a pass ($\geq 40\%$) and one mark a fail ($< 40\%$):**
 - i. The two Markers attempt to agree a mark between them;
 - ii. If they are unable to agree, a third Marker is appointed, who will blind double-mark the work;
 - iii. The final mark will be the average of:
 - a. the two closest marks, where all marks fall to one side of the pass/fail boundary (e.g. **48**, **59**, **52** – final mark of 50); or
 - b. all three marks, where all marks fall to one side of the pass/fail boundary and are equidistant from each other (e.g. **40**, **52**, **46** – final mark of 46); or
 - c. the two marks which fall to the same side of the pass/fail boundary, where the marks are split across the pass/fail boundary (e.g. 38, **40**, **44** – final mark 42).

Where a third marker is appointed and two or three marks are used to determine an average mark, these marks do not need to be within 10% of each other.

11.2.3 Moderation of live assessments

Where live assessments such as presentations form part of an assessment these should be moderated using an appropriate method of moderation as outlined in the table at 11.2.

Live assessments solely worth ≥ 30 credits **must** be double-marked. Live assessments worth < 30 credits, or which form part of a larger assessment, but themselves are weighted as < 30 credits may be sample moderated or double-marked.

11.2.3.1 Sample Moderation

Where a live assessment is to be sample moderated, the Marker and Moderator must agree in advance which assessments are to be sampled, based on the time the assessments are scheduled not on the expected performance of the student(s). This blind sample should account for at least 10% of the total number of assessments, or 5 pieces of work, whichever is greater.

²⁰ For example, the following marks would fall into category A: marks of 40% and 49%, the following marks would fall into category B): marks of 38% and 42%, marks of 40% and 51%.

As it is not possible for the Moderator to agree with the marks without having seen the live assessments, the Moderator should either be present for the sample assessments or be provided with a video recorded sample.

Live assessments should be moderated by the Moderator viewing and recording comments and completing the rubric for the assessment. The Moderator's marks and comments are then used to inform their moderation of all of the marks for the assessments.

Following the assessment the Moderator should receive (where moderating a recorded sample):

- an indication of the spread and distribution of marks across the piece of assessment;
- the marks and comments made by the first Marker for all of the sample assessments.

The Moderator should review the marks of the sampled assessments, in comparison with their own grading, the range of marks and comments and answer the questions set out in 11.2.1.

Where more than one first Marker is used, the Markers may act as each other's Moderators, using the sampling and questioning process outlined above.

11.2.3.2 Double-Marking

Where double-marking is used for a live assessment all individual live assessments must be double-marked.²¹

Double-marking refers to at least two Markers independently reviewing the work and providing a mark (without having reference to each other's marks or comments on the work). Where double-marking is used, the following rules are adopted to manage discrepancies between Markers once all marks have been converted to a percentage²²:

- a) If the marks are $\leq 10\%$ of the total available marks apart, and the marks do not fall either side of the pass/fail boundary, the final agreed mark is the average of the two marks.**
- b) If the marks are $> 10\%$ of the total available marks apart or $\leq 10\%$ of the total available marks apart where one mark is a pass ($\geq 40\%$) and one mark a fail ($< 40\%$):**
 - i. The two Markers should agree a mark between them:
 - ii. If the two Markers cannot agree the final mark will be the average of the two marks.

11.3 Multiple Choice and Digital Examinations

Multiple choice examinations are examinations which allow students to select the correct answer(s) from several given options, where there is no subjectivity or academic judgement required on the answers given. These examinations (their questions and answers) are approved by External Examiners prior to being sat, as per the University's policy on examination papers.

²¹ At least one Marker should be present for a live assessment; however one Marker may mark a video recording or attend remotely.

²² For example, the following marks would fall into category A: marks of 40% and 49% .
The following marks would fall into category B): marks of 38% and 42%, marks of 40% and 51%.

As there is no academic judgement involved in their marking, these examinations do not require moderation, however, an administrative check should be carried out on an appropriate sample (5 assessments or 10% of the total assessments, whichever is greater) to ensure that the marks have been recorded correctly and that the final mark calculations have been correctly completed.

Where such examinations are completed digitally, and the marks automatically calculated, an administrative check should be undertaken on an appropriate sample size (5 assessments, or 10% of the total assessments, whichever is greater) to ensure that the digital marking and final mark calculation of these assessments has been performed correctly.

12 Appointment of Examiners

For each undergraduate course, the MK:U Director of Education approves annually a number of academic staff and Recognised Teachers to act as a “Board of Examiners”, supplementing this board with one or more external persons (External Examiners) independent of the University (see section 13). A Board of Examiners may be appointed for a single course or for a number of courses. Usually, a Board of Examiners will also serve as the progression board for undergraduate students (with the progression board taking place as part of the main examination board meeting).

A combined Board of Examiners may be appropriate where courses are from the same pillar, share common themes or modules, or where low student numbers on a particular set of courses make a combined board more efficient. In such cases the MK:U Director of Education should ensure that the board contains appropriate representation from all represented courses.

Membership lists will be retained by Education Services. At any time, the MK:U Director of Education retains the right to suspend or remove an examiner who becomes incapable of fulfilling their role through illness or other circumstances, or if the MK:U Director of Education has received evidence to support a charge of conflict of interest, negligence or misconduct.

It is the duty of each Examiner to present to the Chair of the Board of Examiners (or MK:U Director of Education) any potential conflict of interests in serving on the board. This includes declaring any personal, professional or familial relationship with any of the candidates.

The Director of Education should ensure that the Board of Examiners collectively covers the intellectual and practical scope of the taught programme(s) of study. The MK:U Director of Education nominates one of the appointed Examiners to act as Chair of the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners will be supported by a professional-level member of Registry Staff in the role of Secretary to the Board of Examiners, who will be appointed by the Academic Registrar.

Boards of Examiners may appoint Markers to support them in the conduct of the assessment process; Markers must normally be either members of academic staff or Recognised Teachers. Markers may review and assess work submitted for assessment, on behalf of the Examiners, and provide marks, comments and other indicators of achievement to the appointed Examiners; all marks and other information provided by Markers must be scrutinised or reviewed by one or more Examiners. Markers are not members of, and do not hold any voting rights on, a Board of Examiners.

In addition to Markers appointed by the Board of Examiners, other persons may be allocated pieces of assessed work to provide comment or an initial evaluation based on clear criteria. This may include professional staff and students as part of their individual personal development. Under no circumstances, however, should such engagement lead to a formal mark of that piece of work without the explicit review and approval by a Marker or Examiner. Any person who provides such comments or initial evaluations may only be involved in the awarding or moderation of marks between individual candidates if they are a member of academic staff or a Recognised Teacher. Where Doctoral students have been used to support marking the appropriate process as outlined by Education Committee must be followed.

The roles and responsibilities of Examiners, Chair, Secretary and Markers are outlined in more detail in the Senate Handbook: Positions of Responsibility in Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Those appointed to these positions should also refer to that Handbook.

13 External Examiners

13.1 External Examiners overview

External Examiners are a fundamental and central feature of assuring teaching and assessment quality in UK higher education; all universities are expected to employ persons external to the organisation to provide a touchpoint on the equivalence of standards in assessment with other higher education institutions.

External Examiners provide impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on the degree-awarding body's standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards. External Examiners confirm that the provider consistently and fairly implements their own policies and procedures to ensure the integrity and rigour of assessment practices. They also comment on the quality and standards of the courses in relation to the national standards and frameworks and comment on the reasonable comparability of standards achieved at other UK providers with whom the Examiner has experience. External Examiners also comment on good practice, and make recommendations for enhancement.

External examiners will have sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers, and where appropriate, professional peers. External examiners do not contribute to delivery through teaching or any other direct capacity.

Awarding institutions expect their External Examiners to provide informative comment and recommendations upon whether or not the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Expectations and Core Practices have been met.

This Handbook is supplemented by a Handbook for External Examiners, which is provided to all External Examiners for undergraduate programmes of study on appointment and is available to download from the University website. Course teams are particularly encouraged to acquaint themselves with the content of the Handbook for External Examiners to ensure they are abreast of External Examiners' expectations of the contact they will have with the course team.

13.2 Person specification and conflicts of interest

The University has adopted the following personal specification for selecting its External Examiners. They are normally expected to be able to demonstrate:

- i) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- ii) competence and experience of the fields covered by the undergraduate programme of study, or parts thereof;
- iii) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least UK Degree level, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
- iv) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
- v) sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;
- vi) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- vii) fluency in English;

- viii) for apprenticeship courses, knowledge of the relevant apprenticeship standard.

They will preferably also be able to demonstrate:

- ix) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
- x) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- xi) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Please note that all External Examiners will be expected to demonstrate that they have the legal right to work in the UK on appointment, and course teams are required to gather appropriate evidence of this.

The University recognises that an individual External Examiner may not be able to meet in full all of the above criteria, and the course team is expected to ensure that individual deficiencies are compensated by the appointment of other External Examiners who are strong in complementary areas. This may include either appointment of multiple course-level External Examiners or appointment of additional Examiners to individual modules (which may be part of several courses).

The University does not divide External Examiners into formal categories, however the Examiners we appoint can broadly be defined as Academic or Practitioner Examiners. Academic Examiners have extensive experience of Higher Education in the UK or further afield and are expected to comment on all areas of provision. Practitioner Examiners are professionals who work in a sector relevant to the subject area of the course and are expected to comment on some or all areas of provision.

