



Senate Handbook

Staff Handbook

Setting up a New Taught Course

THIS HANDBOOK IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW FOLLOWING THE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES MADE FROM 1ST AUGUST 2024

This Handbook supplements Regulations governed by Senate.

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

Contents

1	Process for proposing a new taught course	4
1.1	Background	4
1.2	What exactly is a “course”?	5
1.3	Role of Course Director	5
1.4	Essential course documentation	6
1.5	What is the process for the approval of taught courses?	6
1.5.1	Overview	6
1.5.2	Stage 1: approval of course concept and business case	7
1.5.3	Stage 2: approval of full course proposal	8
1.5.4	Timescales	8
1.6	Course proposal documentation	9
1.6.1	Summary	9
1.6.2	Document descriptions	10
1.6.2.A	Course concept and business case	10
1.6.2.B	Course specification	10
1.6.2.C	Module descriptors	10
1.6.2.D	Other supporting documents	11
1.7	The roles of School Executive, University Executive, School Scrutiny, Course Validation Panels, Education Committee and Senate	11
1.7.1	Description of the process for the consideration of a new course proposal	11
1.7.2	School Executive	14
1.7.3	University Executive	14
1.7.4	School Scrutiny	14
1.7.5	Course Validation Panels	15
1.7.6	Education Committee	16
1.7.7	Senate	16
1.8	Further advice	17
2	Partnerships involving academic provision	18
2.1	Overview	18
2.2	Categories of partnerships involving academic provision	18
2.2.1	The partnership taxonomy	18
2.2.2	Validated external provision	19
2.2.3	Joint provision	19
2.2.4	Partial award recognition	20
2.2.5	Partner support	20
3	Learning resources and off-site students	22
3.1	Context	22
3.2	Library and IT resources	22
3.3	Remote access to university resources	23
4	Producing a course concept and business case document	24
4.1	Primary audiences	24
4.2	Elements of the course concept and business case	24
5	Producing a course specification	27
5.1	Primary audiences	27
5.2	Elements of the course specification	27
5.3	Revisions to course specifications post-course approval	29

5.4	Further advice	29
Appendix A	Partnerships involving academic provision	30
A.1	Flowchart	30
Appendix B	Course design advice	31
B.1	Translating an idea for a course into aims and intended learning outcomes	31
B.2	Constructing a course	31
B.3	How do I write clear and appropriate ILOs?	34
B.4	From ILOs to learning, teaching and assessment activities	35
Appendix C	Master's-Level Descriptors for Taught Courses	37
C.1	What is expected of a student taking a Master's degree?	37
C.2	What is expected of a student taking a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate?	37
C.3	How does Master's-level study differ from undergraduate (honours) provision?	38
Appendix D	Course approval process roles and responsibilities	40
Appendix E	Constitution of a Course Validation Panel	42
Appendix F	Indicative Course Validation Panel questions	43
Appendix G	Completing the course specification template	49
G.1	How detailed should course specifications be?	49
G.2	Completing the individual sections	49
Appendix H	Completing the module descriptor template	62

Major changes to this document since version 3.4 September 2023:

- Note added re. University organisational changes

Major changes to this document since version 3.3 January 2022:

- Reference added to PgAwards (1, Appendix C)
- Additional documentation required for course approvals (including apprenticeship courses and partnerships (1.6))
- Revised guidance on PT course lengths (Appendix C)
- Addition of Appendix I: Principles for setting up a Postgraduate Award (Appendix I)

1 Process for proposing a new taught course

1.1 Background

This Handbook is designed to support academic staff in setting up a new taught course, leading to a formal award of Cranfield University. It outlines in detail University procedures and expectations before a new course can be approved by the relevant authorities (including the University Executive and Education Committee on behalf of Senate). Future changes to courses are outlined in a separate Senate Handbook on Managing Taught Courses: that Handbook outlines ongoing requirements for Course Directors and course teams once a course has been approved, and to which this Handbook will make reference where appropriate.

This Handbook and the procedures herein have been approved by Education Committee (on behalf of Senate) and reflect both University Laws and national guidance and expectations set by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). As part of its role in ensuring robust course management, Education Committee expects all course teams to follow the Handbooks in all respects.

The University currently offers a range of awards arising from taught courses. These include:

- Master of Business Administration MBA
- Master of Design MDes
- Master of Science MSc
- Postgraduate Diploma PgDip (often as an early exit route from a Master's)
- Postgraduate Certificate PgCert (often as an early exit route from a Master's)
- Postgraduate Award¹ PgAward (only as an intended award)

All taught programmes of study associated with any of the degrees above are sponsored by one or more Schools, and approved by the University Executive and Education Committee on behalf of Senate.

New course proposals are scrutinised by Course Validation Panels and approved by Education Committee, a body chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and consisting of the Directors of Education, academic staff representatives and senior officers of the University.

The following are also scrutinised by Course Validation Panels and approved by Education Committee:

- Structured programmes of taught elements in named awards of professional doctorates (e.g. EPSRC-sponsored EngDs);
- Stand-alone accredited modules which result in the award of Cranfield learning credits.

Support for a new course must also be provided by the relevant School or Schools, contributing to the delivery of course content and student learning support.

Please note: This Handbook is currently under review following the organisational changes made from 1st August 2024.

¹ The Principles for setting up a Postgraduate Award can be found in Appendix I

1.2 What *exactly* is a “course”?

Across the University, a number of terms are used to represent a “course leading to an award of the University”. In order to describe a “course” to both staff and students, a number of models have been adopted across the Schools, particularly where there is content overlap between two or more “courses”. For example, there are:

- a) short courses (usually one or two weeks in duration, and offered either not for credit,² accredited in their own right, and/or offered as a module in a long course leading to an award of the University);
- b) long courses (usually made up of a number of discrete taught modules, combined with group work and/or an individual project or other self-directed study and leading to a formal uniquely-named award of the University);
- c) programmes, made up of a number of courses (which usually share one or more taught modules and/or group work, and where each of the courses leads to a uniquely-named award of the University);
- d) courses, made up of a number of options (as above but an example of different terminology across Schools, and where each option shares a common named award, but where the option is often articulated in brackets alongside it – in essence, each option therefore being a uniquely-named award of the University).

Throughout this Handbook, the term “course” shall be used to describe a **discrete and defined combination of learning provision leading to a uniquely-named award of the University**. (In this context, long courses, courses and options in the examples above are all considered to be “courses”.)

Each “course” may have a number of defined entry and exit routes associated with it (and therefore a number of associated awards). For example, we may have a course called “Advanced Galvanisation”, and for which students may apply to study for an MSc, a PgDip or a PgCert as their intended outcome. Equally and separately to those intentions, a student may leave with the award of an MSc, a PgDip or a PgCert (depending on their academic performance). Clarity over which entry and exit routes are associated with any one course is outlined in the course specification.

A Course Director, therefore, may be responsible for a single “course” which may have a large number of entry and exit points, but all of which will bear the same name.

1.3 Role of Course Director

Once approved by the University Executive and Education Committee, the day-to-day management and responsibility of a taught course leading to a formal award of the University is allocated to a **Course Director** appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (School) (or by somebody on his or her behalf).

² Currently, where courses are offered not for credit, there is no requirement for academic approval through Validation panels or Senate: the School, however, is still responsible for assuring that the short course represents an appropriate product for its intended audience.

Details on who can be appointed as a Course Director, and their roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Senate Handbook on Positions of Responsibility in Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

In terms of course management, Course Directors are expected to be aware of the information in this Handbook and other Senate Regulations and Handbooks relevant to the management of the education provision of the University and the management of students.

1.4 Essential course documentation

Every course has a number of key documents associated with it, which require regular review and revision. These documents conform to a common template defined by Education Committee.

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 on the University website. It outlines the aims of the course, 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;³
- Individual **module descriptors** for all modules associated with the course;
- A **course handbook** (or online equivalent).

Compiled at course approval only

Submitted **annually** along with the annual reflective review and integrated into the University's student records system (SITS)

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

Course Directors ensure that there are mechanisms to review these documents on at least an annual basis, seeking advice from Education Services and Directors of Education.

The documents and templates referred to in this Handbook are available to download from the Education Services area of the website.

In addition, marketing material will be required in order to promote the course. Marketing Communications and Development will provide advice and support in producing such material.

1.5 What is the process for the approval of taught courses?

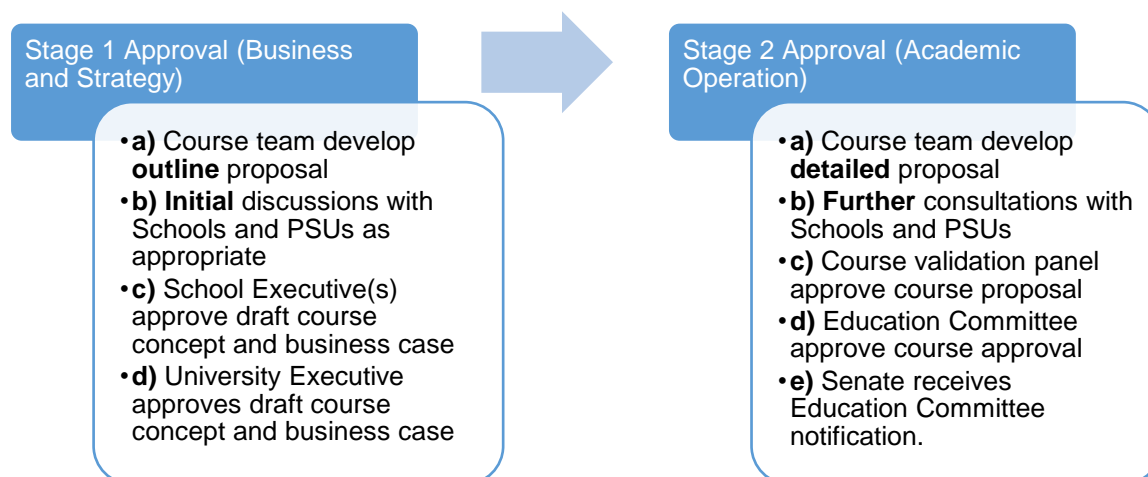
1.5.1 Overview

Senate has determined a two-stage process for the approval of a new taught course. Stage 1 is the early approval of a course concept and business case by the relevant School and by the University Executive. Stage 2 is the consideration of a detailed proposal (including a review of

³ In a number of cases, there is a single course specification document that covers a number of courses (i.e. a "programme specification") particularly where there is significant overlap between the taught modules offered on individual courses. Where a course has multiple intakes in any academic year, additional course specifications are required.

student provision and academic quality and coherence) through the formal academic committee structure (Course Validation Panel → Education Committee (on behalf of Senate)).

At the end of Stage 1, an approved course concept and business case is available to the course team for them to develop the course into a fully-formed proposal. You should not commence producing course documentation until you have had Stage 1 approval.



The main stages in the development of any new course are:

- consultation with any relevant industries, businesses or professional bodies;
- outlining the initial concept in the form of a course concept and business case;
- seeking approval of the course concept and business case by the School and University Executive [STAGE 1];
- gathering together a course team to develop the proposal collectively (Proposals developed by a single member of staff in isolation will not be considered.);
- developing the course proposal in detail, including:
 - resources planning and risk management;
 - detailed construction of the course curriculum and its delivery;
 - appropriate intended learning outcomes at the module and award level
 - effective assessment to meet the award ILOs;
- consulting the relevant Director(s) of Education on the proposal;
- producing the formal course documentation;
- seeking approval of full course proposal by a Course Validation Panel and by Education Committee on behalf of Senate [STAGE 2].

It is essential that course teams do not underestimate the time that may be needed in order to ensure that the course has been developed to a standard necessary for approval by University committees. Time should be allowed for elements of the proposal to be revised and developed before formal approval is granted.

1.5.2 Stage 1: approval of course concept and business case

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (School), both individually and collectively through the University Executive, approve a general course concept and business case before any detailed development of a full course proposal can be taken forward. The course concept and business case document is described in Section 4 and, on completion, should be presented to the School Executive. The Director of Education/Research will inform Education Services of School Executive approval. Education Services will then arrange for its consideration at the University Executive.

The University Executive will either approve the development of a full course proposal [STAGE 2] (with or without highlighting points that will need to be addressed in that development), ask for

further information for it to consider at a later meeting, or reject the development of the course idea. The University Executive will also flag to the Course Validation Panel and Education Committee any aspects of the proposed course that require specific scrutiny (e.g. partnerships with other academic institutions, a need for formal legal agreements etc.).

University Executive meet on a fortnightly basis, to allow for early course proposals to be considered on a relatively frequent basis. Once approved by University Executive, courses can be marketed as 'subject to University approval'. At this stage, Education Services will notify Marketing Recruitment to initiate discussion regarding web/prospectus descriptions and to Admissions requesting completion of the New Course Notification Form which will be used by IT to set up the course and online admissions.

1.5.3 Stage 2: approval of full course proposal

The development of a full course proposal may require amendments to the course concept and business case, either due to comments by the University Executive or because the course concept changes during its development. (The Course Validation Panel will require wholesale changes to the course concept and business case to be reconsidered by the Executives.)

The full set of documentation needed to consider the introduction of a new taught course includes:

1. The approved course concept and business case document, which outlines how the course will be delivered within School/ University structures, and provides a risk assessment relating to resources and the management and delivery of the course (with or without highlighted changes following Executive approval);
2. A course specification, written to a national specification and published on the University website, which outlines the aims of the course; how it is delivered; describes in detail the structure (modules and other elements) of the course for a particular academic year; and what students must do to achieve any awards associated with the course;⁴
3. Module descriptors for any new and existing modules associated with the course. All module descriptors for the course must be submitted regardless of whether they are new or existing modules and should be presented on the standard template for module descriptors.

In addition, Education Services will consult with the Course Director to determine the key stakeholders requiring consultation prior to the Course Validation Panel. The Course Validation Resources Checklist will be circulated by Education Services to the relevant parties in order to confirm whether they are able to meet any requirements from existing resources or whether they will require additional resources to support the course. The Course Director will be required to hold briefing discussions with the identified parties prior to them signing the checklist. The Course Validation Panel will not take place if the checklist has not been signed.

Each document serves a different purpose, and should stand alone. It should, however, not be necessary to repeat information in more than one place. These documents are described in more detail elsewhere in this document, in Section 1.6.2 and in Sections 4-5 and the associated appendices.

1.5.4 Timescales

When all of the documentation above has been compiled, proposals for new taught courses are considered by 'internal School Scrutiny (Section 1.7.4). Recommendations are made as to whether to proceed to a full Course Validation Panel. Course Validation Panels are held as required and are arranged by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit.

⁴ In a number of cases, there is a single course specification document that covers a number of courses (i.e. a "programme specification"), particularly where there is significant overlap between the taught modules offered on individual courses.

Education Committee meets 10 times a year, to allow for course proposals to be reviewed at the point of approval by a Course Validation Panel, and to allow time for revisions to proposals as required. Where particularly contentious issues are identified, Education Committee may stipulate that a full discussion is required at Senate and in such instances marketing of the course remains as 'subject to University approval'.