In addition, it is important to avoid potential conflicts of interest. Wherever possible, the course team should avoid appointments where the External Examiner is, or will become:

- i) a member of the Council of Cranfield University or a current employee of Cranfield or any of its subsidiary companies, including MK:U;
- ii) someone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the undergraduate programme of study;
- iii) someone required to assess colleagues who have been recruited as students to the programme of study;
- iv) someone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study;
- v) someone involved in any recent or current substantive collaborative teaching or research activities related to the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question;
- vi) a former member of staff or student of Cranfield or any of its subsidiary companies, including MK:U (unless a period of five years has elapsed);
- vii) someone who is directly connected to a Cranfield member of staff appointed as an External Examiner at their own institution;
- viii) someone where the immediately previous, or other current, External Examiners were or are colleagues from the same department in the same institution.

A conflict of interest may not necessarily preclude or curtail an appointment, but it is important that these are registered, reviewed and considered in full before a formal appointment request is made.

13.3 Selecting an External Examiner “team”

The course team for a course is responsible for ensuring that a full cohort of External Examiners is in place by the start of each academic year.

Potential External Examiners are contacted informally by the course team in the first instance. External examiners are usually appointed for a period of four years although in some cases a shorter term may be appropriate. The regulations do allow for an extension to the appointment after the four-year term has ended for up to one year, however extensions for appointments are only approved (by the MK:U Director of Education) in exceptional circumstances. Examples of where this might apply include:

- where the subject area is very narrow and the field of potential external examiners is small;
- where the course may be coming to a natural end;
- where a proposed future appointment falls through unexpectedly; and/or
- where the course is a part-time course only and continuity of standards is required.

13.4 Course External Examiners

At least one External Examiner must be appointed for each undergraduate course. Where only one External Examiner is appointed, they will normally be an Academic External Examiner with significant subject and HE sector experience.

Where multiple External Examiners are appointed to a course (either jointly or to review separate aspects of an undergraduate course) one External Examiner shall be appointed as the head External Examiner, who will ensure they have oversight of the course as a whole. All course External Examiners are expected to provide annual reports and expected to attend meetings of the Board of Examiners.

13.5 Module External Examiners

Due to the shared module design of undergraduate degrees it will often be appropriate for External Examiners to be appointed to specific modules or groups of modules, especially for modules shared at Level 4 and the professional skills modules. Where External Examiners are appointed to specific modules (or groups of modules), these External Examiners form part of the External Examiner team for each course that the module appears on. These module External Examiners should report to an overall course External Examiner (the head External Examiner where multiple course External Examiners are in place) for each course that their module appears on.

Module External Examiners may be asked to attend the Board of Examiners meeting for any course that their module appears on, but are not usually required to do so. They will, however be sent samples of assessed work and a written statement for inclusion at the board will be requested. All module External Examiners are required to submit an annual report on their module(s).

Where the course is an integrated apprenticeship and the End-point Assessment forms part of the award, a separate External Examiner may need to be appointed. Further details can be found in the University as an [End-point Assessment Organisation Senate Handbook](#).

13.6 External Examiner expectations

External Examiners are expected to comment on:

- a) whether or not the academic standards of the assessment processes and resulting assessed work are at degree-level, as defined by national frameworks and related guidance issued by the University;
- b) whether or not the assessment processes measured student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes of the course;
- c) whether or not the assessment processes were conducted in line with the policies, regulations and other guidance provided on appointment;
- d) the extent to which standards are comparable with similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions of which they have experience;
- e) any good practice and/or innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment;
- f) any opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.

Depending on their background and experience it is possible that some External Examiners may not be able to comment on some of these areas of provision. For example, practitioners may not have the appropriate experience to comment on comparable standards across the Higher Education sector. Course teams should ensure that collectively External Examiners are able to cover all of the above areas for comment, and the number of appointments may reflect this.

13.7 Appointment process

After the nominee has made an informal commitment to the examiner role, the course team should complete the External Examiner's Appointment Form (MK:U version).

The form requires course teams to provide:

- full contact details for the Examiner, including an email address and telephone number;
- evidence that the Examiner has the right to work in the UK (although this can be confirmed on appointment);
- an up to date CV (unless either the required information is included in the appointment form or the Examiner has been previously appointed in the last three years and provided a CV at this point);
- a case for appointment detailing the nominee's previous experience and suitability for the role. Please note that a reference to the nominee's CV will not be accepted as a case for appointment;
- details of any current External Examiner roles held by the nominee at the University or any other academic institution. Please note that nominees should not normally hold more than two other external examinerships;
- the proposed role of the External Examiner (i.e. Course External Examiner, Module External Examiner only) and the module(s) they will be responsible for.

Before approving the nomination, the MK:U Director of Education should ensure that any University policies are taken into consideration. For instance, have resource implications been considered if the Examiner is based overseas and have the senior members of the University approved the potential expense/confirmed that online attendance is sufficient? If the MK:U Director of Education approves the nomination they should sign the form and send it to Education Services.

The nomination will be checked against the regulations by staff in Education Services. Once the nomination is approved by all necessary signatories, Education Services will write formally to the External Examiner and invite them to take up the appointment.

The letter will include links to key documentation on the website:

- Senate Regulations on Undergraduate Programmes of Study (Chapter 9);
- Senate Handbook on Managing Undergraduate Courses (i.e. this Handbook);
- Senate Handbook for External Examiners (Taught);
- Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards;
- Any other relevant Senate Handbooks relating to the appointment.

Evidence of the right to work in the UK

Course teams are required to collect, record and store evidence that the appointed External Examiner has the right to work in the UK. This is usually collected in the form of taking a copy of their passport (or birth certificate) and, for non-EU nationals, copies of the relevant visas. Further guidance can be provided by HR or by Education Services on request.

Documentation to provide to External Examiners

Education Services will send a copy of the formal appointment letter to the course team. As a matter of courtesy, the letter from Education Services asks the External Examiner to confirm that they will take up the appointment. On receipt of the copy of the letter from Education Services, course teams should assume that the Examiner intends to accept the appointment unless Education Services informs them otherwise.

At this stage, course teams should provide the following information to the newly appointed Examiner:

- aims and objectives of the course;
- details of any relevant apprenticeship standard;
- details of the course curriculum;
- details of the course assessment methods;
- details of attendance requirements, including dates of examination boards;
- confirmation of the fee that will be paid to the Examiner and an indication of when this is likely to occur;
- key dates when the Examiner will be required to undertake specific tasks, i.e. approval of examination papers and sampling of assessments.

External Examiners may act for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

13.8 External Examiner fees

The University's Education Committee has approved the following rates of payments for undergraduate External Examiners from the academic year 2022-23 onwards.

All courses must have an overall External Examiner, the Course External Examiner, who receive an annual appointment fee and payment for each module that they oversee.

Course External Examiners may be supported by Module External Examiners, who receive a fee for each module that they oversee.

The fees payable to Course External Examiners are:

Overall Course External Examiner Fee: £150 per level

Plus

Module appointment fee: Fee per 15 credits-worth of modules £50

The fees payable to Module External Examiners are:

Module appointment fee: Fee per 15 credits-worth of modules £50

The Module appointment fee is per iteration of a module.

Overall Course External Examiners are expected to oversee all levels of a course which is running.

In addition, External Examiner(s) will be appointed to oversee the Professional Skills modules, delivered to the entire student population.

The fees payable to Professional Skills Module External Examiners are:

| | | |
|--|------------------|------|
| Per level, per year: <i>(delivered to entire student population)</i> | 1-50 students | £100 |
| | 51-200 students | £200 |
| | 200-500 students | £300 |
| | 500+ students | £400 |

The overall Course External Examiner should normally be an appointed Module External Examiner, and shall receive the overall External Examiner Fee in addition to the payments for the modules they cover.

Course teams, with the approval of the MK:U Director of Education, are at liberty to make payments in excess of the approved levels at their own discretion. Reasonable travelling expenses should also be paid. It should be noted that, in line with HMRC guidance, tax will normally be deducted from travelling expenses for work carried out at the University, although travelling expenses for work elsewhere can be paid gross.

13.9 Approval of draft summative assessments

All summative assessments will be sent to External Examiners prior to their release to students, with an appropriate timeframe allowed for the External Examiner to provide comments or feedback.

The University will take no responses (within the appropriate time frame) as an endorsement of the assessment. As a general principle External Examiners should aim to return any comments or feedback within ten working days.

Where multiple Course External Examiners are appointed, assessments should be sent to all Course Examiners. Where Module External Examiners are appointed, any assessments associated with those modules should be sent to the Module External Examiners for approval **and** to the Course External Examiner (or head External Examiner where multiple Course External Examiners are appointed) for comments and oversight.

Drafts of all summative assessments will be made available to External Examiners on the VLE, together with rubrics/model answers (or outline solutions) and/or marking schemes in good time for their consideration. Care should be taken to ensure the security of these

documents at all times, through the use of secure delivery of material, or using appropriate encryption or password-protection of electronic documents.

Once appointed, the course team must confirm the times of the year when the Examiner can expect to receive draft assessments. If the Examiner informs the course team that they are not available during this period, alternative timings should be established through mutual agreement.

13.10 Exceptional assessment of individual examination candidates

Assessments are generally prepared for cohorts of students. A re-take examination is normally prepared at the same time as the original examination and reviewed by the External Examiner; this helps ensure that, even where the re-take has to be delayed for some time, it should cover only those topics that were included at the time that the student took the course. Alternative assessments (e.g. individual coursework instead of a group assessment) can only be approved in exceptional circumstances, including (but not limited to):

- **learning support reasons** following the creation of a Student Support Plan with a Learning Support Officer;
- **disruption to group project assessments** where alternative assessments are required for either individual candidates or a group of individual candidates to enable the assessment of a module to be completed.

A case for alternative assessments for individual students should be made by the relevant Course Lead to the MK:U Director of Education. The MK:U Director of Education will then either forward the request to Senate's Education Committee for formal approval, or reject the request.

Where an assessment is created for an individual candidate, the course team must alert the relevant External Examiner(s), and provide them with the opportunity to comment on the equity of the proposed alternative assessment with that scheduled for the other candidates.

The alternative assessment should also be recorded in the minutes of the final examination board.

13.11 Sampling assessments

External Examiners have the right to see all assessments completed by students as part of the course/module they cover.

In the first instance, External Examiners should be provided with a representative sample that provides enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent. External Examiners will have been advised on appropriate privacy and security of such data, but course teams should provide advice on the storage and/or retention of such data after the completion of the assessment process.

At an early stage of the Examiner's appointment the course team should agree the number of samples the Examiner will normally receive. As a minimum the Examiner should be provided with a sample of assessments from the top, middle and bottom of the range, together with all assessments of borderline candidates and those assessed internally as failures.

External Examiners are not required to mark assessments that they sample. On occasion it may be appropriate for the course team to ask Examiners to mark a particular assessment,

or even a suite of assessments (by prior agreement). However, the Examiner's primary role when sampling assessments is to make judgments about the comparability of Cranfield's standards with those of other universities and to check for the level, range and consistency in the internal marking of assessments.

Samples of assessed work will be sent to them via the VLE and a written statement for inclusion at the board will be requested.

13.12 Attendance at Board of Examiners meetings

Education Services is responsible for informing External Examiners of the dates of the Board of Examiners meeting they are required to attend at the start of each academic year. Attendance at the meetings is an important function of the External Examiner's role and assures the oversight of the function to enable the University to conduct fair and appropriate meetings. In some circumstances, External Examiners can participate in such meetings by remote means, but care should be taken to ensure that the continuity of the communications is robust, and all members of the board are content with the arrangements.

In the cases of External Examiners coming to the end of their appointment, and/or a new External Examiner being appointed, the expectation is that the 'outgoing' examiner will attend the Board of Examiners for the academic year just passed. If the 'incoming' examiner wishes to attend as an observer in the manner of a handover then that is to be agreed within MK:U although no 'fees' for attendance will be paid. In exceptional circumstances when the 'outgoing' Examiner is unable to attend e.g. due to ill health, then it is acceptable for the 'incoming' Examiner to be invited and fulfil the role of the External Examiner for that meeting.

There may be occasions when an External Examiner is unable to attend in person. In these instances, it is acceptable for video conferencing to be used.

All Course External Examiners are expected to attend a meeting of the Board of Examiners.

Where an External Examiner is appointed for a module rather than a course, they will not usually be expected to attend the formal Board of Examiners meeting for the course, but will be expected to provide a report to the Board.

External Examiners are equal members of the examination board to which they are appointed, with no additional or especial rights or powers. In the case of disagreement between Internal and/or External Examiners, the Chair of the Board of Examiners will act as arbitrator.

On occasion, it may not be possible to make a decision at the meeting on an individual student's progression or award, i.e. if marks are missing or if a case of academic misconduct is still in progress. In these circumstances, the Chair of the Board of Examiners will facilitate a discussion to agree the nature of the External Examiner's engagement with decisions for these students.

13.13 Annual Reports of External Examiners

13.13.1 Schedule

Reporting is a crucial part of an External Examiner's role and the University relies on the assurance the exercise provides for its taught course provision.

All External Examiners are required to submit a report after the Board of Examiners meeting. Course teams of part-time courses should note that Examiners are required to submit a report on an annual basis whether or not they have attended a meeting of the Board of

Examiners. Within the academic year, the University would expect an External Examiner to have had some element of contact with the course team and therefore produce at least a brief report.

NB: If an External Examiner has not had contact with the course team during an academic year the course team should inform Education Services, in writing, as soon as possible to ensure that External Examiners are not chased for reports they cannot reasonably be expected to produce.

13.13.2 Submission of any reports

We ask that all reports are submitted no later than 6 weeks after the final examination board meeting for that academic year.

Chairs of Boards of Examiners are asked to remind External Examiners of the submission requirements at examination board meetings. If External Examiners are not due to attend an examination board meeting, course teams should remind them of the annual submission requirement and deadlines.

Payments to External Examiners will not be made until receipt of their annual report.

13.13.3 Process for obtaining outstanding reports from External Examiners

If reports are not submitted by the deadlines above, Education Services will ask the course team to contact the Examiner and request that a report be submitted as a matter of urgency.

If the External Examiner does not respond to the request from the course team within four weeks Education Services will write formally to the Examiner to remind them of their obligation to submit an annual report.

If a report is not submitted within a further four weeks the MK:U Director of Education will write to the External Examiner with a final request to submit a report.

If a report is not submitted within the time period requested by the MK:U Director of Education the External Examiner's appointment will be terminated on the grounds that they have not fulfilled a vital part of the role. At this point any payments to the External Examiner will cease and the course team will be tasked with appointing a replacement Examiner as soon as is possible. There may of course be occasions where it is reasonable for an Examiner not to submit a report, i.e. for personal reasons or valid work reasons. Therefore, the MK:U Director of Education will always use their discretion when deciding whether or not to terminate an appointment.

13.13.4 Consideration of External Examiner reports

External Examiners address their reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor, but the initial processing of the reports is managed by Education Services.

In the front sheet to the report External Examiners are asked to indicate whether they have any serious concerns about the quality of the course and whether they require a written response from the course team and/or the University.

If no serious concerns are raised and a response is not required, the course team, the MK:U Director of Education and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (MK:U) will then receive an electronic copy of the report both for their consideration and records. Course teams in particular should consider the feedback from the External Examiner and take action where required. They will also wish to highlight any areas of effective practice to their colleagues, most likely through the Annual Reflective Review exercise.

If a response to the External Examiner is requested (by the External Examiner), course teams will be asked to provide a copy of this to Education Services within a specified deadline. Where these deadlines are not met, the MK:U Director of Education will be informed.

If an External Examiner raises “serious concerns” about the quality of the course, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) will be informed in the first instance and they will contact the course team and MK:U Director of Education in order to respond personally to the Examiner concerned. Such reports and responses will be reviewed by Senate’s Education Committee.

14 Management of meetings of Boards of Examiners

14.1 Overview

The University holds formal exam boards on a regular basis, usually two months after Level 6 has been completed, for the purpose of confirming the final outcomes of students. Formal exam board meetings are usually held for a consolidated group of courses. Any requests for a bespoke course board must be made in writing to Education Committee via the MK:U Director of Education.

Undergraduate Boards of Examiners are expected to review and confirm both the final outcome of an award/credit, for students who have completed their studies, and students' progression between levels of study, in accordance with the award and progression criteria as set out in the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards.

Further details of the decisions Boards of Examiners are expected to make and the outcomes available to them are set out in section 15 of this Handbook.

The Board of Examiners meeting should normally only form one part of the Board of Examiners event, and course teams are encouraged to provide opportunities for External Examiners to meet the course team, review work and familiarise themselves with the University.

Meetings are called for, and arranged by, the Secretary of the Board of Examiners, supported by other colleagues in Education Services (Registry and SAS). Registry and SAS will be jointly responsible for inviting members, preparing papers and all other administrative tasks prior and post boards.

Much of the work of a board can be conducted by correspondence (e.g. the approval of questions, assignments and papers) but meetings should be held to confirm the final award outcomes of individual candidates and the progression of continuing students, and to discuss those students with more complex cases.

14.2 Membership and voting rights

Members of the Board of Examiners include those listed below. Those members with voting rights are denoted by an asterisk (*).

- Chair* (ideally independent to the course/Pillar, but at least with no conflict of interest) – to be a senior member of academic staff appointed by the MK:U Director of Education;
- Course Leads or their nominated deputy*;
- MK:U Director of Education or their nominated deputy*;
- External Examiner(s)*;
- Secretary – to be a professional-level member of Registry staff and appointed by the Academic Registrar;
- colleagues from partner institutions or organisations as permitted by contractual agreements;
- SAS Lead.

As part of the conduct of any meeting, the Chair is responsible for ensuring that all Examiners have been provided with sufficient information and support to undertake their

duties, for ensuring that moderation of marks has taken place and is fair and transparent, and for overseeing all academic aspects of the assessment process.

The Secretary is responsible for ensuring appropriate communications between the Examiners. The Secretary is also responsible for ensuring that formal records of all meetings and decisions are kept.

The ultimate responsibility for making recommendations lies with the Board of Examiners as a whole, however where a decision cannot be reached by those present at the meeting the Chair may make a final decision as informed by the discussion, or defer a decision in order to request further information.

14.3 Conflict of interests

The Chair of the Exam Board should have no conflict of interest with any of the courses being presented (an example of a conflict of interest is where the Chair is also a Course Lead in which case they would be responsible for both making recommendations to the Board and for overseeing a decision based on those recommendations). They should be a senior academic, normally Grade 7 or above, have at least 5 years' experience with Cranfield University and must be at least a Fellow of the HEA.

Where a conflict of interest arises, due to the number of courses being presented, it is permitted to 'double' chair the exam board, where a second chair covers any courses that may result in a possible conflict of interest for the first chair.