Course proposals – from idea to student entry – will take at least 6 months, and those developing *new courses* are asked to bear this in mind when planning their activities.

1.6 Course proposal documentation

1.6.1 Summary

The table below outlines the range of documentation to be completed:

For the purposes of this document, the term “course” represents a coherent body of learning and teaching (from the student perspective) for which there may be several pathways (“options”) and exit routes (e.g. MSc, PgDip, PgCert).

	Document	Brief description
A	Course concept and business case	Overview of the proposed course, including evidence of current and future demand, its “fit” with any School strategic plan for educational provision, and an outline of internal and external competition. Confirmation from the School of the course’s synergy with School strategy, potential funding streams, provision of adequate staff resources and teaching facilities, local student support mechanisms and any potential wider implications for the University. Details on resources (course delivery requirements, student numbers and staff commitments) and risk management of provision (staff preparation, location of delivery, student learning support provision, arrangements for any academic partnerships). <i>This document should be supplemented with evidence of external demand.</i>
B	Course specification	Information on aims and intended learning outcomes, course outline, modes of delivery of teaching and assessment, award criteria, and information on academic or industrial partners, quality assurance mechanisms and potential careers prospects for graduates. It contains detailed information on the modular structure of courses and weightings for assessment purposes. <i>Please note that a single document is required for a course, irrespective of the number of exit routes.</i>
C	Module descriptors	University template descriptors for individual modules within a taught course: they will include aims and intended learning outcomes, syllabi, assessment methods, reading lists and other information.
D	Other Documentation	For apprenticeship courses, documentation should also capture details outlining the involvement of employers in the design of the programme. Where a course falls under the definition of a partnership involving academic provision, there are a number of other documents required to supplement any course proposal as outlined in Section 2 and the Senate Handbook on Partnerships involving Academic Provision.

The documents listed form the official documentation for the proposed course, and are common for all taught courses across the University (i.e. irrespective of School). Templates have been developed to help prospective Course Directors provide appropriate information in sufficient detail.

The course concept and business case (Document A) is produced for all new courses at the point of conception, and is the key document which leads to a decision about whether the new course should be introduced.

It is supplemented by a course specification (Document B), which is reviewed and revised annually as the course develops and changes over time. Module descriptors are also likely to change and develop each year.

1.6.2 Document descriptions

1.6.2.A Course concept and business case

The course concept and business case serves two purposes: it is used early on in the development of a new course to ensure that the proposal is in broad agreement with School and University strategies. It is also used to identify as early as possible whether any aspects of the course require particular oversight or negotiation (e.g. provision which is offered jointly or in collaboration with external organisations, proposals which may conflict or compete with provision in other parts of the University, proposals that will require major investment outside of the School). A number of headings are provided for prospective Course Directors to provide key information and to demonstrate that they have reflected upon how the proposed course will be delivered in practice.

The course concept and business case is therefore the key document to describe the proposal, and how the course will operate.

The completed course concept and business case should be supplemented with any evidence or testimonials to support the market demand for the course, with especial reference to external support or sponsorship.

Where the course includes a partnership arrangement with another institution, attention is drawn to the University processes relating to course approval and management – see Section 2 and the Senate Handbook on Partnerships involving Academic Provision.

1.6.2.B Course specification

The course specification is essentially a description of the taught course leading to one or more awards of the University. It covers the aims and intended learning outcomes of the course as a whole, and the means by which the outcomes are achieved and demonstrated. It also provides detailed information on the content of a course, and how the various elements (e.g. taught modules, projects, placements) add together to lead to specific awards. It contains detailed descriptions of each element of the course, when they are scheduled, whether they are shared, cross-modular assessments (where applicable) and assignments of credits and examination weightings for use in determining overall marks and information to be included on a student's transcript.

Only one course specification is required irrespective of the number of entry and exit routes associated with the course. Additional course specifications will be required for multiple intakes in an academic year.

Some of the detailed information may not be available at the course validation stage and Appendix 7 outlines the parts of the specification that are not required to proceed to validation. However, the course specification must be completed in full after the validation of the course.

1.6.2.C Module descriptors

In addition to the proposal documentation, prospective Course Directors will need to provide detailed course information in the form of module descriptors.

Module descriptors provide essential information for members of the course team, including examiners, in order for them to deliver the course and set appropriate assessments. They are usually included in course documentation for current students.

Module descriptors include the following information:

- module rationale/aims and intended learning outcomes;
- any pre-requisite requirements
- methods of assessment (and how they relate to the award intended learning outcomes);
- student workload;
- syllabus or curriculum points; and
- preparatory or in-course reading lists.

It is expected that there will exist only one module descriptor for a module, even where it may be shared between courses. If a Course Director/ wishes to use the *content* of a module, but outline alternative intended learning outcomes and/or modes of assessment this should be outlined on a separate module descriptor with a separate module name.

Attention is drawn to Appendix B.2.6, which outlines policies relating to the use of shared modules, or modules that share teaching between separate courses. Guidance on completing the module descriptor template is outlined in Appendix H.

1.6.2.D Other supporting documents

Where a course falls under the definition of a partnership involving academic provision, there are a number of other documents required to supplement any course proposal. These are outlined in more detail in Section 2 and the Senate Handbook on Partnerships involving Academic Provision, and are a formal Senate requirement for the proposal of a new course.

For apprenticeship course, documentation should also capture details outlining the involvement of employers in the design of the programme.

Course Validation Panels will request skeleton timetables of modules and may request other supporting information, including for example opportunities for personal development planning activity, or course handbook pages or entries.

1.7 The roles of School Executive, University Executive, School Scrutiny, Course Validation Panels, Education Committee and Senate

1.7.1 Description of the process for the consideration of a new course proposal

In order to facilitate the course approval process, prospective Course Directors need to provide the documentation outlined in Section 1.4, including (but not necessarily limited to):

A	Course concept and business case	overview of the new course
B	Course specification	programme specification ⁵
C	Module descriptors	detailed descriptions of course elements

In addition Education Services produces:

D	Course validation resources checklist	consultation checklist
E	Validation report	conditions and recommendations

The process overview flowcharts for taught courses and stand-alone accredited modules below indicate on the right-hand column the documents that are considered by each of the committees/ panels.

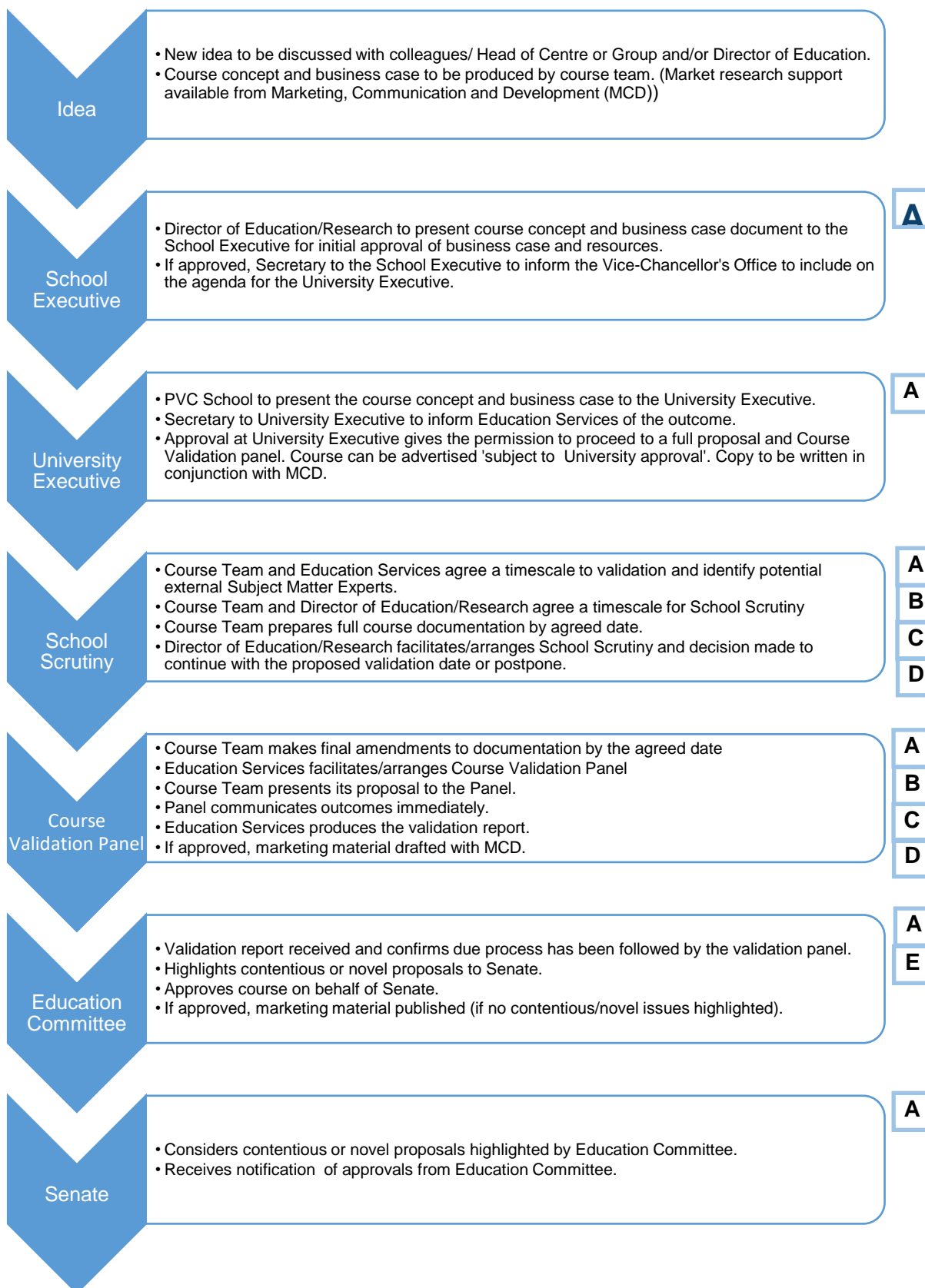
⁵ For stand-alone accredited modules, only the course module section of the document is required.

The School and/or University Executive should flag whether any further inter-School discussions are required, and whether any consideration is required over resources or arrangements for partnerships involving academic provision.

Following stage 2 approval, the course specification document must be completed in full where detailed information was not available at the course approval stage.

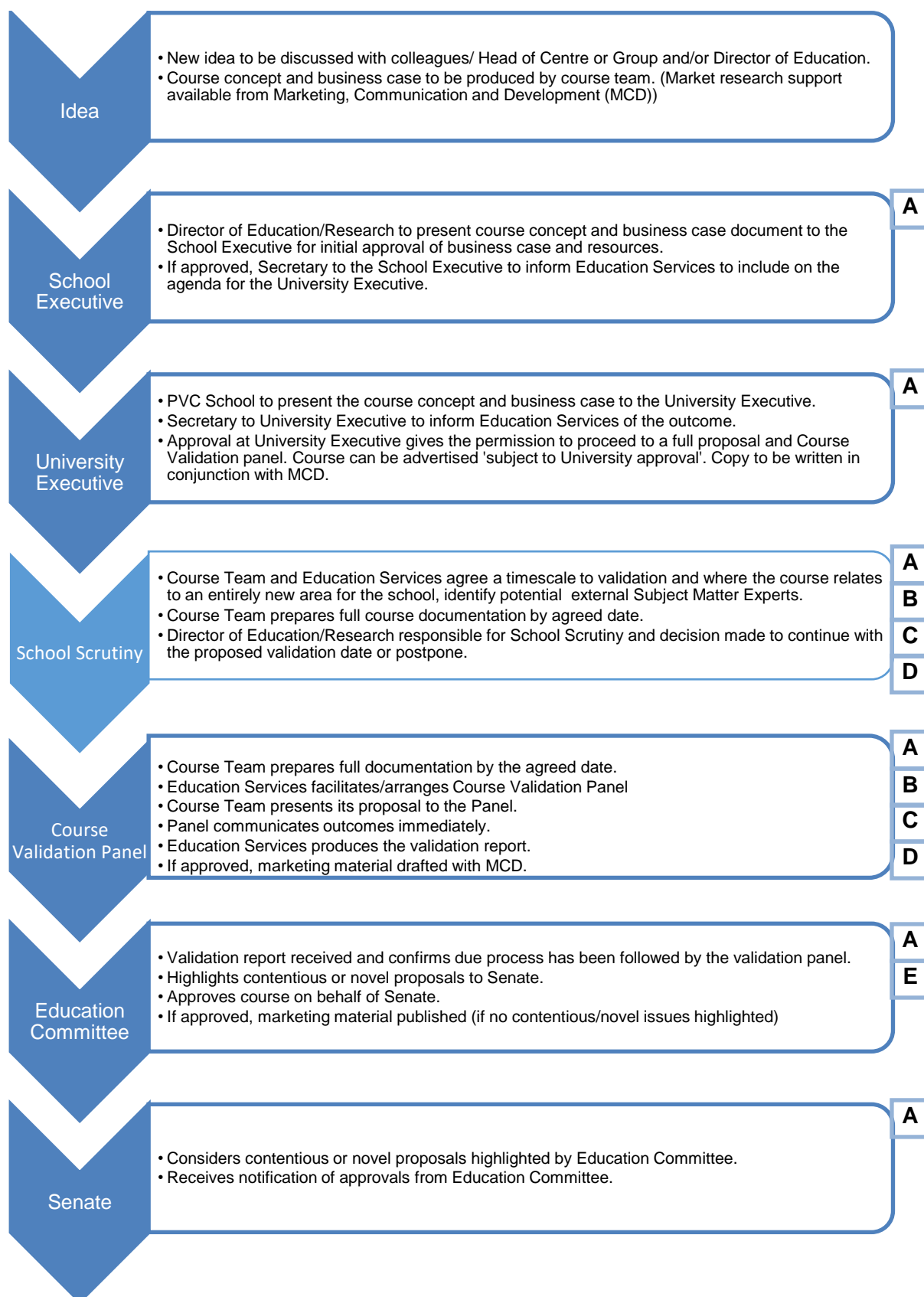
1.7.1.1 Process overview flowchart

Document



1.7.1.2 Stand-alone accredited module overview process flowchart

The process for approval of stand-alone accredited modules follows the general principles of new course approval but has variations in process (such as specific circumstances in which an external subject matter expert is required). There are also variations in the documentation required (outlined in section 17.1).



1.7.2 School Executive

The School Executive considers the course concept and business case in order to consider the following questions:

- Does this proposal fit with the University's mission and Education Strategy and the Educational Portfolio of the School/Theme?
- Does the School have (or intend to acquire) the appropriate resources to deliver the proposed educational outputs?
- What are the risks associated with the proposal? e.g., sponsor pulling out, reputational risk, market viability, availability of staff.
- Where there are shared modules across Schools, is there sufficient evidence in the documentation that there has been consultation and that management of modules has been agreed?
- Is this really in an area of current expertise for the School/University – if not, should we be working in this area (yet)?