A member of the Board of Examiners, including co-opted members, must inform the Chair and Secretary of any potential conflicts of interest if they are due to attend a Board of Examiners meeting, by email and at least one week prior to the Board.

Examples of potential conflicts of interest may include:

- personal interests or involvement with students;
- when a member of the Board of Examiners, included as a co-opted member, is a student on a course being presented;
- where students/staff that are line managed by Board of Examiner members, or co-opted members, are being presented to the Board of Examiners.

Where conflicts of interest are identified they should be announced to the Board at the start of the meeting, and that member of the Board of Examiners may be excluded from any decision making for that particular course or student.

14.4 Quoracy

All Examiners are expected to attend meetings of Boards of Examiners, unless prevented by good cause and agreed in advance with the Chair. The quorum for a meeting of a Board of Examiners is the attendance of two thirds of the voting members of the Board; however the Chair and Secretary must be in attendance (this may include Examiners attending by remote means).

Where an External Examiner cannot attend a meeting, they should be asked by the Secretary to provide comments in advance of the meeting, and asked to approve formally all decisions made by the Board of Examiners in their absence. External Examiners who have been appointed as Module External Examiners do not need to attend the meeting, but should submit a report to the Board in respect of the module(s) they cover.

14.5 Preparation meeting

A Pre-Board preparatory meeting should take place at least 2 weeks prior to the formal Board of Examiners meeting. In order for this to be an effective meeting, all marks must be provided to Registry at least 10 working days prior to the Pre-Board. This will allow time for mark entry and preparation of the board papers.

The constitution of Pre-Board meetings is at the discretion of the course team and can be either for course by course or on a consolidated basis. At the Pre-Board preparatory meeting all marks and proposed outcomes for students will be reviewed and analysed. At this meeting those present will determine which students will be discussed in detail at the formal Examination Board meeting with an agreed recommendation (with guidance notes where necessary).

14.6 Formal Board of Examiners meetings

At the formal meeting of the Board of Examiners the following students will be presented to the Board:

- *Awarding* - Students who have completed their studies, with a decision required on the outcome of their award – pass, fail, lower award²³, credit or deferred decision.
- *Progressing* - Students due to continue to the next level of their award.
- *Continuing* - Students progressing satisfactorily, or not, on their course.

Following discussion at the Pre-Board preparatory meeting, the detailed discussions at a Board of Examiners will be only those students identified to have complex cases. For these students, individual mark and progress profiles will be provided to all attendees for full discussion and a formal decision.

All other Awarding and Progressing students' outcomes will be noted. These outcomes are given in detail in section 15 of this Handbook.

Continuing students will be noted by the Board or Examiners.

Decisions made at a Board of Examiners meeting will be based solely on the achievements of the students.

- i. Marks of $\geq 40\%$ can be ratified as passed and credits confirmed.
- ii. where re-sit opportunities (where applicable) have been taken, such marks can be ratified as failed.

On the basis of the information presented to them, and as a result of discussions at the formal meeting of the Board of Examiners, the Board may exercise the discretionary powers afforded to them as detailed in section 16.6.2.

External Examiners may highlight areas of concern which the Board may wish to take action on, for example to request the re-mark of selected assessments for all students on that occurrence of the assessment. Requests cannot be made to re-mark an individual student's piece of work.

Board of Examiners do not have the power to change individual marks.

²³ Lower awards are not available to apprenticeship students.

14.7 Virtual Board of Examiners meetings

A Board of Examiners may conduct business outside of a formal Board of Examiners meeting in order to ensure the timely processing of student results, where too few students are to be discussed to convene a full Board of Examiners meeting or to make a decision which has been deferred from a formal Board of Examiners meeting. Virtual Boards of Examiners should be by exception only.

Any business conducted outside a formal Board of Examiners Meeting in a Virtual Board of Examiners Meeting must have the agreement of the Chair of the Board plus at least two Examiners, one being an External Examiner. Any decisions taken at a Virtual Board of Examiners meeting should be reported at the next formal Board of Examiners meeting.

14.8 Chair's Action

Chair's Actions may only be taken to confirm actions which have previously been agreed at the Exam Board. Any Chair's Actions should be reported at the next meeting of the Board of Examiners.

14.9 Managing Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances for student cases are managed throughout the year by the Student Casework Team.

Should a student, in advance of the Board of Examiners, come forward with new information not previously disclosed within 20 working days of the assessment date, that may impact the previous decision made by the Student Casework Team, it should be managed as follows²⁴:

- i. new evidence supplied to the Student Casework Team;
- ii. new evidence is considered by the Student Casework Team alongside the original case;
- iii. the recommendation is provided to the Board of Examiners via Education Services.

Any new evidence for an exceptional circumstance case must be provided to the Student Casework Team at least 5 working days prior to the formal Board of Examiners meeting; any received thereafter will usually not be permitted.

The University pass criteria for awards and individual assessments are specified in the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards. Examiners should familiarise themselves with this Handbook, and in confirming award outcomes must ensure that they are made in accordance with the assessment rules.

Separate guidance and information about procedures relating to academic misconduct are available in a separate Senate Handbook on Academic Misconduct. Course teams and Examiners are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this additional guidance.

²⁴ A full process flow for the management of exceptional circumstances can be found on the intranet: <https://intranet.cranfield.ac.uk/EducationServices/Pages/Process-flows.aspx>

15 Decisions open to Boards of Examiners

15.1 Overview

Boards of Examiners have the delegated authority of Senate to confer distinctions on individual candidates in relation to the specific undergraduate programmes of study, within the rules approved by Senate (as outlined in this Handbook and the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards). This includes approving the candidates for the award they intended to achieve upon initial registration, or a lower award associated with the undergraduate programme of study (i.e. a Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education)²⁵, providing that they demonstrate they have met the associated intended learning outcomes.

Boards of Examiners are also responsible for approving the progression of students between levels of study (i.e. Level 4 to Level 5) within the rules approved by Senate (as outlined in this Handbook and the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards).

Boards of Examiners should refer closely to the annual course specification for the undergraduate programme of study, to ensure that successful and progressing candidates have met the approved requirements of the course, within the pass criteria outlined by the University.

The management of Examination Boards is set out in Section 14 of this Handbook.

15.2 Student Progression

The Board of Examiners act as the progression board for all students who are required to achieve specified requirements in order to progress to the next level of their course.

Students studying on courses which feature progression from one level to the next (usually all Level 5 and Level 6 courses) must satisfy the Board of Examiners that they meet the university's requirements for progression.

A student may progress between levels where:

- 1) They have attained 120 credits at the level they wish to progress from.

or

- 2) They have attained at least 90 credits in fully completed modules at the level they wish to progress from, and have been as yet unable to re-sit a failed assessment associated with a module (either due to personal circumstances or circumstances beyond their control). Students who wish to progress under these circumstances do so 'at risk', with no guarantee that they will subsequently complete the level they wish to progress from (and so fail their intended award) should they fail to be awarded the credits from the previous level at a later date.

or

- 3) Only by exception at the recommendation of the MK:U Director of Education, they have attained at least 90 credits in fully completed modules and deferred an assessment/module. Students who wish to progress under these circumstances do so 'at risk', with no guarantee that they will subsequently complete the level they wish to progress from (and so fail their intended award) should they fail to be awarded the credits from the previous level at a later date.

²⁵ Lower awards are not available to apprenticeship students.

The decisions open to a Board of Examiners in respect of the progression of individual students are:

- progress to the next level of study;
- progress to the next level of study at risk;
- fail to progress to the next level of study.

Students must have achieved 90 credits in fully completed modules in order to progress 'at risk'. Credits which are carried 'at risk' must be completed before a student can progress to a subsequent level of study.

Where a student has failed to progress to the next level of study this will normally result in the failure of their intended award. Students who have completed a full level of study previously (those who fail to progress from Level 5 to Level 6) may be considered for a lower Level 4 award by a Board of Examiners where such an award is available.

15.3 Conferring Awards

In the consideration of each individual candidate for awards, Boards of Examiners choose either to:

- a) confer a candidate's intended academic distinction (Honours Degree, Diploma or Certificate of Higher Education); or
- b) confer a lower academic distinction (Ordinary Degree, Diploma or Certificate of Higher Education)²⁶;
- c) defer a decision on the outcome of assessment, requiring the candidate to undertake further work to demonstrate that they have met the intended learning outcomes of the course; or
- d) fail the candidate.

In coming to its decisions, a Board of Examiners, at its discretion, may request any candidate either to attend a meeting of the Board of Examiners for an oral examination or otherwise request further information to be presented, in order to clarify any questions over the quality, origin or completeness of written examination or work submitted for assessment.

Should the Board of Examiners fail to agree on an outcome for an individual candidate, it may submit a report to the MK:U Director of Education. The report provides a summary of the reasons for being unable to agree on an outcome and a recommendation agreed by the majority of the Examiners. On receipt of a report, the MK:U Director of Education consults with the PVC MK:U or the PVC (Education) and either accepts the recommendation of the majority of the Examiners, or otherwise refers the case back to the Board of Examiners.

Where candidates have failed to achieve the required standard in any of the taught parts of the course (including group projects, where relevant), the Examiners may (in line with the rules prescribed in the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards) decide either to:

- a) require the candidate to resit the necessary examination, or re-submit a piece of work for assessment;²⁷ or
- b) require the candidate to return to studies, involving a repeat of the learning associated with the course.

²⁶ Lower awards are not available to apprenticeship students.