1.7.3 University Executive

The University Executive considers the course concept and business case in order to consider the following questions:

- Does this proposal fit with the University's Corporate Plan and brand?
- Is it set in the correct Theme and/or School?
- Does this set up any internal competition with other courses?
- Is it sustainable in the open market?
- For closed courses is it time limited and does the income exceed development costs?
- Is this really in an area of current expertise for the School/University – if not, should we be working in this area (yet)?

1.7.4 School Scrutiny

The School conducts internal scrutiny of the course proposal. The Director of Education/Research is responsible for ensuring that the course team is supported in the development of the course and that the documentation has been scrutinised to enable the course to proceed to a Course Validation Panel. It is good practice for this to take place through a School Panel. The Panel is internal to the School and considers the course concept and business case, course specification and module descriptors. The role of the panel is to:

- Act as a critical friend to the proposing Course Team.
- Pose questions that a Course Validation Panel may raise.
- Identify gaps in the documentation and areas for clarification and improvement.
- Advise the Course Team of useful amendments to the documentation.
- At the feedback point have a full and frank discussion with the Course Team and the Director of Education/Research about whether the team are ready to go ahead on the scheduled date or if and when a postponement is appropriate.

When a panel does not take place this role is undertaken by the Director of Education.

1.7.5 Course Validation Panels

Full course proposals are considered by Course Validation Panels. Course Validation Panels ensure that new academic programmes and courses meet or exceed the threshold standards appropriate to the level of the proposed provision and to ensure the quality of the student

experience. Course Validation Panels include a member external to the University to meet the expectations of the QAA, Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) and strategic partners. Guidelines for the constitution of a panel are included in Appendix 5. Course Validation Panels are part of the process of continuous improvement and enhancement across the university. The course approval process draws on evidence presented by the proposing team to demonstrate how the proposed provision addresses institutional policies, regulations and guidelines and appropriate reference points such as the QAA or requirements of PSRBs. The panel should receive the course concept and business case (A) to provide important contextual information, but will focus on reviewing the course specification (B) along with module descriptors (C) and any required additional documents.

The role of the panel is to:

- Review proposal paperwork and contribute to the questions for the course team;
- Ensure courses meet the threshold standards required by the QAA.
- Ensure all sections of the validation template have been effectively addressed;
- Make recommendations on the basis of best practice and enhancement;
- Set conditions and recommendations for validation;
- Make a formal decision:
 - Recommend approval to Education Committee (no conditions; with/without recommendations);
 - Recommend approval to Education Committee (subject to conditions; with/without recommendations);
 - Fail to approve (proposal requires significant work before being re-presented);
- Confirm accuracy of the validation report.

Conditions should be applied where there would otherwise be a breach of threshold standards; or a proposal would breach a Senate Regulation; or is out of line with an explicit Education Committee directive.

Examples:

- | | |
|----|--|
| C1 | Review the module ILOs such that they align with the taught content of the modules. This will require revisions to, and triangulation of, the relevant sections of the Course Specification and Module Descriptor documents. |
| C2 | To have acquired and commissioned additional laboratory testing capability (as outlined in the course proposal) before the start of the course. |
| C3 | Course Structure document should be clearly marked to show whether the assessments are key or general assessments. |
| C4 | The timetabling of the taught elements and assessments should be rationalised to give an appropriate workload for learning. |

In any other case, views are expected to result in Recommendations.

Recommendations relate to issues which would merit from further consideration in order to enhance future provision but would not detrimentally impact on the delivery, threshold standards and quality of the student experience.

Examples:

- | | |
|----|--|
| R1 | To consider methods of making self-reflection for learning and personal development more explicit within the course. |
| R2 | To consider offering seminars around the pre-existing generic modules to ensure appropriate contextualisation. |
| R3 | For modules with more than one assessment, the weighting of and rationale for multiple assessments to be reviewed. |

1. The proposal;
2. Curriculum;
3. Learning Teaching and Assessment;

4. Support for students;
5. Staffing and resources;
6. Programme and quality management.

A guide of indicative validation panel questions can be found in Appendix 6 of this Handbook.

A formal report of the Course Validation Panel will be made to the Course Team and Director of Education about whether to recommend the new course to Education Committee.

Normally, conditions must be met before the proposal can be put forward to Education Committee. However, where conditions are based on securing additional resources such as staff or equipment with a long procurement time, approval can be made subject to the conditions being met before the course commencement date. Normally the Course Validation Panel Chair in conjunction with the Course Validation Panel Secretary can confirm whether conditions have been met. Where circumstances change, such that a condition cannot be met, the matter should be referred to Education Committee by the relevant Director of Education.

Recommendations do not have to be met in order for the course to gain approval. However, the Course Team should respond to each recommendation in the first Annual Reflective Review.

1.7.6 Education Committee

Education Committee has a formal role, delegated to it by Senate, in scrutinising and approving proposals for new courses, and maintaining and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching throughout the University. It brings together Directors of Education from all Schools and other senior officers of the University to consider all new course proposals recommended to them by Course Validation Panels.

Education Committee will review the validation report in order to:

- Confirm due process has been followed by the Course Validation Panel.
- Discuss risks presented by non-completion of any outstanding conditions
- Confirm that recommendations do not need to be conditions
- Refer contentious or novel proposals to Senate.
- Approve / not approve new courses on behalf of Senate.

1.7.7 Senate

New courses are formally approved by Education Committee on behalf of Senate. Education Committee will refer novel or contentious proposals for consideration by Senate.

Senate will receive notification from Education Committee of approval and receive an (updated/annotated) copy of the original (approved) course concept and business case to consider whether there have been any significant changes in the political/financial/academic landscapes that would render the proposal no longer appropriate for inclusion in the University's portfolio and will note any outstanding resource conditions of validation.

1.8 Further advice

Further advice for the production of material to propose a new course can be obtained from Education Services. Prospective Course Directors are advised to alert the Director of Education/ Director of Research and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (School) of any potential course proposals at as early a stage as possible. They are also invited to discuss course design issues with the Centre for Andragogy and Academic Skills

Once a course has been formally validated and approved by Education Committee it is considered finalised. Any changes that are required to be made to the course after this point must be done so using the process set out in the Managing Taught Courses Handbook.

The specific roles and responsibilities of the key participants in the course approval process are outlined in Appendix 4 and refer to:

- The Course Team/ Course Director
- Director of Education/Research
- Education Services
- Validation Panel Secretary
- External Subject Matter Expert

2 Partnerships involving academic provision

2.1 Overview

Senate has approved separate and additional policies to govern academic provision which leads to formal awards of the University, and which is delivered or supported in partnership with one or more external organisations (including other higher education providers, research institutes, businesses and other agencies).

The full guidance, policies and procedures are outlined in the Senate Handbook on Partnerships involving Academic Provision: this covers the additional scrutiny given to provision of this type at the point of conception and approval, as well as ongoing monitoring and review requirements. In the event of a course proposal being part of a partnership involving academic provision, the partnership should first receive approval from the University Executive and Council (where relevant) before the course is presented to a Course Validation Panel. The panel will additionally consider the aspects of the partnership relevant to the provision as part of their consideration for course approval. This section provides a summary of those elements that relate to the approval of new courses, but readers are advised to read the full Senate Handbook on Partnerships involving Academic Provision if this applies to any proposed provision.

2.2 Categories of partnerships involving academic provision

2.2.1 The partnership taxonomy

The University has identified four categories of partnerships involving academic provision: the categories broadly correspond to the extent of direct management and oversight of the provision and the student experience by the University, and therefore the different levels of risk to the reputation of the University and its ability to ensure the quality of the learning, teaching and assessment.

Provision that does not involve formal partnerships is referred to as “Cranfield provision”, which is defined as academic provision where the majority of teaching provision and assessment is provided by members of the University, and where teaching is carried out on University premises. The Senate Handbook on Partnerships involving Academic Provision provides examples of where Cranfield provision does involve some element of externality, but does not formally represent a partnership.

The four categories of partnerships involving academic provision are:

- **VALIDATED EXTERNAL PROVISION** delivered entirely by another organisation, with Cranfield awarding degrees on its behalf
- **JOINT PROVISION** a shared arrangement for the delivery of teaching and learning with another institution
- **PARTIAL AWARD RECOGNITION** discrete parts of the provision are from another institution, with learning credits recognised by Cranfield
- **PARTNER SUPPORT** delivered in part or in full away from University premises, but by University staff

Appendix 1 provides a chart to help prospective course teams determine which category their provision falls under.

In all cases, further advice and support is offered by Education Services, who should be contacted at as early a stage as possible in the development of a new partnership arrangement.

2.2.2 Validated external provision

Validated external provision is defined as academic provision where:

- i. the programme in its entirety is delivered either by persons who are not permanent members of the University, or by another higher education institution or other partner; and
- ii. student achievement on the programme is “recognised” or validated for credit by the University.

For any programme leading to the award of Cranfield University, the University retains full responsibility for assuring the quality of the provision and the standards of the awards. Validated external provision delegates responsibility for the delivery of the programme and the assessment of students outside of the University: clear mechanisms and auditing tools are required to ensure that quality and standards remain appropriate.

It is therefore important that both the proposed partner and the associated provision are considered in full before course approval is granted by the University Executive and Senate. Given the deep relationships built in this type of provision, approval by the University’s Council is also required prior to launching any new partnership. The following additional evidence is required in addition to the course approval process outlined in Section 1:

- evidence of the suitability of the partner and its “fit” with Cranfield, which will usually require a report of a site visit to the premises of the partner;
- a risk assessment of the partnership and a conclusion over the level of contractual protection required to ensure the robustness of the arrangements, which will usually result in the production of a formal legal agreement.

Templates and examples are provided by Education Services on request.

2.2.3 Joint provision

Joint provision is defined as academic provision where:

- i. teaching provision and assessment is shared in an established arrangement between the University and another higher education institution or other partner(s) with an established educational record; and
- ii. the management of the programme may or may not be shared between the University and the other partner(s).

For any programme leading to an award of Cranfield University, the University retains full responsibility for assuring the quality of the provision and the standards of the awards. Joint provision may delegate responsibility for the delivery of the programme and the assessment of students outside of the University: where this occurs, clear mechanisms and auditing tools are required to ensure that quality and standards remain appropriate.

Again, it is important that both the proposed partner and the associated provision are considered in full before course approval is granted by the University Executive and Senate. The following additional evidence is required in addition to the course approval process outlined in Section 1:

- evidence of the suitability of the partner and its “fit” with Cranfield, which will usually require a report of a site visit to the premises of the partner;
- a risk assessment of the partnership and a conclusion over the level of contractual protection required to ensure the robustness of the arrangements.

Where joint provision arrangements include the award of joint degrees (i.e. a single award issued by a consortium of universities), approval for the partnership is also required by the University's Council.

Templates and examples are provided by Education Services on request.

2.2.4 Partial award recognition

Partial award recognition is defined as academic provision where:

- i. defined parts of the teaching provision and assessment (including but not limited to individual modules) are delivered by another higher education institution or other partner; and
- ii. student achievement on these parts of the programmes is “recognised” for credit by the University.

Where defined parts of the teaching provision and assessment are delivered by individuals who are not formally employees with academic status, the University operates schemes to “recognise” their teaching contribution (i.e. the “Recognised Teachers” process).

For any programme leading to the award of Cranfield University, the University retains full responsibility for assuring the quality of the provision and the standards of the awards. Partial award recognition delegates responsibility for the delivery of discrete parts of the programme and the assessment of students outside of the University for a defined proportion of the marks: where this occurs, clear mechanisms and auditing tools are required to ensure that quality and standards remain appropriate and comparable to other parts of the programme.

Again, it is important that both the proposed partner and the associated provision are considered in full before course approval is granted by the University Executive and Senate. The following additional evidence is required in addition to the course approval process outlined in Section 1:

- evidence of the suitability of the partner and its “fit” with Cranfield, which may require a report of a site visit to the premises of the partner, depending on the size and nature of the arrangements;
- a risk assessment of the partnership and a conclusion over the level of contractual protection required to ensure the robustness of the arrangements, which may range from an agreed written statement of provision to a formal legal agreement, depending on the complexity of the arrangements.

Templates and examples are provided by Education Services on request.

2.2.5 Partner support

Partner support is defined as academic provision where:

- i. a significant proportion of the teaching provision and assessment is provided by persons who are not members of the University; and/or
- ii. teaching resources or learning support that is integral to the course of study is provided by or contracted out to a partner organisation.

For any programme leading to the award of Cranfield University, the University retains full responsibility for assuring the quality of the provision and the standards of the awards. Partner support does not delegate responsibility for the delivery of the programme or the assessment of students outside of the University, but will likely take some aspects or provision of support outside the direct control of the University. Sufficient checks are required prior to and during delivery to ensure that the quality and standards remain appropriate, consistent and comparable to other parts of the programme.

A distinction is drawn between a partnership arrangement that applies to a cohort of students (i.e. to the programme as a whole) and to partnership arrangements that are negotiated on an individual student basis. The most common example of the latter category would include industrial project placements, and specific arrangements for these are outlined further in the Senate Handbook on Partnerships involving Academic Provision.

Again, it is important that both the proposed partner and the associated provision are considered in full before course approval is granted by the University Executive and Senate. The following additional evidence is required in addition to the course approval process outlined in Section 1:

- evidence of the suitability of the partner and its “fit” with Cranfield, which may require a report of a site visit to the premises of the partner, depending on the size and nature of the arrangements;
- a risk assessment of the partnership and a conclusion over the level of contractual protection required to ensure the robustness of the arrangements, which may range from an agreed written statement of provision to a formal legal agreement, depending on the complexity of the arrangements.

Templates and examples are provided by Education Services on request.

3 Learning resources and off-site students

3.1 Context

The University provides a wide range of learning resources and teaching infrastructure on its two campuses. A number of students, however, may be based for large parts of their courses away from campus and, in the case of some partnerships involving academic provision, may be based away from campus for the entirety of the course.

All courses rely to a degree on the physical and electronic learning resources provided by its Schools, but also by the central services and particularly the Library and IT. When a new course is being developed and where students are based on-campus, access to learning resources is usually straightforward and no special consideration is needed to ensure that students will be provided with a suitable learning environment.

This section outlines some of the issues that a course team may need to consider if the students are to undertake any learning away from the campuses of the University.

In all cases, the course teams should discuss any proposals with the Library and IT as early as possible in the planning process and are part of the resources checklist required for validation. It is helpful to discuss and resolve any access issues before courses have been approved and, in the case of partnerships involving academic provision, before agreements have been entered into.

3.2 Library and IT resources

Cranfield Libraries provide access to a wide range of services and electronic resources (e-journals, e-books, databases). IT manage access to all electronic systems, including virtual learning environments, EVE (the student portal) and other systems. Access to these services and resources for off-campus students – and particularly for teachers not directly employed by the University – may present a series of challenges that are unique to any individual proposal.

When a new course is being planned, Library staff can provide advice and guidance on:

- the identification of resources to support courses delivered off-site and/or at partner institutions;
- investigation of licensing issues which may otherwise limit the use of these resources (particularly for people who are not formally members of the University, or who are based overseas);
- training and support to ensure students are able to make best use of these resources;
- off-campus access arrangements including the use of passwords, the extranet and the use of learning portals;
- other infrastructural requirements that affect the use of these resources;
- possible alternative arrangement to access to physical learning resources (e.g. the feasibility of digitising material for remote use);
- copyright, performance rights and related issues, including legal requirements on photocopying material and the use of recordings outside of the UK.

IS can provide advice and guidance on:

- access rights to University systems;
- standard expectations of commonly-used software (including web browsers, office applications, PDF viewers and media players);

- costs of licences for software provided centrally (noting that specialist packages exist for some areas of the University).

It is helpful to establish at the outset of any proposal any matters which may affect the contractual requirements of a proposed course or partnership. Matters such as contracts or memoranda of understanding and the definitions and statuses of “staff” and “students” within these have implications for the availability of learning and IT resources. It is more effective to enter into agreements with full knowledge of the implications, rather than rely on others working around them once they are in place.

3.3 Remote access to university resources

A course team should not assume that all persons associated with a new proposal will be eligible for access to all university systems. A number of systems rely on access from central IT accounts: most issues tend to relate to people who are not registered students (e.g. the staff of companies who are supporting students, or staff at partner educational institutions who have no formal standing with Cranfield University).

Access to a range of services is provided through Cranfield accounts, including:

- @cranfield.ac.uk email addresses and accounts;
- University networks, including extranets;
- Passwording systems, including Shibboleth and EVE;
- Virtual learning environments, including Canvas, Blackboard and Moodle;
- Learning support tools, including Turnitin.

In addition to resolving access rights to these systems, it is important to ensure that the physical infrastructure of remote sites can enable such access. It is strongly recommended that access to these resources is pre-tested from any remote site in order to identify any potential software, hardware, firewall or other network problems.

4 Producing a course concept and business case document

4.1 Primary audiences

The course concept and business case has two main audiences through the course approval process. It is the key document reviewed by the School and University Executives (at Stage 1). Part 1 outlines the course rationale and Part 2 outlines related risks and resources. The course concept and business case will be reviewed in detail by the proposing School's Executive. Additionally the University Executive will consider the corresponding minutes from the School Executive. It should therefore serve to outline how the course meets School and University strategic objectives, and demonstrate that the course represents a positive academic opportunity and will be a sustainable initiative.

The course concept and business case can also be used for course teams to frame discussions with key stakeholders as part of the completion of the validation resources checklist.

Once approved, the course concept and business case may be subject to further change (as course plans mature): it then becomes a key document to describe the full course proposal to Course Validation Panels, (Stage 2). At the Course Validation Panel, it is the key document used to discuss with the Course Director whether the course is being developed within University and School practices and policies, and that full consideration has been given to ensuring the quality and sustainability of both the academic provision and the student experience.

As such, it is focussed on the risks associated with the management of the taught provision and related questions around the management of contributing staff and University (and other) facilities.

Consequently, the course concept and business case should be written for the intelligent and generalist reader, and it can be assumed that the readers are fully aware of University and School policies and expectations for all provision of the University.

4.2 Elements of the course concept and business case

A template for completing the course concept and business case has been developed: it is divided into two parts, with headings. For each heading, a full explanation should be given to provide assurance that all aspects have been appropriately reviewed.

The length of this document will depend on the nature of the course being provided, and how different it is to existing provision. Clearly, the more elements of the course that are delivered by visiting staff, provided off-campus or through non-standard teaching methods, the more detail needed to assure the Course Validation Panel that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the quality of the overall provision. It is generally anticipated, however, that the document should be between 8-14 sides of A4.

PART 1: RATIONALE

- 1) **Summary of course aims and origins:** outlining why the course is being proposed and an explanation of where the idea for the course originated;
- 2) **Relevance to School and/or University educational portfolio:** outlining how the course aligns with the School's strategy the University's mission and the Education Strategy and fits with the other provision of the School and/or University; which accrediting bodies will be applied to for accreditation; how the course will improve student's employment prospects; what

makes the course distinctive and where it is supported through relevant research or other interests;

- 3) **Evidence of current and future demand for the course⁶:** outlining what data exists or what research has been undertaken to demonstrate that there is a demand (from potential students and future employers) for the proposed course;
- 4) **Internal and external competition:** outlining whether other similar courses exist at other higher education institutions (including their levels of recruitment), what makes the course distinctive, and whether there is any potential overlap with any provision in other parts of the University;
- 5) **Location of course delivery:** outlining where course delivery takes place and how the quality of facilities are monitored and reviewed. You may need to refer to the Senate Handbook (Partnerships involving Academic Provision) if any part of the course is delivered off-campus. See Appendix 1 as a starting point to categorise your provision;
- 6) **Academic partners:** outlining whether the course will be offered in partnership with other universities or research institutes, with or without formal contractual arrangements;
- 7) **University impact:** outlining what impact the course may have on other Schools and/or Professional Service Units and whether appropriate consultations have been undertaken according to the checklist provided.

PART 2: RESOURCES AND RISKS

- 8) **Funding streams:** outlining what external funding, if any, has been acquired to assist in the delivery of the course, and any likely sources of student fee income;
- 9) **Student numbers:** outlining the rationale for the projected minimum and maximum student numbers, and whether that will cover the full costs of the course;
- 10) **Course fees and costs:** outlining the proposed fee point, proposed bursaries, net fee income and rationale outlining costs of non-standard course specific learning resources;
- 11) **Periods of registration:** outlining the rationale if the course does not conform to the University standard periods of registration;
- 12) **Academic staff resources:** outlining the required numbers of appropriately-qualified staff within the School to deliver the course, and whether they are currently available, or planned for the future, and outlining the balance between delivery by permanent and visiting staff, how staff will be briefed and/or trained, and what contingency plans are in place in the event of staff departures and in this context details of the staff available (both internal and visiting staff, and academic and administrative staff) to deliver elements of the course;
- 13) **Other staff resources:** outlining the additional staff requirements (for professional service staff) to sustain the proposed course, and whether they are currently available, or planned for the future;
- 14) **Student learning support:** outlining how students will be supported in their learning outside formal classes, who is responsible for managing student learning support and how the quality of any provision will be monitored and reviewed, highlighting particularly any innovative or unique mechanisms.

⁶ Assistance with Market Research can be obtained from Marketing, Communications and Development.

- 15) **New features of the course:** outlining whether the proposed course introduces new areas of activity or new modes of delivery of teaching and/or assessment beyond the current experience of the School, and what measures have been taken to assure the School that those can be supported, and that a risk assessment of these areas (including health and safety of students) has been considered;
- 16) **New material:** outlining the extent to which the proposed course represents new provision and whether it draws on any existing provision across the University;
- 17) **Innovative course delivery:** outlining in detail any non-standard resource implications (e.g. study tours, industrial visits, individual projects, specialised software packages). You do not need to include standard classroom-based activities;
- 18) **IPR:** outlining who owns the IPR for any course materials and course projects.
- 19) **Admissions process:** outlining the rationale if the course is excluded from online applications

The completed course concept and business case should be supplemented with any evidence or testimonials to support the market demand for the course, with especial reference to external support or sponsorship.

Where the course includes a partnership arrangement with another institution, attention is drawn to the University processes relating to course approval and management. See Section 2 and the Senate Handbook on Partnerships involving Academic Provision.

5 Producing a course specification

5.1 Primary audiences

Course specifications may be used:

- by Course Validation Panels, to understand clearly the intentions and structure of proposed new courses, or changes to courses;
- by internal and external reviewers, including external examiners, to contextualise their own activities regarding the courses;
- by students and prospective students, to gain an understanding of the courses being offered;
- by recent graduates, as a way to measure the effectiveness of the programmes and their delivery and to provide additional context to their official transcript of marks;
- by employers and professional bodies, to gain a better understanding of the expected achievements of graduates and the detailed content of courses;
- by prospective students, to gain an understanding of the courses being offered, and to gather information for visa and funding applications;
- by Schools, to promote discussion and reflection on the purpose, content and delivery of their taught courses, and to inform students of their provision;
- by Education Services, to ensure that University systems are maintained, so that accurate records of student achievement (including official transcripts) can be produced;
- by Course Directors, to use in course handbooks;
- by Education Services, to support assessment dates (for assignment submission and examination dates)

Course specifications should therefore be used both as resources to inform interested parties, and also as reflective and developmental tools. During the process of drawing up or revising a course specification there is an opportunity to think through the purpose of the course and whether the methods of teaching, learning and assessment are appropriate for the aims that you want to achieve in offering the course to students. This type of reflective exercise will be most valuable when a new course is being set up from scratch, but it can be useful at any stage of course review. Some brief advice about course design is included in Appendix 2, but course teams should also seek advice from senior academic colleagues in their School (especially to pay due heed to School expectations), from the Centre for Andragogy and Academic Skills, or from external agencies, such as the Higher Education Academy. Appendix 7 provides information on completing the course specification template and outlines which information is required to proceed to a new Course Validation Panel.

In response to national requirements, all course specifications are made publicly available through the University website. The University also maintains an annual archive of course specifications, and will use these in response to future requests from alumni and employers as course descriptors to provide important contextual information to official degree certificates and transcripts.

5.2 Elements of the course specification

A course specification is a description of a taught course leading to an award of the University. It covers the aims and intended learning outcomes of the course as a whole, and the means by which the outcomes are achieved and demonstrated. In addition, it provides detailed information on the content of the course and how the various elements (e.g. taught modules, projects, placements) add together to lead to specific awards. It includes descriptions of each element of the course, when they are scheduled in any one academic year, cross-modular assessments (where applicable) and assignments of credits and examination weightings for use in determining overall marks and information to be included on a student's transcript.

Course specifications are also designed to meet the national requirements for programme specifications, as defined by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).⁷ Consequently, this section outlines in detail how this document should be laid out, to ensure consistency across Cranfield for these public documents.

Course specifications are meant to inform readers about the course as a whole: individual modules or other elements making up the course will have relevant detailed descriptions elsewhere (e.g. module descriptors in course handbooks).

Course specifications will usually answer the questions:

1. **What is the course?** (standard descriptors)
2. **What are the aims of the course?** (aims)
3. **What should students expect to achieve in completing the course?** (award intended learning outcomes)
4. **How is the course taught?** (teaching and learning methods)
5. **How is the course structured?** (programme and module structure including detailed information for individual modules and other elements of the course, (e.g. group project, dissertation, individual research project) and course interdependencies.
6. **How are the ILOs assessed?** (assessment methods, ILO mapping and cross modular assessment)
7. **What do students need to achieve in order to graduate?** (progression requirements, pass criteria and exit routes)
8. **How will the University assure the quality of the provision?** (teaching quality assurance mechanisms)
9. **What opportunities are graduates likely to have on completing the course?**

In addition, course specifications will include a detailed description of the course structure, as it changes year on year.

A template for course specifications is provided: a detailed description on how to complete the course specification template is provided in Appendix 7.

5.3 Revisions to course specifications post-course approval

Course specifications must be completed in full following the validation where detailed information was not available at the course validation stage.

For courses starting in September/October, Course Directors are required annually in March/April to review their course specifications, to ensure that they remain accurate and up-to-date and to enable course changes to be approved. Further information about managing changes to courses can be found in the Senate Handbook on Managing Taught Courses. Revisions to course specifications can be made at any time, but it should be clear whether the changes made therein take effect immediately, or from the next academic cycle.

For courses starting at other times of the year, the revised Course Specification should be prepared and submitted to Education Services 4-5 months in advance of the start date. Courses with multiple entry points in each academic year will be required to produce a Course Specification for each intake.

If revisions to a course specification are required, copies of the altered document with tracked changes should be sent to Education Services. The new document should indicate the date of the last revision so that the reader's attention is alerted to any changes mid-programme.

⁷ QAA Programme Specifications: www.qaa.ac.uk

Word versions of any existing course specifications can be provided on request.

5.4 Further advice

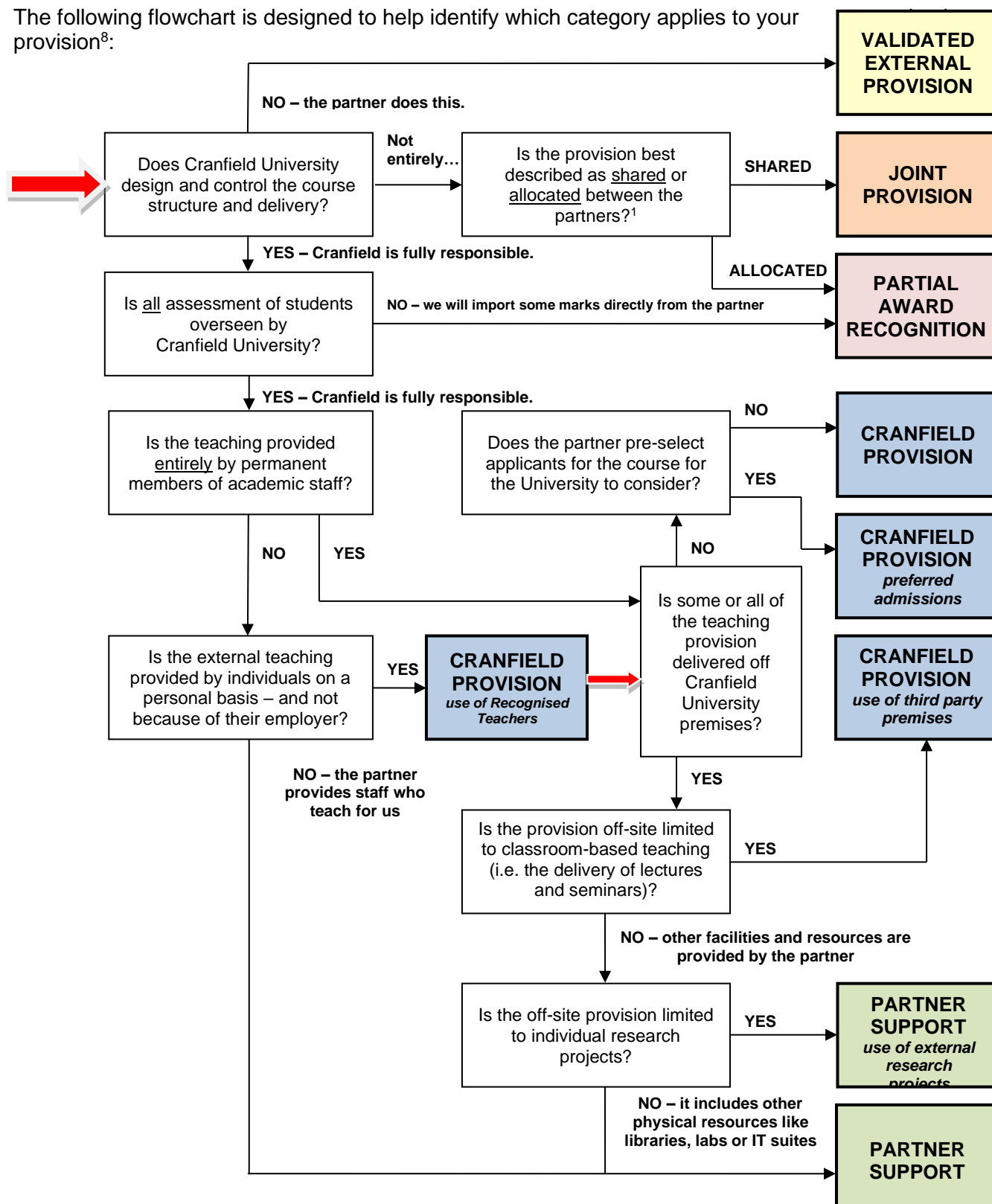
Further advice for the preparation or revision of course specifications can be obtained from Education Services, or from the relevant School Director of Education. Further advice and support on the more pedagogic aspects (including the articulation of aims and intended learning outcomes) can be obtained from the relevant Director of Education, or from the Centre for Andragogy and Academic Skills, or from external agencies, such as the Higher Education Academy.