²⁷ Students may be offered a re-take opportunity which would be capped at 40%

| RESIT ASSESSMENT | RETURN TO STUDIES (REPEAT PART OF THE COURSE) |
|--|--|
| No need to attend courses or have supervision | Required to attend courses |
| Continued access to learning facilities (remotely) | Continued access to learning facilities |
| Mark capped at 40% | Mark capped at 40% |

Where only a resit or re-submission is required, the Examiners should identify the timescale on which this will happen (i.e. the date of the examination sitting, or a deadline for the revised or replaced piece of work).

Where a return to studies is required, the Examiners should inform the Course Lead; they will then determine any additional period of registration (and any fees to be charged). While this would normally be permitted, the University may choose to set aside the decision of the Examiners on the grounds that supporting the student further would not be in the best interests of either the student or the University; in this case, the student would be withdrawn from the University and deemed to have not completed the course (retaining their right to appeal against the decision under Regulation 46: Early Termination of Registration). Such a decision should be based on a written case from the Course Lead and supported by the relevant Pro-Vice Chancellor (or a member of staff on their behalf).

In both cases, the student is deemed to still be registered with the University, and will have continued access to learning facilities (Library and IT) but may not necessarily have an automatic right to University accommodation (laboratory, office or domestic). Where such accommodation is deemed to be necessary by both the student and the University, additional tuition fees or other charges may be applied.

15.4 Conferring a fail

A result of a fail is most commonly issued when the student either fails to achieve sufficient marks and credits to qualify for any exit award (i.e. failed to progress from Level 4 or failed to complete an award where no lower exit award is available). Where the Examiners recommend a fail, they should complete a “Statement of Reasons for Failure” as part of the final report on the student. This statement should outline the reasons in sufficient detail to explain the Examiners’ decision, and stand up to external scrutiny to a possible appeal.

15.5 Additional factors affecting those decisions

In conferring an award, the Board of Examiners is required to ensure that students have attained the appropriate number of learning credits and achieved the stated intended learning outcomes of the award. There are other factors which the Board of Examiners may take into consideration in order to deem that those learning credits and outcomes have been achieved.

15.5.1 Requests relating to assessment deadlines, completion or attendance

The University does not permit Boards of Examiners to adjust the marks under any circumstances; the marks recorded for formal awards of the University must always represent the evidenced academic achievements of the candidates for examination. Boards of Examiners, under certain circumstances, may, however, permit candidates to re-take one or more assessments again to mitigate against award failure.

Candidates are expected to complete all assessments at the scheduled times, as outlined in the course material. The University recognises, however, that personal circumstances may require a candidate to adjust their studies (including assessments) and operates a ‘fit to sit’ policy (i.e. if a candidate attends an examination, or submits work for assessment, they are declaring that they felt capable and competent to do so). It therefore permits candidates to request changes to their scheduled assessment, and strongly encourages them to do this in advance (i.e. as soon as the personal circumstances are known).

The procedures for managing such requests are outlined in the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards.

15.5.2 Accredited/Recognised prior learning

Where a candidate has presented evidence to support the approval of accredited prior learning, from previous study either at the University or another higher education institution, a Board of Examiners may be instructed to approve the recognition of learning credits accrued outside of the period of registration, in accordance with the approved rules around accredited prior learning as set out in section 18 of this Handbook. Such instructions will be communicated to the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

Marks from modules undertaken at the University will normally count towards the calculations of average or total course marks for the award; credits “imported” from other higher education institutions will normally not be included in such calculations.

15.5.3 Import of academic credit

Students may, as an approved part of their course undertake modules at an agreed partner institution and import such credits to their Cranfield award. Further details can be found in section 15 of the Undergraduate Awards Handbook.

15.6 Errors and issues identified in assessment or teaching

Due to the new nature of undergraduate awards being delivered by the University, there may be occasion where, due to issues identified in the teaching or assessment of students, the overall marks achieved by a cohort of students taking an assessment do not fairly represent those students’ level of understanding or ability on a particular topic when considered against the other average marks achieved by that cohort of students.

In exceptional circumstances, where course teams have identified an error or issue in the teaching or assessment of a module, they may recommend that a Board of Examiners apply some normalisation to that assessment (or assessments, where the issue affects a whole module) for the entire cohort, providing that the below conditions are met in full.

A specific and documentable error or issue with an assessment or the teaching associated with the assessment has been identified;

and

the MK:U Director of Education (or equivalent) agree that the error or issue is sufficient that normalisation should be applied to the assessment;

and

the average mark for the assessment in question is:

- below the pass mark threshold (40%); or
- above the distinction threshold (70%); or
- there is a variance of $\geq 15\%$ between the average mark of the assessment/module in question and the average marks achieved elsewhere on the course.

The External Examiner should be notified in advance of the Board of Examiners meeting in order that they may discuss the issue with the Course Lead and/or Chair of the Board of Examiners.

A Board of Examiners may choose whether to accept the recommendation to apply normalisation to the marks of an assessment.

Appropriate normalisation may include:

- increasing/decreasing the marks for all students by a set percentage;
- condoning the module (so credit is awarded but marks are not).

In determining appropriate normalisation, consideration should be given to:

- the average mark portfolio of the cohort (either across the course or at the specific level);
- the gravity of the issue or error identified;
- the pass threshold for the assessment/module.

Any normalisation applied must be applied to the cohort as a whole, and be consistent with any normalisation applied previously by a Board of Examiners.

Following any Board of Examiners meeting where normalisation has been applied, the Chair of the Board of Examiners is expected to provide a written report to Education Committee explaining the rationale and action taken.

Where assessment or modules are elements of more than one course the same normalisation must be applied to all students taking the assessment/module. In such cases where the assessment/module is considered by separate Boards of Examiners, course teams must make this clear to the Board and request that a decision is confirmed collectively (usually by correspondence following discussion at the formal Board of Examiners meetings).

The power for Boards of Examiners to approve normalisation of undergraduate assessments/modules for full cohorts of students was granted by Education Committee in March 2021 on a time-limited basis, and will be reviewed triennially. The next review will take place in March 2026, with any change to take effect for assessments taken from the academic year 2026-27 onwards.

15.7 Awarding credit

Students may attend the University to study individual or groups of modules for credit only, not as part of a full university course. Boards of Examiners are required to confirm such credit where the student has met the pass criteria for undergraduate modules as set out in the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards.

15.8 Communication of final outcomes and marks

Where the Board of Examiners recommends a formal and final outcome (i.e. the conferment of an award or a fail), the Secretary provides formal confirmation to Registry, whose staff take action to inform the individual candidates of the decision.

Result letters and transcripts will be sent to students who have successfully completed their award (or achieve the intended learning credits) within 20 working days of the Board of Examiners decision.

16 Award Outcomes and Classifications

Award outcomes and classifications are set out in detail in the [Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards](#). This includes:

- final award outcomes
- lower exit awards
- classification
- borderline classification

16.1 Awards made under unusual conditions

Aegrotat degrees

In the unfortunate situation where a student dies or becomes permanently incapacitated, course teams can apply to Senate to consider the award of an aegrotat degree (i.e. the award of a qualification without demonstrating the student has met the intended learning outcomes associated with the qualification). Such consideration is strictly limited to where there is conclusive evidence that there is no possibility that the student will be able to complete the course at any future time.

In considering the authorisation of an award under these circumstances, Senate reviews evidence including:

- i. the personal circumstances of the candidate;
- ii. where work has been submitted for assessment, the extent to which the candidate has satisfied the Examiners; and
- iii. any recommendation from the MK:U Education Lead on whether the candidate, had they not been so prevented, would have satisfied the Examiners in the assessment of their work.

Senate only authorises an aegrotat award where the student has completed a significant period of their course of study, which is normally evidenced by work submitted for assessment²⁸. Only in very exceptional circumstances is an award made where no work has been submitted for assessment, and only where compelling evidence of the required academic standard has been provided.

Where such an award is considered by Senate due to the death of the student, the award is only made on the explicit request of the next of kin of the candidate. Course teams are advised to manage the next of kin extremely carefully and sensitively; it is not always appropriate to suggest or recommend such an award, and the university should be led by the wishes of the next of kin.

Where such an award is considered by Senate due to any other reason, including illness, the award is only made on the explicit request of the student or by their next of kin if evidence is presented to suggest that the student cannot reasonably submit such a request. If an award is made, the student will not be permitted to be considered for the same award on any future occasion.

The Academic Registrar should be consulted at the earliest opportunity if an aegrotat award is being considered.

²⁸ For undergraduate students, a significant period of study would normally require completion of Level 4 and assessments undertaken at Level 5 as a minimum.

Unavailability of provision required for an award

On rare occasions, the University finds itself having to change the structure of a course or programme on which students are already registered, and those changes significantly affect the ability of those students to complete their intended course.

Where a student is unable to accrue the required number of learning credits for a particular award as a result of changes to the course of study approved by Senate within their period of registration, the MK:U Education Lead may instruct the Board of Examiners to authorise the award with no fewer than 90% of the required number of credits associated with the award, providing that the MK:U Education Lead has received evidence to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes of the course of study have been met in full.²⁹

The MK:U Education Lead and the Academic Registrar should be consulted at the earliest opportunity if such a course of action is proposed.

²⁹ Due to the distribution of credit across modules, such provision is unlikely to be available for Level 4 awards, and only for a single 15 credit module for a Level 5 award and 30 credits' worth of modules for a Level 6 award.