In addition, your attention is directed to the QAA document *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*, the University's own M-level descriptors (Appendix 3) and Appendix 7 on completing the course specification template.

Appendix A: Partnerships involving academic provision

A.1 Flowchart

The following flowchart is designed to help identify which category applies to your provision⁸:



¹ "Allocated" is defined as discrete provision which is managed by the partner (e.g. an individual module of a taught course, or primary oversight of research projects). All other definitions are more likely to indicate "shared" provision.

⁸ Taken from Senate Handbook: Partnerships involving Academic Provision

Appendix B: Course design advice

B.1 Translating an idea for a course into aims and intended learning outcomes

An idea for a new course may come from a variety of sources, often from discussions with representatives of industry. It is therefore important to be able to define these ideas in language which will help define the course in appropriate educational terms.

The *aims* of a course will define its purpose at the institutional level, indicating the scope of the subject matter, the target student population, and the type of industry/profession that will ultimately employ graduates of the course.

The *intended learning outcomes (ILOs)* of the award will specify the content and activities of the course by defining the tasks and criteria under which learning, teaching and assessment will take place, under conditions which should be as closely aligned as possible with the conditions under which a graduate might be expected to perform similar tasks in their subsequent employment.

B.2 Constructing a course

B.2.1 Considering the link between teaching and research components

While most courses will have a distinct taught element and research components, consideration should be given to developing the skills required for a research component during the taught course. Many courses include a group research project which helps develop students' research skills while still receiving a significant degree of support from both staff and fellow students. Nonetheless, it is still worthwhile considering whether students may benefit from developing and/or practicing skills necessary for research during the taught course such as:

- Literature retrieval and review
- Experimental design
- Selecting materials
- Problem solving / troubleshooting
- Laboratory methods
- Writing up methods
- Data collection and statistical analysis
- Time / project management
- Critical discussion
- Identifying novel research directions

B.2.2 Transferable skills and personal development

The industries with which we work tell us that, in addition to high levels of knowledge and technical skill, they expect our graduates to be well equipped in terms of skills such as communication and teamwork. While many of our course proposals claim to encourage such skills in our students, it is not always explicit how and when this is done. In order to emphasise the importance of transferrable skills development, Course Directors may like to consider the following in their courses:

- Ensuring a range of communication methods and styles are utilised through different modes of formative and summative assessment (written, oral, upward/downward communication)
- Inclusion of team working and assessments, especially if the course does not include a group project

- Formative peer assessment, or the opportunity for students to review each other's work
- Encouraging students to do a self-evaluation of transferrable skills at the start of the course, and give them relevant feedback on which they can reflect and use for self-improvement throughout the course.

B.2.3 Provision for part-time students

The University offers two types of course for part-time students:

- A variant of a full-time course, but offered in a more flexible mode of study (where students “jump on and jump off” modules over a longer period and sit classes alongside full-time students);
- A course specifically designed to be studied part-time, and where the course is structured entirely to suit distance or remote learning and/or non-campus-based activities.

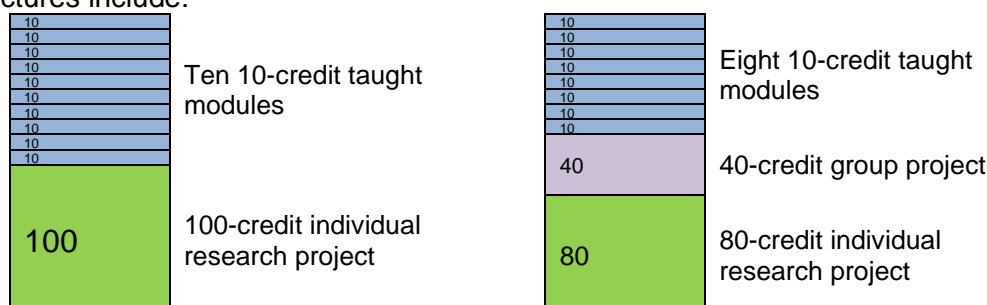
Where the course is aimed primarily at full-time students, consideration should be given as to whether any specific order of attendance needs to be applied for the various elements making up the course: for example:

- Are there specific taught modules which need to be taken first, or in a particular order?
- Do all taught modules need to be completed before commencing a research project?
- Can part-time students realistically integrate into a group assessment?
- Are there elements which should be added to a course structure specifically for part-time students so that they can meet one or more ILOs through an alternative route?⁹
- Should full-time and part-time students be given different lengths of time to prepare assessed work? 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, submission dates of more than 10 working days apart can be set, providing that different assessments be issued for full-time and part-time students.

B.2.4 Course structure and learning credits

Once the aim and award-level ILOs have been defined, an appropriate course structure needs to be decided upon so that the aims and outcomes can be addressed in manageable and assessable elements. The elements within a course may be dictated by your School; if not, then you should consider the best way to divide the credits into taught and research elements to address the aims for your course. A Master's course at Cranfield University must consist of at least 200 M-level credits.

Typical structures include:



⁹ A good example of this is where a number of existing courses, which include a group assignment, allow part-time students instead to conduct an independent literature review (or other exercise): the ILOs are the same, but the learning and assessment are different.

In all new courses, taught modules and other elements should normally be multiples of 10 credits.

10 credits requires 100 learning hours in both contact and private study time, and amounts to 2 intense working weeks per module. Generally, it is expected that between 25 and 40 hours will be “contact hours” consisting of classroom, laboratory, or other structured learning activities¹⁰; the remainder is considered to be private study and time spent on assessment of the module.

B.2.5 Entry and exit routes

In considering how the course is structured, it is important to consider how students may progress through the intended course. It is common for a number of awards to be associated with a full 200-credit course of study, and to incorporate appropriate exit routes for students who (for a number of reasons) may not want – or are unable to – complete the full course. The University also awards Postgraduate Certificates (PgCert: 60 credits or more) and Postgraduate Diplomas (PgDip: 120 credits or more): where these are offered, however, they must represent a coherent package of study with discrete intended learning outcomes (even if these are simply a subset of those outlined for a full Master’s course). In no circumstances should either a PgCert or PgDip be presented as a “safety net” for those who may fail the course.

B.2.6 Borrowed and shared modules

Borrowed modules

It is important to establish clear ownership and oversight of all modules: all modules should be the clear responsibility of a single course, so that an individual Course Director 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 Director of the primary course.

Where a course team chooses to borrow an existing module from another course, 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 course (same Department? same School?) and what checks will then be necessary to ensure it meets – and continues to meet – the needs of your course;
- (c) what mechanisms are in place to ensure that any changes to the borrowed module will be notified to the course team (e.g. representation on the relevant “home” course committee).

Borrowed modules must be “lifted and dropped” directly into the secondary course: there must be no changes to the content, assessment or submission dates of the module. 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.

Shared modules

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

¹⁰ It is accepted that the precise number of contact hours is dependent on both the specific intended learning outcomes of the module and on the academic discipline.

separate module descriptors, as the aims, assessment and curriculum will necessarily be different. The course creating the new shared module is the owner of that new module.

As a new shared module is a different and separate module from the existing module it must have a different 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 shared modules have separate Module Leaders, separate titles and separate module codes, as defined by each course running the module.

Course Teams will be required to provide clear details on the discussions held to effectively manage the implications of borrowed or shared modules as outlined in Appendix 6. Where the variations relate to pre-requisites, assessment type (i.e. key or general) these should be included on the same module descriptor as specified in the template in Appendix 8.

B.3 How do I write clear and appropriate ILOs?

Intended learning outcomes (ILOs) should provide course designers, teachers and students with a clear and shared statement of the scope and level of learning which a diligent student is expected to have acquired by the end of the module or course. The design of the course, the teaching activities, and the assessment should all be aligned so that the ILOs are transparently and effectively achieved. At award level, the ILOs are articulated in the tables provided in the *course specification*, and provide a broad perspective on the expected capabilities of a graduate of the course. At module level, the ILOs should be detailed in a *module descriptor* and relate more specifically to the intended syllabus of that module.

Effective ILOs should therefore be expressed in terms of what a student will be able to do as a result of the course, module, lesson, or whatever. Assessment should test that capability accurately, and formative assessment should be aimed specifically at helping the student to develop it.

ILOs should be expressed using **active verbs**, and be presented in a specific **context** and define the nature of the **object**, to show learning that can be measured at the appropriate level. Framing ILOs in this way will help to ensure transparency for both teachers and students.

Example:

By the end of this course a diligent student should be able to

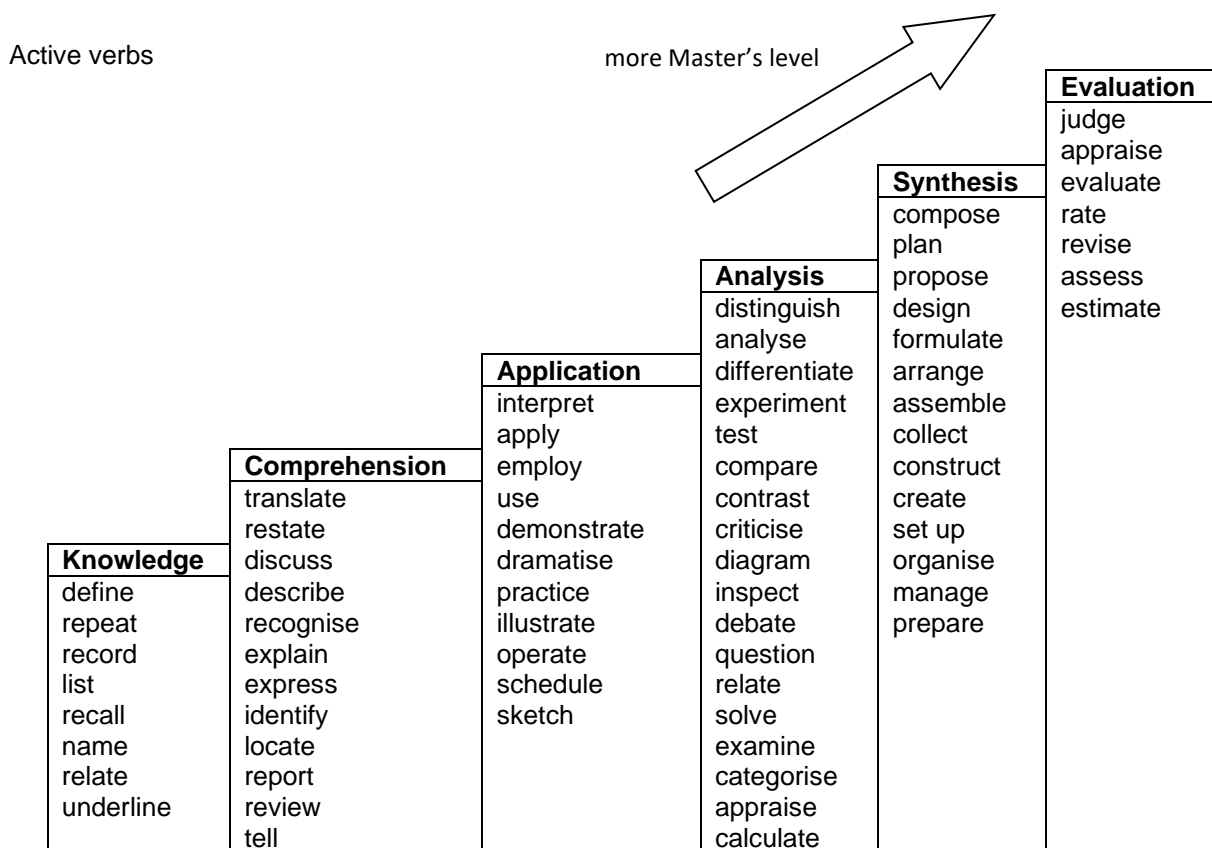
- Analyse experimental data from a clinical trial

↑
Verb

↑
object

↑
context

Verbs should be carefully selected to represent the type of activity which would be expected of graduates of the course, indicate the level of learning required (see “Bloom’s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*” below), and assessable. Verbs such as ‘understand’ and ‘appreciate’ are considered a poor choice for ILOs as they are difficult to measure and assess directly.



B.4 From ILOs to learning, teaching and assessment activities

Once ILOs have been defined at an award level, these should then be defined for each element of the course, such as the taught modules. The principles outlined above remain applicable for module-level ILOs, but there is increased specificity.

For example, an award level ILO of

- By the end of this course a student should be able to analyse experimental data from a clinical trial

may be subdivided at the module level into outcomes such as:

By the end of this module a student should be able to:

- Select an appropriate statistical test for clinical trial data analysis
- Apply a statistical test to a given set of data
- Interpret the output of a statistical test

¹¹Adapted from <https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/resources/course-preparation-resources/course-design-aids/bloom%E2%80%99s-taxonomy-educational-objectives>

Other tools available at:

<http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2014/03/new-blooms-taxonomy-planning-kit-for.html>

<http://www.docsrush.net/1811153/bloom%C3%A2-s-taxonomy-action-verbs-california-state-university.html>

Consideration may then be given to the nature of the teaching, learning and assessment activities so they are as closely aligned with the ILOs as possible. A module with the ILOs above may therefore draw heavily on use of classes where students have hands on access to the relevant software, data sets and discussion of the results of any analysis, and the module assessment could use similar activities – there should be a clear link between the module ILOs and their assessment.

Course Directors should also think about the balance of assessment across the whole course when deciding upon module assessments. Use of a variety of assessment methods will not only encourage a broader range of skills development in students, but also guard against discrimination of individuals who for reasons of learning style, previous educational experience or disability may have difficulty with particular modes of assessment. Course Directors may also refer to the **Senate Guide: Assessment of Taught Courses: Design and Feedback** which is intended to offer advice and guidance and act as a source of ideas for developing new approaches to assessment but is not intended to be prescriptive.

The number of assessment points per course should be kept as low as possible. Numerous independent assessments within a module are not deemed good practice and will require clear justification in order to be approved. A good spread of outcomes should be assessed summatively, but it is not essential to assess all via formal assessment, and careful consideration should be given as to whether closed-book examinations need to be included in the assessment strategy, as they are not considered to be an effective assessment for Master's-level outcomes in most instances. Similarly, it is usually considered sufficient to have a single mode of assessment for a taught module, and if more than one assessment is required, the weighting of each needs to be justified.

Where students fail an assessment (i.e., they do not achieve the minimum mark for the work), course teams are asked to consider whether the permitted re-assessment should be either:

- a new piece of work; or
- an opportunity to revise and represent the original piece of work.

The re-assessment method should be communicated to students in advance through the assignment specification and course handbooks.

Senate has agreed that the opportunity to revise the original piece of work would **not** be appropriate where:

- there is a clear and single model answer; and/or
- the assessment learning outcomes relate primarily to the process of completing the work rather than the output submitted by the student (e.g. where the assignment includes primary data collection or research, and where the marks are allocated for that purpose rather than the interpretation and/or presentation of the results).

Education Committee encourages Course Teams to be innovative in the design of assessment, cognisant that the aim of assessment is to improve students' learning and/or professional skills; assessment it is not a goal in itself. Assessment, whether formative or summative, should be efficient and effective and have a clear purpose. Synoptic assessment (e.g., one piece of assessment across a range of modules) can be used if appropriate but due diligence should be observed with respect to part-time students who may be taking the required modules over a number of academic years.

Further information on good practice in learning, teaching and assessment can be found via the academic development intranet pages.

Appendix C: Master's-Level Descriptors for Taught Courses

C.1 What is expected of a student taking a Master's degree?

All taught courses leading to awards at Cranfield University are delivered at Master's level (level 7 in the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications outlined by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)).

The Credit Framework descriptors for Master's provision¹² are:

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice;
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and holders will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
- decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations;
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

C.2 What is expected of a student taking a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate?

The above descriptors should apply in full for any student graduating with a Master's degree, and are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year. They are distinguished from other qualifications at this level (Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates) by an increased complexity and length of study. In particular, Master's degrees include individual research activity, which accounts for the learning outcomes relating to the contribution to original knowledge above.

The Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate is usually awarded therefore to students who have successfully completed an approved taught programme of study and demonstrated all the above characteristics save those associated with completion of an individual project or piece of research.

¹² extracted from the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications:
www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI08/default.asp#p4.4

Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates are awarded to students either where a student has initially registered for an approved course leading to that award, or where a student has initially registered for an MSc course, which has a legitimate PgDip or PgCert exit route and has satisfied all the academic requirements associated with that specific award.

Senate defines the standard minimum and maximum durations for all taught programmes of study, including different durations depending on the mode of study.

Intended award	Standard durations of periods of study for taught programmes of study			
	Full-time study		Part-time study	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
MSc	10 months	13 months	13 months	5 years
MDes	10 months	1 year	12 months	5 years
MBA	10 months	1.5 years	18 months	5 years
PgDip	6 months	1 year	10 months	4 years
PgCert	3 months	1 year	6 months	3 years
PgAward			1 month	12 months

Generally, it is expected that 20 learning credits requires approximately 1 month of full-time study.

Students on part time courses with set structures (e.g. EMBA, apprenticeships) should be provided with a registration start and end date (and therefore registration period) that matches the expected delivery of the course. These dates should match the apprenticeship training agreement where applicable.

For part time students that take modules which are components of full-time courses and AP contract courses they should be offered a 3-year registration period.

It should also be noted that to ensure correct offer letters are issued to students, all course start and end dates must be confirmed at least 12 months prior to the commencement of the course.
**Excluding bespoke cohort intakes which are often timetables at short notice and should be notified as soon as possible.*

For programmes of supervised research, no student is registered for a period of study of more than eight years unless exceptional permission is granted by Senate. The period of study for each individual student is subject to confirmation from the Academic Registrar, including the period of study agreed at the point of initial registration and any further periods approved after that date.

C.3 How does Master's-level study differ from undergraduate (honours) provision?

All Cranfield courses should provide students with a clearly-structured education in one or more subjects directly related to the University's mainstream research activities. The learning experience of students should build on a first degree or equivalent prior knowledge and/or training and/or learning through employment.

Some examples of where Master's provision builds on honours provision include:

Knowledge and understanding

- Master's graduates should expect to have a full and comprehensive knowledge of their subject area (rather than just key aspects);
- Master's graduates should have a critical awareness of current issues and new developments (rather than just being aware of them);

- A significant proportion of the teaching material should be at the forefront of the discipline (rather than just one or two examples to illustrate current trends);
- Master's graduates should be able to discern and select appropriate techniques to apply to a given problem (rather than just being able to apply one that has been highlighted to them), and be fully aware of the limitations of the variety of research techniques available to them;
- Master's graduates should have a practical understanding of how established research techniques can be applied to create knowledge or advance understanding;
- Master's graduates should therefore be contributing to the body of knowledge in the field through original research or new insights and/or application of existing knowledge (rather than just reviewing and summarising existing knowledge);
- Master's graduates should be able to identify and evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship (rather than just describe and comment on articles and items presented to them);
- Master's graduates should be able to make confidently sound judgements in the absence of complete data (rather than just be aware of the limitations and ambiguity of knowledge).

Personal development skills

- Master's graduates should be able to manage and expand their learning, without continuous supervision (rather than just apply and consolidate);
- Master's graduates should be able to reflect upon the scope of research projects and identify by themselves new avenues to explore (rather than just undertake a defined project);
- Master's graduates should be able to communicate their conclusions, including their assumptions and methodologies, to both specialist and non-specialist audiences (rather than just communicating the outcomes of any research);
- Master's graduates should have advanced skills in furthering their own personal development, and be able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses to a sophisticated level (rather than just be able to continue to develop skills as appropriate);
- Master's graduates should be able to make clear decisions in complex and unpredictable situations (rather than just in situations where there are elements of complexity or unpredictability).

All courses will be expected to demonstrate that the provision of teaching and standards of student learning are clearly above honours level provision.

Appendix D: Course approval process roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities

The development of a new course is a collaborative process with a number of stages and stakeholders. The respective roles of key participants are outlined below:

Course Team/Course Director

- Discuss the feasibility of the proposed course with colleagues, Head of Centre/Group and/or Director of Education/Research to agree in principle to prepare a course concept and business case for consideration by the School Executive
- Liaise with Marketing, Communications and Development regarding marketing data and trends, HESA UK registered student data, competitor analysis and discussions around market research requirements.
- Prepare the proposals for the Director of Education/Research to present to the School Executive
- If approved at University Executive to recommend a number of external Subject Matter Experts to serve as a panel member and to indicate who needs to be consulted on the course validation resources checklist as part of the validation
- Prepare the fuller proposal for Validation
- Liaise with Education Services regarding dates for Course Validation Panel
- Liaise with the Director of Education/Research regarding dates for an internal school panel (if held)
- Present and defend the proposals to the internal school panel if held)
- Present and defend the proposals to the Course Validation Panel
- Meet the Conditions of Approval by the agreed dates
- Incorporate a discussion of the Recommendations into the first Annual Reflective Review
- Revise documentation at each stage throughout as appropriate
- Liaise with Marketing, Communications and Development regarding marketing material
- After Course Validation Panel update the course concept and business case document and the course specification as appropriate.

Director of Education/Research

- Present proposal to School Executive
- Ensure that Education Services is formally informed through the receipt of the appropriate School Executive minute if the proposal is approved to go forward to University Executive (and attach the papers to be included on the University Executive Agenda)
- Confirm suitability of SME with Course Team
- Facilitate school scrutiny and confirm to Education Services if and when the proposal is ready to go to a Validation Panel
- Introduce the proposal to the Course Validation Panel from the perspective of the School Executive (an alternative member of the School Executive may undertake this role.)
- Monitor completion of conditions.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (School)

- Present proposal to University Executive

Education Services

- Co-ordinate the validation process from start to finish administratively and provide expert advice and guidance and/or signposting on preparation of proposals
- Following approval by University Executive, notify Admissions and request completion of the New Course Notification Form for IT and online applications
- Following approval by University Executive to liaise with the Course Director regarding who needs to be consulted and then to distribute the validation resources checklist with the course concept and business case document as required
- Liaise with the External Subject Matter Experts
- Provide an appropriately qualified and trained Secretary to the Course Validation Panels.
- Post approval to send notifications to Course Director, Admissions, Assistant Registrar (School), web team, Marketing, Communication and Development, IT, Finance, Director of Defence Academic Programmes, MOD as appropriate

Validation Panel Secretary

- Appoint an appropriate Panel
- Agree dates
- Initial scrutiny of proposals (after school scrutiny) to map evidence against the validation panel template document. Draw attention of the Panel to any specific concerns that should be explored at the Panel event
- Check receipt of fully completed course validation resources checklist
- Circulate paperwork to panel members
- Brief the Chair before the Panel event
- Brief Panel members at the start of the event (Chair to facilitate Panel in agreeing areas of key interest for discussion with course team)
- Monitor that all sections of the validation template have been adequately/satisfactorily addressed and prompt the Chair to ask further questions as appropriate.
- Write the validation report and circulate for approval
- Provide a copy of the final report for Education Committee
- Monitor that conditions have been met by the due dates and report to Education Committee/Director of Education/Research as appropriate
- Receive revised paperwork from the Course Team
- Receive updated course concept and business case and circulate to School and University Executives.

External Subject Matter Expert

- Act as the external benchmark in respect of the subject and level
- Review the coherence of the course in terms of content, assessment and intellectual integrity
- Make recommendations on the basis of best practice and enhancement.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)

- Present new course to Senate.

Appendix E: Constitution of a Course Validation Panel

The composition of the Course Validation Panel would be flexible within the guidelines set out below. There would be:

- a) at least three members of academic staff, experienced and trained in course reviews and nominated by one or more Directors of Education; one of whom will be the Chair;
 - The academic staff must be independent of the Theme/Centre that will sponsor the course.
 - The panel may also include members of professional staff experienced and trained in course reviews.
- b) Normally, an external subject matter expert.
 - In very exceptional circumstances, this requirement can be waived by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), with the reasons being recorded formally in the report of the Course Validation Panel.
 - The external would not be permitted to become the External Examiner of the proposed new course, until at least one full academic cycle under an independent External Examiner had taken place.

The Course Validation Panel will be supported by a Secretary with experience of University regulations and handbooks, appointed by the Academic Registrar. The Secretary will minute meetings and discussions of the Course Validation Panel, review the course proposal paperwork and advise the panel on the completeness of the documentation. If required, a representative of Education Services who may provide specific expertise (e.g. on partnerships involving academic provision) or administrative support to the panel.

The panel would be quorate with three members of academic staff, which may include remote attendance at meetings. Where the external member is unable to attend meetings formal written comments must be considered by the Course Validation Panel prior to any course approval.

In attendance: the Director of Education (or Research) of the originating School attends the Course Validation Panel when a course proposed by their School is being discussed. By agreement, other academic or professional staff may attend a Course Validation Panel meeting as part of their development.

Where proposals are re-presented to the Course Validation Panel, the membership of the panel may be different, providing that the Chair and Secretary remain the same. The Course Validation Panel may delegate the consideration of further information or conditions to the Chair and/or Secretary to approve on its behalf.

Appendix F: Indicative Course Validation Panel questions¹³

COURSE VALIDATION PANEL

<Date>

MSc

Panel Membership

Chair:

Secretary:

External:

Internal:

Proposing Team Members

Course Director

Director of Education

1 Context of Institutional Approval

Course Validation Panels (CVP) are part of the approval process to ensure that new academic programmes and courses meet or exceed the threshold standards appropriate to the level of the proposed provision and to ensure the quality of the student experience. Institutional Approval draws on the evidence presented by the Proposing Team to demonstrate how the proposed provision addresses Institutional Policies, Regulations and Guidelines (with particular reference to the Senate Handbooks 'Setting Up A New Taught Course' and 'Managing Taught Courses'; Senate Guide 'Assessment of Taught Courses' Design and Feedback' and appropriate reference points such as the QAA or the requirements of Public, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)). Senate has delegated authority (through Education Committee) to appropriately constituted Course Validation Panels to assess whether or not the new proposal meets the threshold standards. Only the report resulting from the Course Validation Panel will be considered by Education Committee. On the basis of that report Education Committee will make an appropriate report to Senate regarding approval.

CVPs are also part of the process of continuous improvement and enhancement and as such the meeting between Panel and the Proposing Team is supportive rather than adversarial. A secondary aim of the Panel is to identify good practice in course design or learning, teaching and assessment that could be shared more widely.

Outcomes

The outcomes of a CVP can be:

- Recommend approval to Education Committee (no conditions; with/without recommendations)
- Recommend approval (subject to conditions; with/without recommendations)
- Fail to approve (proposal requires significant work before being re-presented)

Normally conditions **must** be met before the proposal can be put forward to Education Committee. However where conditions are based on securing additional resources such as staff or equipment with a long procurement time, approval can be made subject to the conditions being met before the course commencement date. Normally the Chair of the CVP in conjunction with the Secretary to

¹³ Not all questions are relevant to all proposals and this is not an exhaustive list of questions.

the CVP is sufficient to confirm that the conditions have/have not been met. Conditions can be set at Course, School or University Level.

Recommendations **do not** have to be met in order for the course to gain approval. However, the Course Team should respond to each recommendation in the first Annual Reflective Review report for the programme or course.

2 Summary of Discussion

2.1 The Proposal

Question	Evidence	Comments
Does the programme align with the University's mission and Education Strategy?		
What makes this course distinctive from other courses, both internally and externally?		
How does this course differ from other provision – what's new in it?		
What is the likely market? (NB financial issues are not the remit of the CVP but quality of the student experience is – too few, too many students etcetera.)		
What are the graduate opportunities following this programme?		
How has the team developed this programme over time?		
Is it clear that this a team proposal – do they all buy into it? Has this been developed by more than just one person?		

2.2 Curriculum

Question	Evidence	Comments
Is the programme coherent, logical, and does it have an intellectual integrity related to clearly defined purposes?		
Is the content of the programme appropriate to the name of the programme? Is the content and reading list appropriate to the level of the programme?		
Is there a clear relationship between Programme ILOs and Module ILOs? How and where is this demonstrated?		
Are the ILOs at M level (refer to Bloom's Taxonomy)?		
Are there any external reference points? For example, PSRBs, sponsor requirements etcetera. Has any benchmarking been done against other similar programmes or Subject Benchmarks? Which accrediting bodies are you applying to for professional accreditation? Give details of the timescale.		

How have students contributed to the design of the programme?		
Does the programme conform to the University's learning credit structure and do the indicative notional learning hours correspond? (60 credits for PgCert, 600 hours, 120 credits for PgDip, 1200 hours and 200 credits for MSc, 2000 hours).		
Does the structure of the programme allow completion in the students' expected period of registration?		
What is the relationship between the programme's curriculum and current research or professional practice in the same area?		
Is there any innovative practice in programme design that merits sharing elsewhere?		
Is there a specific Introductory Studies module?		
Are research methodology skills covered during the programme?		

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment (L,T&A)

Question	Evidence	Comments
Is the programme balanced, e.g., across academic and practical elements, personal development, academic outcomes, breadth and depth of the curriculum?		
Is the use of the VLE and TEL effective?		
What processes are in place to ensure that the all course material, including those on the VLE, are kept up-to-date?		
Are the course ILOs met? Is there a clear correlation between the ILOs and assessments? Is each ILO at module and programme level adequately addressed in L, T & A? Is there a balance of assessment methods and are these appropriate to M level? Is the programme over-assessing students? Is the volume of assessment consistent and logical across the programme?		
Is there evidence of formative assessment and or other opportunities for learner feedback?		
Is there any innovative practice in L, T & A that merits sharing elsewhere?		
Is the assessment on any shared module designated differently in terms of minimum marks between this programme and any other programmes?		