PART C STUDENT MANAGEMENT

17 Undergraduate Admissions Policy

The University has an approved admissions policy for the selection and admittance of undergraduate students. Which is set out in full in the [Senate Handbook on Admissions](#).

Undergraduate admissions are managed by the Admissions Office; for apprentices this is done in conjunction with the Apprenticeships Office.

There are three possible routes of entry for Undergraduate Students:

- through appropriate qualifications,,
- through completion of a pre-approved course or programme
- through an individual assessment.

The Undergraduate Admissions Policy also sets out requirements for English Language proficiency and management of offers and accredited prior learning.

18 Attendance and Engagement

The university has an approved attendance policy that sets out the expected standards of attendance and engagement for undergraduate students. The University has a separate attendance policy for postgraduate students. The Undergraduate policy is provided for students in the [Undergraduate Students' Handbook](#), see section 6 for full details.

19 Induction of Students

19.1 initial induction

Course Leads are responsible for ensuring that all students are aware of both their responsibilities, and the learning facilities and opportunities that are available to them. Course Leads should ensure that students are suitably inducted, alongside any formal induction activities provided by MK:U or the wider university.

Particular care and attention should be given to the induction of part-time students or other students who do not register at the formal start of the course in that academic year and may miss formal University-wide events and inductions offered by the service departments.

Course Leads should ensure that students' overall Induction experience covers:

- responsibilities of students;
- course information;
- any relevant specific information for apprentices;
- learning support.

Responsibilities of students

- the expectation of degree-level provision, including self-directed learning and academic standards;
- the requirement of maintaining regular contact with the course team (including the requirements of the Undergraduate Attendance Policy and apprenticeship compliance where applicable), and proactively raising any concerns or impediments to learning;
- the requirement to actively use and check the MK:U app and their @cranfield.ac.uk account, to monitor and manage University communications;
- their contribution to good citizenship as a student, including dignity at study, equality, health & safety and safeguarding issues (including Prevent);
- general and specific expectations relating to:
 - attendance at classes and other teaching sessions;
 - submission of assessment work and potential academic penalties (including academic misconduct);
 - complying with University Laws and local MK:U guidance;
 - the implications of bringing the University into disrepute by their actions or inactions.

Course information

- where and how the course team outline the requirements of the course (e.g. course VLE site, module descriptor, the app), including teaching provision and assessment requirements;
- where and how any unexpected changes to the course will be communicated;
- where and how students can raise concerns about the quality of the provision, or complaints about the standards of the course or the contributions of staff to their learning.

Learning support

- the range of information and supplementary courses available to students, including:
 - plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, and the use of Turnitin;
 - expected standards of academic writing and referencing;
 - identifying appropriate sources of research material;
 - careers information, advice and guidance;

- personal development planning;
 - English language support;
 - the role of SAS Lead in supporting their learning and other matters;
 - the role of Learning Support Officers;
 - the role of student representatives, both for the course and more widely from the CSA.
- The use and availability of facilities more widely available to all students:
 - the intranet, the VLE and EVE;
 - IT services and support;
 - library services;
 - Careers services;
 - University-approved on-line survey tools;
 - the CSA;
 - wellbeing and counselling services;
 - advice and guidance from the International Office for students on Tier 4 visas.
 - The use and availability of facilities relating specifically to the course, including:
 - specialist hardware and software, including the availability of licences;
 - laboratories (including relevant health, safety and fire training);
 - specialist research facilities, available to them on- or off-campus (including relevant health, safety and fire training).

19.2 Module Inductions

In addition to the initial induction of students, Course Leads are responsible for ensuring that appropriate inductions are provided for each module. The module induction will normally be arranged and undertaken by the Module Lead.

Module inductions (which may be delivered in person or electronically via the VLE) should cover:

- an overview of the contents of the module;
- the attendance and engagement requirements for that module;
- the assessment and feedback methods to be used during the module (both formative and summative);
- if the module is being delivered and assessed at different levels of study, where differences may occur during the module, learning or assessment for students studying at differing levels.

19.3 Project Inductions

Where a course includes the requirement for a group or individual project specific care should be given during the module induction to ensure students are made aware of the additional responsibilities and expectations associated with a project³⁰.

Additionally to the Module Induction, a Project Induction should also cover:

- how projects are allocated;
- project briefs;
- responsibilities and expectations of students and staff;
- details of any risk assessment completed/required;

³⁰ Where the project forms part of an apprenticeship End-point Assessment, the EPA guidance takes precedent with regard to Project Inductions

- details of the University's ethical approval process (if appropriate);
- how students will receive formative feedback;
- submission points and methods.;
- health and safety and/or risk assessment requirements (as appropriate);
- codes of conduct for off-campus projects and/or statements of responsibilities (as appropriate).

A risk assessment (and if necessary, a COSHH³¹ assessment) should be completed for all projects, unless they are carried out at another organisation /institution (where the responsibility for completing risk assessments falls to that organisation/institution). Details of how to complete risk assessments can be found on the Health and Safety intranet pages.

To ensure that research undertaken at the University conforms with the appropriate ethical principles and standards all students must submit their project research proposals through the University's ethical approval system (CURES) for review. This applies to both individual and group research projects.

³¹ Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

20 Capturing student intentions

The University is required to make a number of annual returns to a number of government agencies on the volume of student activity for each individual student. These returns are based on information provided by students and verified by their Course Lead.

The Course Lead is expected to advise students on the suitability and eligibility of combinations of modules in the context of the course structure approved by Senate, and on whether students may take additional taught course modules over and above those required for their intended award (with or without additional fees).

All student activity reported to government agencies is taken from the University's student record system (SITS), which is required to hold information on:

- personal information on each student (captured by them at the point of registration);
- their **intended** studies for each 12-month period following their initial registration;
- their **completed** studies at the end of each 12-month period.

This information is used to provide benchmarking information about the scale of the University's educational activities, to calculate government funding, and to provide assurance that students are attending the University.

SAS Leads are responsible for ensuring there are local mechanisms in place to ensure that the data held in SITS is both complete and accurate. These mechanisms include:

- Ideally within the first four weeks of a student registering, they should be registered in SITS with all modules they intend to study within their current year of instance (in most cases that will be the academic year).
- At the final assessment point for each module, the receipt of student work or their attendance at the formal examination is recorded in SITS.³²
- As soon as marks are confirmed by the markers for any piece of assessed work (for taught or group modules), the information is entered into SITS, and thereafter made available to students through EVE as an unconfirmed result.
- Where changes to student intentions are communicated or agreed with the Course Lead, this information is updated in SITS as soon as possible.

³² Education Services staff record this information in SITS. Marks for the assessed work should be entered as soon as practicable after they have been generated (usually within 1 working day).

21 Providing Feedback to Students

21.1 Formative Feedback

Formative assessment is a core MK:U principle to enable the student to evaluate their own progress and understanding of a particular topic as they progress through their learning journey.

Feedback on formative assessment can vary hugely, from individual written feedback (e.g. comments on asynchronous blog post) to a group debrief after a class-based activity, from formal to informal feedback. It is important to be clear with the students when formative feedback will be provided, and the feedback should be coaching in nature to enable the student to progress their learning.

Formative feedback should be rapid, timely and act as a learning opportunity for students, providing them with feedback on where they are able to improve their performance and develop their understanding of a topic. Formative feedback should be provided in time to allow students to understand and digest the feedback prior to any summative assessment.

21.2 Feedback on Summative Assessments

Students should receive an appropriate level of general and/or individual written feedback on all assessed work to promote learning and facilitate improvement.

Final moderated marks must be made available to Registry for entry to SITS, and feedback made available to students, by **no later than 20 working days** from the date of the assessment (hand in or exam date). Moderated marks which have not been submitted within 20 working days are reported monthly to the PVC (MK:U) and twice a year to Education Committee.

Course Leads should ensure that all student-focused course documentation (e.g. handbooks, app) is clear on:

- who is responsible for providing feedback to students;
- how and when this will happen, noting that feedback on assessed work should be provided to all students as soon as practicable and no later than 20 working days after the submission deadline;³³
- to whom students should raise concerns with about the timeliness or quality of feedback.

Where individual students have underperformed (i.e. obtained <40% on any individual piece of work), it is important to provide both feedback **as soon as practicable** on how to improve for future assessments, but also to highlight the potential risks of students failing to complete the course successfully overall. Course Leads (and Module Leaders), through their SAS Lead should ensure that students are provided with written confirmation that their underperformance may lead to failure of the course, or to them being removed from the course as a result of a lack of appropriate academic progress. Copies of such correspondence (which may be formal letters, emails, or notes of meetings) should be retained for future reference.

³³ Where an extension has been requested, feedback should, where possible be provided within 20 working days of the revised submission date. Where this is not possible feedback should be provided no later than 40 working days after the agreed submission date.

Further guidance on types of feedback, and how assessments can be designed to facilitate feedback, can be found in the supplementary Senate Guide on Assessment Design and Feedback.

21.3 After the formal end of the course

Once the formal course has been completed and all work submitted, a decision on the student's academic achievement is confirmed by the Board of Examiners. Course Leads are, however, still responsible for ensuring that:

- students finalise their studies (including returning all University materials and ensuring facilities are handed back properly);
- learning support is provided in cases where further work is required.

22 Changes to Registration

The University has standard processes for the management of changes to a student's registration, whether voluntarily or enforced by the university. These processes are set out in the Senate Handbook on Changes to Registration. This Handbook is written primarily for postgraduate students, however the processes apply to all students of the University. Changes or adaptations to the processes listed in the Changes to Registration Senate Handbook for undergraduate students are given below.