<p>Please specify which modules this applies to and give details of the actual difference in assessment.</p> <p>What has been outcome of your discussions with the relevant module leader(s) in terms of managing the student experience and the scheduling of reassessments?</p>		
---	--	--

2.4 Support for Students

Question	Evidence	Comments
Are the modules on this course open to delegates (short course – no assessment) and associate students (short course for credit)? If yes, how will you manage the student experience, particularly in terms of group work and engagement?		
How have the requirements of learners entering the programme been taken into consideration? E.g., admissions requirements, introductory studies, difference for f/t and p/t learners, learner support and learning support.		
What information about the course and the expectations of students are provided to students?		
What does induction look like?		
What are the induction arrangements for students joining the course late or attending on an ad hoc basis or an Associate Student basis?		
What processes are in place to ensure students stay the course? Who monitors student progress? What happens if a student is not reaching the standards?		
What general support mechanisms exist to support students in the School? Where do students go if they have academic issues? Personal issues?		
What specific support mechanisms, if any, exist to support students on the course (e.g., personal tutor system)?		
What opportunities exist for students in terms of future employment and how are they supported in this? How will you handle the tensions (if they exist) between the needs of the sponsors and the career ambitions of the students?		

2.5 Staffing and Resources

Question	Evidence	Comments
Are all staff appropriately qualified to teach and assess at the proposed level? What evidence do we have to support this?		

What use is there of external staff? Do these have Recognised Teacher Status?		
Are there any concerns about resources, staffing or otherwise in relation to this programme? NB all programmes are approved to run subject to the appropriate resources being available. It is not in the gift of the CVP to turn down a proposal on the basis that the resources are not yet in place, but this can be flagged in conditions (in respect of specific pieces of kit and in relation to staff resources).		
What consultation has there been with the Library, Learning Services, Information Services, Marketing Communications and Development, School Administration Services and Education Services over the introduction of this programme. Have all areas confirmed sufficient learning resources and/or staff resources as appropriate?		

2.6 Programme and Quality Management

Question	Evidence	Comments
Are there any particular risks associated with this programme (e.g., sponsors pulling out) and how will this be managed?		
Does the team understand the University's processes of annual review, Senate Review and focussed review?		
Does the team understand the process by which changes to the programme can be made?		
Does the team understand the University's position on bespoke arrangements for individual students?		
Has an external examiner (EE) been identified yet for the programme and are the proposing team aware of the rules in relation to the appointment of EEs?		
What mechanisms will be used to gain student and other stakeholder views on the quality of the provision?		
What are the mechanisms to feedback outcomes to students and other stakeholders?		
Is there a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Course Director, Module Managers and any other staff associated with the programme?		
How does the Course Team intend to share good practice with and from others?		

Shared modules – what mechanisms or protocols are in place to manage these? Is the Panel satisfied with the arrangements?		
---	--	--

2.7 Modules for approval

NB Existing approved modules do not need to be approved here, but do need to be considered in the overall integrity of the programme. Therefore a copy of the module descriptors for ALL modules associated with this course **must** be submitted with the course documentation.

Module Title/Reference	Approved Y/N	Comments
Existing Modules from MSc in		
	N/A	
	N/A	

2.8 Onward approval

Does the Panel wish to highlight any contentious or novel elements of the proposal to Education Committee which may require Senate approval? (If yes, give details.)

--

NB the documents received can be broadly viewed as follows:

A	Course Concept and Business Case	Overview of the new course – produced as part of the initial business proposal	Do we want to offer this and can we do it?
B	Course Specification	Programme specification, course components, indicative timetable, learning credits	What is it?
C	Module descriptors	Detailed descriptions of all modules	What's in it?

Appendix G: Completing the course specification template

G.1 How detailed should course specifications be?

Course specifications should reflect the aims and intended learning outcomes of the course as a whole and provide the annual structure of the course. Course specifications will normally be updated annually in March/April, as part of the annual review cycle or when there has been a change to the course.

A single course specification should be drawn up to cover all of the entry routes and exit awards associated with a course. With some of the more complicated taught courses (i.e. those that include multiple exit routes- MSc, PgDip and PgCert- and a number of options of study, it is possible that the course specification may be quite complex. This will vary depending on a number of factors, including commonality of the modules across options, different course structures for full and part time students, and the nature of specific requirements for exit routes: Course Directors are advised to consult with Education Services on the best way to present this information if they believe presentation in line with the template is too complicated. Where courses have multiple intakes which will result in varying course structures in a single academic year, separate course specifications will be required at appropriate times.

Detailed information about course (or module) content should not be included. This should help to distinguish between the purposes of course specifications and other sources of information, such as student handbooks or websites.

G.2 Completing the individual sections

G.2.1 The “header”

Each course specification starts with a standard disclaimer and table of information. As the course specification is used for new courses and continuing courses, where information is not required at the validation stage this is noted below. Most of this information is factual and straightforward, but some notes are provided below:

Course title	
Course code*	<i>The SITS course code is only required for validated courses</i>
Academic Year	
Valid entry routes	e.g. MSc, PgDip, PgCert, MRes, MBA
Additional exit routes	e.g. PgDip, PgCert
Mode of delivery	Full-time/ Part-time/ Distance
Locations of study	Cranfield/Shrivenham/other UK/ Overseas-Country
School(s)	School(s) providing the majority of the teaching
Theme	
Centre	
Course Director*	The Course Director name is only essential for validated courses although a lead name for approval is required
Awarding Body	Cranfield University
Is this an AP Contract course?	Yes / No
Teaching Institution	Cranfield University and/or <i>collaborative partner</i>
Admissions body	Cranfield University and/or <i>collaborative partner</i>
Entry requirements	Standard University entry requirements

UK Qualifications Framework Level	QAA FHEQ level 7 (Master's)
Benchmark Statement(s)	Where PG-level subject benchmark statements exist, you should benchmark or acknowledge these
Registration period(s) available	e.g. 3 years non-MOD, 5 years MOD
Course Start Month(s)	e.g. September, October, January

This section also includes specific statements on who is delivering the course, and whether the course has recognition with any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies. For new courses details are provided of how the course has been designed to meet the requirements of the relevant PSRB.

Example:	
Course title	Advanced Engineering Studies
Course code	MSAESFTC, MSAESPTC
Academic year	2014/2015
Valid entry routes	MSc, PgDip, in - Mechanical Engineering - Production Engineering
Additional exit routes	PgCert in -Mechanical Engineering -Production Engineering
Mode of delivery	full time and part time
Locations of study	Cranfield
School	School of Aerospace, Transport Systems and Manufacturing
Theme	Manufacturing
Centre	Advanced Systems
Course Director	Professor I.M. Cleaver
Awarding Body	Cranfield University
Is this an AP Contact Course?	No
Teaching Institution	Cranfield University & the Institute of Engineering
Admissions body	Cranfield University
Entry requirements	standard University requirements, plus professional experience in one or more engineering fields
UK Qualifications Framework Level	QAA FHEQ level 7 (Master's)
Benchmark Statement(s)	Engineering Master level statement
Registration Period(s) available	standard University registration periods -MSc 1 year full-time, 3 years part-time
Course Start Month(s)	October and January

Course title

This should have been considered carefully at the point of the introduction of the course, but marketing and feedback often reveals that the course title is inappropriate. Care should be taken to ensure that the course title is short, concise and relevant to the overall aims: the inclusion of specific terms to market the course should be avoided.

Course code

This is allocated following the validation of a course and is not required on a course specification for a new course.

Academic Year

The academic year in which a course is run. There should be a course specification for each academic year (and each intake within an academic year)

Awarding Body

For most awards, this section should list “Cranfield University” as the sole awarding body of a degree. Where a joint degree has been approved, all partners of the consortium should be included.

Teaching Institution

Most of our courses are delivered solely by the University, with the University retaining all responsibility for the provision and quality of teaching. Some courses, however, are offered in formal partnership with other educational institutions. Where this is the case, there should be additional documentation in place to describe the partnership involving academic provision (see Section 2).

Admissions body

Again, the majority of our courses are open to the general public, providing they meet the entry requirements of the course. The assessment of the suitability of the applicant is almost always the course team, and so “Cranfield University” should be the usual statement included here. If the course, however, is only open to particular students (e.g. through a partner company, or where the course of another educational institution is described as a pre-requisite), this other partner should be included here as a formal admissions body.

Entry requirements

The University outlines its general standard entry requirements for each course in the Regulations. Where a course adopts different entry requirements (either higher or lower), these should be articulated. This includes both academic achievement (i.e. previous qualifications and/or relevant work experience) and proficiency in English language.

Benchmark statement(s)

The QAA has worked with the UK higher education sector to provide descriptors of most subject areas offered within higher education.¹⁴ These are generally at undergraduate (honours) level, but are increasingly used at postgraduate level, although they may not be entirely relevant to very specialist courses. It may be useful to include relevant benchmark statements if the course has been designed to meet directly the needs of honours graduates.

Registration period(s) available

The university norms have been outlined in Appendix 3.2. Where the course has been developed for the MOD, the range of registration periods should be included.

Institutions delivering the course

In addition, this section provides an opportunity to provide brief descriptions where any of the following apply:

- students undertake their studies off campus, or at another institution;
- students undertake their research and/or project work off campus, or at another institution;
- teaching is provided by external agencies, or jointly with other institutions;
- the course is sponsored by particular companies or organisations (including whether the course is only open to a limited cohort of students);

¹⁴ QAA benchmark statements <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/honours-degree-subjects>
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/masters-degree-subjects>

- the course has defined feeder streams from other institutions, including significant sponsorships.

In each case, no more than 1-2 paragraphs of detail need be included: it is important to remember:

- a) course specifications should be restricted to explaining the nature of partnerships and not the detail (for example, there is no need to provide a definitive list of industrial project sponsors)
- b) course specifications are written for a variety of audiences, and will be retained as an historical archive: the level of detail should reflect the longevity of the information.

G.2.2 What are the aims of the course?

This section should outline the **aims of the course**. Aims represent the intentions of the University and the teacher, whereas intended learning outcomes (see section A.7.2.3) are concerned with the achievements of the learner.

The aims of a course should encapsulate the purpose of the course and what Cranfield is trying to do in providing it. This section could also indicate the audience for whom the course is intended or the kind of career or future study for which it might be designed.

For courses with multiple exit routes, it is helpful to focus on what the University provides to the cohort as a whole: articulation of the achievement of individual students should be described in terms of intended learning outcomes.

Example:

- provide a taught engineering programme with a focus on local and global challenges in the context of a sustainability framework;
- provide opportunities, through structured research, to integrate traditional engineering with emerging concepts of sustainable development;
- produce graduates in the field of engineering with the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to devise and deliver solutions to the sector's needs;
- produce graduates who have the ability to integrate research and business interests and who can apply management theory in a wide range of business areas.

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) and Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) exit routes are provided for students who wish to access only parts of the course provided.

This programme is intended for the following range of students:

- recent graduates wishing to extend their knowledge and skills in the above areas;
- qualified engineers wishing to apply their skills into new areas.

The example describes the aims of the course as a whole and is necessarily expressed in broad and general terms: more specific aims relating to the detailed course provision would be articulated in module descriptors or course handbooks.

In order to articulate the aims, Course Directors may wish to consider:

- Why the course is distinctive and/or unique;
- What the academic content of this course concentrates on;
- What, in attending this course, Cranfield University wants students to have experienced;
- What graduates from this programme will be able to apply their learning to.

G.2.3 What should students expect to achieve in completing the course?

The section outlines the **intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the award** (*i.e.* the knowledge, understanding and skills to be acquired by students). ILOs should articulate to students what they

should be able to do after taking the course. They are distinct from course aims as they are concerned with the achievements of the learner, rather than the intentions of the teacher.

ILOs in the course specification should be brief and high-level. This section should not describe the course or award in its entirety, but focus on the broad achievements and expectations of most students who will take the course. Critically, the course-level ILOs should not be a collated list of ILOs from the individual modules (that is what the module descriptors are for...); a course should represent more than the sum of its parts. The achievement of each Award ILO will need to be mapped directly to assessments; Course Teams should therefore ensure appropriate consideration and debate are afforded to both the number, and breadth, of the Award ILOs.

In practice, therefore, the course specification should include between 6-12 ILOs for the award as a whole (with them allocated appropriately between the different exit awards associated with the course).

The QAA suggests that ILOs can be broken down into the following categories, though there is no requirement for you to adopt this structure:

- **knowledge and understanding** (of the subject matter);
- **skills and other attributes**, the development of which are integral to the course. These can be further broken down (if appropriate) into:
 - **intellectual skills** (such as analysis, synthesis and problem-solving);
 - **practical skills** (such as direct practical work, the use of computers and other equipment, the use of libraries and development of bibliographies *etc.*);
 - **other transferable skills** or personal development (such as communication, independent and/or team-working, time management, learning and/or teaching techniques and experience *etc.*).

ILOs are usually framed in the form of a statement beginning with “On completing the course, a diligent student would be expected to...”. For this reason, it is appropriate to articulate ILOs for each award associated with a course: a student graduating with a Postgraduate Diploma will have gained and demonstrated different skills and knowledge to one graduating with a Master of Science (e.g. the full Master’s course will usually include an independent project, and the skills and knowledge associated with these should be articulated against that exit award only).

In articulating ILOs, course teams should pay close attention to the language used in the University’s M-level descriptors (Appendix 3). These are based substantially on guidance provided by the QAA.¹⁵ Where a course is accredited by a professional, statutory or regulatory body, specific articulation of ILOs may be required in a format suitable for their own audits of University provision.

ILOs should communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will be able to demonstrate and apply: they should therefore be expressed:

- using active verbs;
- in a specific context; and
- in a measurable way, that will link clearly to the form of assessment to be used.

The selection of appropriate verbs should reflect the M-level nature of the provision (as articulated in the University’s M-level descriptors). Further reflection on the level of cognitive ability required to achieve the outcome could be explored using pedagogic research tools, including, for example, Bloom’s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956).

¹⁵ QAA Framework for HE Qualifications <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2718#.VOCx7U9FBGo>

Example:

A. Postgraduate Certificate

In completing this course, and achieving the associated award, a diligent student should be able to:

Intended learning outcomes

- i. explain the principles and theories behind selected and specialised areas of production engineering;
- ii. assess specific manufacturing techniques in a variety of selected engineering environments
- iii. employ capabilities in numeracy, IT, communication and presentation

B. Postgraduate Diploma

In addition to the intended learning outcomes outlined above, a diligent student would also be able to:

Intended learning outcomes

- iv. explain and critically discuss the principles and theories behind a comprehensive range of specialised areas of production engineering;
- v. assess in detail a wide range of manufacturing techniques in a number of selected engineering environments;
- vi. integrate discrete areas of knowledge in a selected example of production engineering to develop a new application, process or product;
- vii. produce a high quality dissertation, based on appropriate desk-based research;
- viii. undertake successfully team working, project management, report writing and presentation;
- ix. employ a range of transferable skills in a professional engineering context, based on a capacity for self-awareness and personal development planning.