This information is provided to students in the Undergraduate Students' Handbook.

General points:

- The role of Course Director will be carried out by the MK:U Course Lead.
- All students on apprenticeship courses must discuss any changes to their registration with the Apprenticeship Office, as changes may affect their apprenticeship eligibility.
- Students can also obtain advice and guidance from their Coach.

Suspensions of Study:

- The restriction on suspensions of study being approved only in exceptional circumstances for part-time students on a 5-year registration applies only to postgraduate taught students.
- Undergraduate students may be required to return from suspension the following year and join the next cohort at the point at which they suspended, or, depending on the amount of time the suspension is required for, may be able to continue to the next level of study 'at risk' and undertake any missed learning credits upon their return, alongside their other modules. For more information see the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards.

Extensions:

- Extensions to undergraduate assignments, group projects and projects are covered in the Senate Handbook on Undergraduate Awards.

23 Academic Misconduct

The University has standard processes for the detection and investigation of Academic Misconduct. These processes are set out in the Senate Handbook on Academic Misconduct. This Handbook applies to Undergraduate students in full, including the penalties applied following an upheld allegation of academic misconduct as set out in Appendix A of that Handbook.

The role and responsibilities given as being of a Course Director will be carried out by the MK:U Course Lead.

24 Complaints and Appeals

The University has standard processes for the management of student complaints and academic appeals. These processes are set out in the Senate Handbook on Student Complaints and the Senate Handbook on Academic Appeals respectively. These Handbooks are written primarily for postgraduate students, however the processes apply to all students of the University. Changes or adaptations to the processes detailed in these

Handbooks for undergraduate students are given below. This information is provided to students in the Undergraduate Students' Handbook.

24.1 Student Complaints

The Senate Handbook on Student Complaints applies in full to undergraduate students, noting that:

- the 'Course Director's' responsibilities given in the Handbook are undertaken by the Course Lead;
- the 'Head of Faculty's' responsibilities given in the Handbook are undertaken by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (MK:U).

24.2 Academic Appeals

The Senate Handbook on Academic Appeals applies in full to undergraduate students, noting that:

- the 'Course Director's' responsibilities given in the Handbook are undertaken by the Course Lead.

Stage 1 – Informal Investigation

Undergraduate students follow the taught students process as set out in section 5.1 of the Senate Handbook on Academic Appeals.

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

Undergraduate students follow the process for taught students set out in section 6 of the Senate Handbook on Academic Appeals, noting that:

- undergraduate students may make a formal appeal against the mark of a single piece of assessment following a Board of Examiners decision on their final award (as is the process for postgraduate taught students) or following a progress board's decision on whether they may progress to the next stage/level of their studies.

Stage 3 – Review

Undergraduate students follow the process as set out in section 7 of the Senate Handbook on Academic Appeals.

Appendix A: Approval channels for changes to undergraduate courses

The table below is an illustrative guide to the relevant approval channel depending on the nature of a proposed change, and the process required to consider the change proposal. For all changes, the MK:U Director of Education (or the specified delegated authority)* should ensure there is a clear audit trail of the changes, and the date of approval, and provide such information to Senate's Education Committee on request. Changes to module delivery dates and assignment hand-in/examination dates only require Course Lead approval. Please consult with Quality Assurance and Enhancement for further guidance.

| LEVEL OF CHANGE in order of increasing impact on course | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED | APPROVAL LEVEL |
|--|--|---|
| Piece of assessment within an individual module | | |
| Change of length, format or style of examination Change of format of submitted work | Revised Module Descriptor (if changes need to be updated/reflected) | Not deemed to be a change in the course: approval to be sought from the Course Lead |
| Change to minimum mark of an assessment | University Proforma Revised Module Descriptor Revised Course Specification | MK:U Director of Education* (reported to Education Committee) |
| Change to module content | | |
| Change to module content Change to module intended learning outcomes | University Proforma Revised Module Descriptor | MK:U Director of Education* (reported to Education Committee) |
| Changes to module structure | | |
| Change to module duration Change to module contact hours | University Proforma Revised Module Descriptor Revised Course Specification | MK:U Director of Education* (reported to Education Committee) |
| Change to module title Change to module delivery mode (PT/FT/Distance Learning/TEL) Change to module delivery level (e.g. being taught at Level 5 instead of Level 4) Change of assessment method (e.g. from examination to written submission of work or <i>vice versa</i>) Change of balance of assessment within a module Change to module credit value | University Proforma Revised Module Descriptor Revised Course Specification | MK:U Director of Education* (reported to Education Committee). |
| Withdrawal of modules | | |
| Withdrawal of module Change of module type from compulsory to elective or vice versa | University Proforma Revised Module Descriptor Revised Course Specification | MK:U Director of Education* (reported to Education Committee) |
| Introduction of new modules or new course elements | | |
| Addition of a new module Addition of borrowed module from another course | University Proforma Revised Module Descriptor Revised Course Specification | MK:U Director of Education* (reported to Education Committee) |
| Addition of a new course element (e.g. group project) | University Proforma New Element Descriptor Revised Course Specification | MK:U Director of Education* (reported to Education Committee) |

| LEVEL OF CHANGE in order of increasing impact on course | DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED | INDICATIVE APPROVAL LEVEL |
|---|---|--|
| Change to award intended learning outcomes | University Proforma Revised Course Specification | MK:U Director of Education* (reported to Education Committee) |
| Introduction of a new mode of delivery for the course (i.e. part-time variant of an existing full-time course, or <i>vice versa</i>)^ Change of module delivery level | Written change proposal Revised course specification | MK:U Director of Education [<i>no delegation</i>] and then Education Committee |
| Change of course title Addition of a new option/pathway within an existing course Merging of existing courses Delivery with a new academic partner^ | Written change proposal Revised course documentation | University Executive and then MK:U Director of Education [<i>no delegation</i>] and then Education Committee |
| Additional entry and/or exit award routes Introduction of a new mode of delivery (novel to the Faculty) Delivery in a new location | Written change proposal Revised course documentation | Relevant Director of Education [<i>no delegation</i>] and then Education Committee |
| Significant changes driven by a change in the Apprenticeship standard especially where KSBs have had to be remapped | Written change proposal Revised course documentation Scrutiny Panel minutes | MK:U Director of Education [<i>no delegation</i>] and then Education Committee |
| Additional intakes added to previously validated courses | University Proforma Revised course timetable | Pro-Vice Chancellor – MK:U [<i>no delegation</i>] and then reported to Education Committee |
| Deferral of intake for a particular occurrence of the course | University Proforma Revised course timetable | Pro-Vice Chancellor – MK:U/MK:U Director of Education [<i>no delegation</i>] and then reported to Education Committee |
| Suspension of a course | University Proforma Teach-out plans (where relevant) | MK:U Executive/MK:U Director of Education [<i>no delegation</i>] and then Education Committee |
| Permanent withdrawal of a course | University Proforma Teach-out plans (where relevant) | MK:U Executive/MK:U Director of Education [<i>no delegation</i>] and then Education Committee |

* or formal delegated authority, which may be an internal MK:U committee or another member of staff

^ These changes will also require a business case, to be approved by the MK:U Executive, and are normally subject to a course review panel

Appendix B MK:U Reading List Policy

1 Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a coherent and integrated approach to the communication of required reading between academic staff and students and to enable Library Services to meet student expectations for adequate resource provision.

2 Aims

The aims of the policy are to:

- Ensure that students have access to required reading materials and are aware of further reading which may be required.
- Provide clear, accurate and current reading lists.
- Ensure that purchasing and provision of reading material is cost-effective and that resources are available in the right format and in sufficient numbers to meet the learning and teaching objectives of the course of study.
- Ensure reading lists are adaptable for those with disabilities: including blind, visually or print impaired and deaf or hearing-impaired students.
- Ensure that the University complies with the Copyright Licensing Agency regulations.
- Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of Library Services, the module leader, SAS Teams and Learning Support Officers.

3 Scope

This policy should be adopted by all areas within MK:U and applies to all course modules.

In addition, this policy applies to those reading lists that are included in any definitive programme documents, including those that are incorporated into any validation or re-validation documentation.

4 Student Experience

Reading lists are most helpful to students if they are:

- realistic: so that resources are available in digital form where possible and appropriate or, for physical resources, that they are in stock, with sufficient copies and appropriate loan periods;
- accurate, so that students can find the correct resource, including correct editions;
- annotated with levels of importance, so that students understand what is expected of them and Library Services staff understand what they need to provide.;
- clearly laid out, so that students can distinguish the different types of resource on the list;
- updated regularly, so that students are working with the latest information;
- provided to Library Services in good time, to ensure the staff can acquire the required resources.

5 Reading list terminology and Library Services acquisition guidelines

When adding items to reading lists, academic colleagues should indicate whether the books/items are for:

- 'Topic core text – must read';
- 'Additional reading – should read'; or
- 'Further reading – could read'.

These designations will allow the Library Services staff to apply the purchasing parameters outlined below. Reading list items added without one of the categories outlined will be returned to the requester for further clarification and may therefore be subject to delay.

Reading list books will be acquired on an e-first basis as this is the best way to ensure both equitable and timely access for all students. When online access cannot be provided (unavailable, prohibitive cost etc.), the library will purchase print copies at a ratio determined by the importance of the text.

Topic core text - **Must read**

Definition: A key text for the topic/module that is either re-occurring reading or is heavily required throughout. Material deemed to be essential to understanding the topics in the module.

If available, an e-copy will be provided with sufficient access to meet student numbers on the module. Print copies will also be available.

Where an e-copy is not available, the Library Service will endeavour to provide material in this category to a pre-agreed formula, normally in a ratio of 1 book for every 5 students, up to a maximum of 10 copies subject to available funds.

Reading lists should normally include a maximum of one essential reading item per module. Where the module has been combined to cover more than one topic (e.g. maths and programming) it may be necessary to have an additional essential reading item. Careful consideration should be made when deciding on more than one essential reading item both in relation to the time students have to engage with multiple resources and the library's ability to provide suitable quantities.

If the core text is a journal article or book chapter, Library Services will digitise such requests wherever possible within the Copyright Licensing Agency's guidelines and make these items available within the Reading List Management System.

Additional reading - **Should read**

Definition: Not essential but pertinent to assignments and useful supplemental or alternative sources of information for the module. Material providing additional and more detailed understanding of topics in the module.

If available an e-copy will be provided. Print copies may also be available.

Where an e-copy is not available, Library Services will endeavour to provide material in this category to a pre-agreed formula, normally in a ratio of 1 book to every 40 students, up to a maximum of 3 copies subject to available funds.

Reading lists should normally include a maximum of five additional reading items.

Further reading - Could read

Definition: Supplemental Reading around the subject area in order to further understanding. Material providing a wider and deeper understanding of topics in the module.

Library Services will only acquire if budget allows.

Reading lists should normally include a maximum of twenty-five further reading items.

Key journals

If there are any key journals (academic titles/industry periodicals/popular magazines) relevant for the module these should be included here. The Library will provide aggregated databases of popular periodicals which should be sufficient for undergraduate study but will consider providing access to a wider range of journals where appropriate based on value for money (e.g. cost per use).

If there are specific journal articles relevant for the module, these should be included on the reading list.

6 Additional acquisition guidelines

a. New editions

Library Services will purchase the newest available edition unless an academic states that a specific edition is required for pedagogical reasons.

b. Book chapters

If a reading list contains a book chapter, Library Services will offer to digitise such resources; the digitised copy can then be linked to in the Reading List. If more than one chapter from the same book is requested the Library will treat this as a purchase request for the entire book, to comply with Copyright Licensing Agency regulations.

It may be advantageous to digitise resources where a reading list item is in high demand, to make access to essential reading easier, or when only one chapter of a book is needed, allowing Library Services to manage resource budgets accordingly.

Digital course readings must be managed via the Reading List Management System to comply with the requirements of the CLA licence. They must not be uploaded onto the VLE. To do so would be a breach of Copyright Law and could result in a large fine and damage to the University's reputation.

c. Out of print items

Library Services will not purchase out of print material. If such items are included in reading lists, the reading list should clearly indicate that the material may not be readily available.

d. Distance learning / part-time courses

Course teams should consider with support from Library Services whether the suggested reading is available in a format that matches the delivery model of the course.

e. Student numbers

It is essential to indicate the number of students enrolled (or expected to enroll) in a module, to ensure Library Services orders sufficient numbers of copies and can comply with the CLA Licence for digitised resources.

7 Responsibilities

Module Leaders/list creators will be responsible for list contents including:

- Submission and updating of reading lists (annually) by the deadlines detailed in section 8.
 - Selection of the correct semester for the list, to ensure the list rolls over to the next academic year.
 - Assigning importance to each reading list item:
 - *Topic core text – must read;*
 - *Additional reading – should read;*
 - *Further reading – could read.*
- so library staff can purchase copies to the agreed formula.
- Attendance at training on the Reading List Management system.

SAS Teams will:

- If possible, provide the number (or likely number) of students on the module, so library staff can purchase to the agreed formula.

Learning Support Officers will:

- Provide details of any relevant Student Support Plans where it may be necessary to provide texts in alternative formats (Library Services require ten weeks' notice of any resources in alternative formats for students with additional needs).

Library Services will:

- Provide training, guidance and ongoing support in the use of the Reading List Management System.
- Provide support for resource planning at the course / module design, development and review stages.
- Check and acquire resources on published reading lists in accordance with section 5.
- Identify and promote online alternatives to printed resources.
- Advise on copyright clearance and document digitisation.
- Endeavour to obtain clearance for digitising copyright material and if clearance cannot be obtained advise list creators.
- Treat items as '*Further reading – could read*' when no level of importance has been set by the list creator.
- Ensure that reading lists are available in the appropriate space in the VLE.

8 Timescales

Academic Staff will be contacted by their Librarian a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the module start date to remind them to submit or update new reading lists. Academic staff are expected to ensure all current reading lists are created or updated at least 4-6 weeks in advance of the module start date.

Appendix C Timeframe for Developing Module Contents

The below table is an indicative guide for course teams on the expected timescales involved in developing a new module for a course or making changes to an existing module.

| Module Activity | Month from before Module Start Date | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-------|
| | M-12 | M-11 | M-10 | M-9 | M-8 | M-7 | M-6 | M-5 to M-1 | Start |
| Module Leader reviews descriptor for currency and relevance | | | | | | | | | |
| Module Team identifies industry partner(s) | | | | | | | | | |
| Module Team write learning project outline(s) | | | | | | | | | |
| Course Lead's review of module contents and intended assessment approach* | | | | | | | | | |
| Module Team develop assessment(s) | | | | | | | | | |
| Course Lead's review of assessment** | | | | | | | | | |
| External Examiner's review of assessments** | | | | | | | | | |
| Publication of module contents for students to select as electives*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Module Start Date | | | | | | | | | |

* This meeting would be across all modules within a programme due to start in the semester under discussion and would look at: the assessment types both formative and summative; learning and assessment variety across the student experience; relevance to the course and module ILOs; assessment relationship with learning projects; and student workload. For the first iteration this would also form part of the Course Validation Process.

**Formal sign off of the assessment(s).

***As part of the "Electives - open" approach at the 'individualise' stage of the student journey (assessment outline shared but not specifics).

Appendix D Intended Learning Outcome Guidance

Introduction

This document lays out how the MK:U course design teams will create the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) at both Programme and Module level. This document will be subject to regular review but aims to provide a common standard across the course design teams.

ILO Structure

Each module will usually have three to four ILOs for each level it will be taught at. The ILO section will begin with the following statement:

On successful completion of the module you will be able to:

The ILOs will always be of the form:

One active verb + object + context

Active verb: answers the question of what will be the specific action the student will be able to do

Object: the entity the student will be studying

Context: the environment or subject of interest

For example:

Demonstrate [Active verb] mathematical concepts [object] relevant to digital problem [context]

A list of recommended verbs, separated into encouraged and acceptable per FHEQ level, as well as a list of banned words at each level is available from the MK:U Director of Education.

FHEQ Levels and ILO phrasing

ILOs should indicate which level through the choice of language. In terms of a framework for this MK:U follows the UK FHEQ level descriptors. There are some examples where Bloom's Taxonomy suggested verbs contradict those used by UK FHEQ, and in these instances the UK FHEQ terminology and ethos should take priority.

The differences in level can be characterised as:

Level 4 is generally concerned with learning the fundamental concepts for a subject, and this can be demonstrated in many different ways. For some subjects it can also reflect learning about systems at the individual component level. It is generally within the area/field of study/discipline or within a structured and managed environment.

Level 5 is generally concerned with the application of the concepts, theories and knowledge from L4, often within an industry setting. In some cases, it also involves using the knowledge gained at L4 in an environment or application setting different to the one it has been taught within, and can include communicating concepts to non-specialist audiences. For some subjects it also reflects learning about entire systems, where various components interact. It is generally outside of the original context, within an employment context, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and/or within organisations.

Level 6 is generally concerned with concepts, knowledge and research at the forefront of the discipline. It is usually in uncertain, complex and/or unpredictable environments.

Given the multi-disciplinary nature of MK:U there will be examples of students learning some of the basics of a subject in their later levels of study, where the subject is not their main focus. The learning outcomes will still reflect the academic level the student is at, as they will be able to work with the concepts at a more advanced level, due to the professional skills, and greater industry awareness from their main subject; for example, a final year student will be expected to study all modules at L6.

Verb Sets

Given the aspiration for all students at MK:U to be able to take any module, and for students to choose their own pathway through courses (where accreditation does not prevent this) there is a need for module content to be able to be assessed at different levels. For many modules this could be achieved using the same module descriptor, and just modifying the ILO phrasing to reflect each level. **An example sets of verbs have been suggested below, but this list is not exhaustive and a fuller list can be provided by the Director of Education.**

| Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 |
|----------|-------------------------------|--|
| Identify | Examine Analyse Compare | Determine Critique Contextualise Debate |
| Explain | Analyse | Investigate |
| Describe | Compare | Debate |

Where modules are taught across different levels, additional active verbs can be inserted after the first active verb in the format of:

For example:

L4 – Demonstrate, L5 – Implement; L6 – Deploy mathematical concepts relevant to digital problem.

Shown in the module descriptor, where L5 is the predominate level, as

[Demonstrate] Implement [Deploy] mathematical concepts relevant to digital problem.

Formatting

Each ILO should end with a full stop. ILOs should start with a capital letter. ILOs should be numbered. This enables software to read the ILOs out loud and fits with MK:U's inclusivity values.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Owner | Academic Registrar |
| Department | Education Services |
| Implementation date | August 2024 |
| Approval by and date | Academic Registrar, August 2024 |
| Version number and date of last review | V1.4 August 2024 |
| Next review by | August 2025 |