C. Master of Science

In addition to the intended learning outcomes outlined above, a diligent student would also be able to:

Intended learning outcomes

- x. critically evaluate the published literature in the discipline, where necessary by synthesising information from other disciplines; .
- xi. carry out relevant independent research using appropriate techniques and draw justifiable inferences from the data obtained;
- xii. produce a high quality written thesis, and critically evaluate and defend the interpretations of the data.

G.2.4 How is the course taught?

This section should be used to describe any innovative teaching methods, or those that would not be obvious to a general reader.

This section should also include specific features of learning support that are provided to students. While it is helpful to list more routine mechanisms of support (e.g. library facilities, VLE), the detail should focus on more specialised support mechanisms (e.g. placement project office, PDP programme, provision of a personalised laptop).

If the course includes a placement, reference should be made to details that will be included elsewhere in the course specification (see Section A.7.2.1).

G.2.5 How is the course structured?

This section should outline how the course fits together for an individual student.

Consider phrasing this information as if you were describing the course to a student at an Open Day. Information for both full and part time students should be included.

This section also details individual elements of the course, their contact hours and when they are delivered in the calendar year. This section is presented as a table. For each “element” of a course – introductory session, taught module, project, placement, piece of individual extended work – a number of key pieces of information should be provided. Most of this information is

essential for updating the University's central systems for recording course structures. These include:

Module code

All course elements should be uniquely named/numbered to identify them in other parts of the document (especially exit awards). This code is allocated by the Student Systems and Records Team following validation and is not required when the course specification is being written for a new course.

Title

This should be the title of the module, or a clear description/definition of the course element (e.g. PgDip dissertation; MSc research project).

Module Leader

This should be a single named member of academic staff with primary responsibility for the module or course element: he or she will be the first point of contact for queries about course information. This information is not required when the course specification is being written for a new course but if the information is available it should be included.

Contact hours

You should include here the number of contact hours that students will receive by taking this module or course elements. Contact hours include all elements of scheduled teaching and instruction, either to students in a group (e.g. lectures, lab classes) or individually (e.g. meetings with project supervisors).

The Cranfield norm is for students to receive between 25-40 contact hours for a 10-credit taught module: this represents a ratio of between 3:1 and 2.5:1 of private study: direct teaching hours. The most appropriate ratio will depend on the nature of the subject matter, the intended learning outcomes and the methods of teaching.

Please note that, routinely, we include a statement on all course specifications relating to contact hours. This reads:

"Please note that all contact hours are indicative and represent scheduled teaching, which is subject to minor changes and variation at short notice."

Total hours delivered by Visiting Lecturer

You should indicate here the hours anticipated to be delivered by a member of staff not on a permanent contract but with Recognised Teacher Status. This does not include occasional guest speakers.

Credits

You should indicate here the number of credits that should be allocated to the course element. The Cranfield credit system (which conforms to the emerging UK credit system) is for 1 credit to represent 10 "notional learning hours". It is understood that all students learn at different rates: a "notional learning hour" is defined as the time in which it is expected that a diligent student will spend, on average, to complete the work needed to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

You should also note that, in any one calendar month, it would be unreasonable to expect a student to accumulate more than 20 credits. (This would represent roughly 8 hours of learning per day for 6 days of the week.)

It is worth noting here that the Cranfield credit system does not necessarily conform to other formalised credit systems and in particular the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). As a broad rule of thumb, 10 Cranfield credits is equivalent to 5 ECTS credits. The University does not provide official confirmation of achievement in terms of ECTS credits.

Compulsory/ Elective

You should indicate whether the element is compulsory or optional to the award.

Is the module shared?

You should indicate whether the module is shared with another award.

Calendar: module start date and residential start and end date

You should outline here exactly when in the year the student will receive teaching for the module. This information is required for funding council returns, but should also serve to help you plan the course and how it fits together. The module start date includes any pre-reading whilst the residential start date should be used to denote the start of contact hours.

You are NOT expected to know these firm dates for a **new course proposal**, but any indication of likely dates is helpful to demonstrate that the course will hang together well. For example, you should be able to indicate at the approval stage the month in which the course element will take place e.g. “Feb” for a two-week taught module, or “Apr-Aug” for an extended piece of individual research.

Once the course is up and running, annual iterations of the document will require exact dates.

Assessment: type and weighting within module

For each module, you should indicate both the type of assessment that is being used to assess whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Senate **strongly** advises that each 10 credit module should normally have no more than one assessment associated with it: where two or more assessment are proposed, clear justification will need to be provided by the Course Team prior to approval by the relevant Director of Education.

A coding system is currently applied and it would be preferable to choose from the following table:

Code	Descriptor
ICW	Individually completed submitted coursework
GCW	Jointly completed submitted coursework
EX	Formal examination
OR	Oral examination
IPRES	Individual Presentation
GPRES	Group Presentation
IPRAC	Individual Practical
GPRAC	Group Practical
IPROJ	Individual Project (>20 Credits)
GPROJ	Group Project (>20 Credits)
THESIS	Thesis or dissertation

If you feel that none of the above describe adequately the chosen method of assessment, please use your own nomenclature, but provide a detailed definition of these at the bottom of the table. These may be refined in due course by Education Services once the course has been approved and incorporated into the student records system.

Where more than one piece of assessment is used, it should be marked clearly in the course specification and module descriptor. From 2021-22 multi-part assessments are not permitted for any University assessments - all assessments must be set as independent assessments. You need to indicate both the assessment and the weighting (%) within the individual module or course element. You also need to indicate (by using an asterix *) which of the methods listed represents the final piece of assessment.

The impact of failure of assessments is outlined below¹⁶:

Independent assessments								
e.g. three separate assessments, outlined in the module descriptor (10 credits) as:								
A	assignment	25%						
B	assignment	25%						
C	assignment	50%						
<table><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>25%</td><td>25%</td><td>50%</td></tr></table>			A	B	C	25%	25%	50%
A	B	C						
25%	25%	50%						
<u>Example 1:</u>								
marks obtained	45%	20% 55%						
outcome: overall mark of 44%. minimum mark for overall assessment attained – but assessment B must be re-sat. The mark for assessment B will be capped at 50%.								
<u>Example 2:</u>								
marks obtained	45%	20% 42%						
outcome: overall mark of 37%. minimum mark for overall assessment not attained – but only assessment B must be re-sat. The mark for assessment B will be capped at 50%.								
Failure to submit one or more of the three assignments would count as one instance of a failure to complete the assessment, and the one opportunity to be allowed to re-sit the assessment(s).								
The failure above (highlighted in red) corresponds to 2.5 learning credits (for the purposes of the stated 30 credit limit on re-take opportunities).								

In-class tests should normally be deemed as exams¹⁷ unless they are:

- formative assessment; and/or
- account for less than 30% of the credits for that module

In addition you will be required to designate all assessments having either 40% or 50% minimum mark.

¹⁶ In the examples given the assessments have a minimum mark of 40%.

¹⁷ The Exams Office will only provide invigilator support for assessments deemed as 'exams'.

Assessment submission date and/or exam date

You need to indicate the dates on which each assessment should be submitted and/or examination taken. This information is required for funding council returns, but should also serve to help you plan the course and how it fits together. For all assessments, resubmission dates must also be included.

In addition, the examination dates will be used to put together a draft examination timetable prior to the start of the academic year.

You are NOT expected to know these firm dates for a **new course proposal**, but any indication of likely dates is helpful to demonstrate that the course can be delivered within a student's registration period. For example, you should be able to indicate at the approval stage the month in which the assessment will take place.

Course interdependencies

In addition to details about the individual modules or course elements, this section also includes space to identify where these modules are shared with other courses offered across the University. This helps to identify how much material is unique to the course being described.

Example:

#	Module code	Title	Module Leader	Contact hours*	Total hours delivered by visiting lecturer	Credits	Calendar				Assessment			
							Compulsory/ Optional	Module Start Date	Residential Start Date	Residential End Date	Minimum Mark (50%/ 40%)	Weighting within module (%)	Assessment submission date and/or exam date	Retake date
1	MC-FLA-01	Introductory module	Dr S Bagger	40	0	10	Comp	1/1/15	20/1/15	25/1/15	CW (40%)	100	3/2/15	20/3/15
.		
7	MC-FLA-04	Modern materials	Dr B Piper	25	5	10	Opt	15/1/15	15/1/15	20/1/15	EX (50%)	100	2/3/15	20/4/15
8	MC-FLA-05	Production Engineering Society perceptions	Dr O Rigger	25	0	10	Opt	30/1/15	30/1/15	5/2/15	CW (40%) CW (50%) PRES* (50%)	40 40 20	6/3/15 9/3/15 5/4/15	20/5/15 20/5/15 25/5/15
9	MC-FLA-12	MSc research project	Dr S Bagger	20	0	80	Comp	1/4/16			THESIS	100	1/9/16	

Please list all course elements that you consider to be the primary responsibility of another course (*i.e.* that this course/option shares with another existing course).

Module code	Module title	Course that owns the module	Course(s)/programme(s) that share the module
MC-FLA-04	Modern Materials (4)	MSc Material Science	MSc in Advanced Materials MSc Material Science

G.2.6 How are the ILOs assessed?

Course Teams are encouraged to use a range of assessment types, but employing only those which are appropriate to the subject matter. In giving an award of the University, we are making a statement that a student has met the award ILOs, and therefore it is expected that the award ILOs will be assessed by Summative Assessment. It is **not** necessary to assess **all** Module ILOs using Summative Assessment; Formative Assessment may be the most appropriate form of assessment for any *additional* Learning Outcomes. If your assessment strategy has been developed to meet any specific requirements of an accrediting body please detail that information in this section.

This section should also describe in broad terms the overall assessment strategy for the course, outlining where and why particular forms of assessment are used. This is the opportunity to outline the balance of individual modes of assessment. You should indicate the assessment types and why the approach has been adopted.

Example:

The course uses a range of assessment types. Students can expect to have 1-2 written examinations, 10-12 pieces of assessment by submitted work and 3 elements of assessment by presentation or viva. This approach has been adopted in order to ensure that students demonstrate their understanding through a wide range of learning techniques, but are not disadvantaged through any one approach.

Example:

The course uses a range of assessment types. The compulsory modules at the start of the course are assessed by submitted coursework, to encourage students to develop an appropriate written style. Optional modules are assessed by either written examination or further submitted work, with one assessment point for each module. All students undertake a group project, assessed by a group presentation and report. The individual research project also requires students to be assessed on the written and oral presentation skills, through a submitted thesis and oral examination.

In addition you will be required to complete an ILO mapping grid to outline the links between ILOs and assessment methods

Example:

Award ILOs Module No.	ILO 1.	ILO 2.	ILO 3.	ILO 4.	ILO 5.	ILO 6.	ILO 7.	ILO 8.
98	ICW				EX	EX	ICW	
99	GCW 1		GCW 1	GCW 2				

Cross modular assessment. Some courses now offer examinations or other assessments which sit outside the remit of a specific module. The table should be filled in with similar information to that outlined above, with an additional indication of which modules or course elements the assessment is associated with.

If there are no cross-modular assessments, this section can simply be deleted.

G.2.7 What do students need to achieve in order to graduate?

The document thus far has simply articulated the building blocks from which an overall course is constructed. These are combined in specific routes, approved by Senate, for formal awards of the University. Within any award, some elements may be compulsory or optional and the total number of credits must conform to Senate guidelines, as outlined below:

Award	Minimum Credits
--------------	------------------------

Postgraduate Certificate	60
Postgraduate Diploma	120
Master of Science	200
Other Master's awards	200

This section of the course specification provides clear details on what elements of the course a student must complete successfully in order to achieve a defined award. Separate tables should be provided for **all** exit routes: for example if a course offers MSc/PgDip/PgCert awards for two options, $3 \times 2 = 6$ tables will be needed to provide a full description of the course.

The information required for each exit route includes:

- an indication of compulsory and elective elements of the course,
- overall credits

Example:

Master of Science in Production Engineering

Description	Credits
COMPULSORY MODULES	
module 1 (provide module name)	0
modules 2-10 (provide module names)	90
research project (13) (provide module name)	100
ELECTIVE MODULES	
one from either module 11 or 12 (provide module names)	10
TOTAL:	200

Postgraduate Diploma in Production Engineering

Description	Credits
COMPULSORY MODULES	
module 1 (provide module name)	0
modules 2-10 (provide module names)	90
dissertation (14) (provide module name)	20
ELECTIVE MODULES	
one from either: module 11 or 12 (provide module name)	10
TOTAL:	120

Postgraduate Certificate in Production Engineering

Description	Credits
COMPULSORY MODULES	
module 1 (provide module name)	0
ELECTIVE MODULES	
6 from modules 2-12 (provide module names)	60
TOTAL:	60

This section also captures the **pass criteria** for the course: the pass criteria is the university standard and covers the assessment “rules” for all awards associated with the award.

G.2.8 How will the University assure the quality of the provision?

This section includes the university standards on:

- course approvals and changes
- course delivery and curriculum review by the course team;

- student feedback mechanisms, both quantitative and qualitative (on course content and provision), and mechanisms for implementing responses to this feedback;
- mechanisms for feedback to students (on formative and summative assessment);
- use of external examiners, directly and through consideration of reports;
- use of other external advice and support (including advisory panels).

Where course teams have additional quality assurance measures in place they should be outlined in this section.

G.2.9 What opportunities are graduates likely to have on completing the course?

This section could outline briefly the likely career paths and employability of graduates of the course, if appropriate. Advice from the Careers Service and/or your Industrial Advisory Boards (or equivalent) should be included in this section.

Appendix H: Completing the module descriptor template

Module descriptors define the structure, content and assessment of each module and should be written to cover all relevant courses. The template provides a format to outline for differences between courses as defined in Appendix B.2.6 . The template is divided into:

- **Basic module information**, to identify clearly the course(s) it refers to, and key information about the credits, module type and assessment details as well as key contacts. This section also outlines variations when modules are shared across courses;

Example for 'Introduction to Load Bearing Dynamics' module owned by the MSc in Aviation Management course:

Example:						
Module title: Introduction to Load Bearing Dynamics			Module SITS code: TBC		Credit rating: 10	
Is this module offered as part of an EngD or other Research Degree Programme(s)?		No		Title of EngD or other Research Degree Programme(s) to include Thematic Area: N/A		
Is the module offered as part of an award of another Higher Education provider (UK or International)?		No		Details of Institution(s) and Award(s) this contributes to: N/A		
Module used by: List All Courses (Module owner 1 st) ¹ <i>Indicate if Course is AP by inserting AP against the course title</i> ^{AP}	Please give details below on a course by course basis					
	Module Type Compulsory / Elective	Pre-requisite modules	Site(s) of delivery	Assessment summary		
				Type ¹	Weighting ¹ %	Minimum Mark ¹
	Aviation Management	Compulsory	N/A	Cranfield	ICW	100%
Human Factors and Safety	Elective	N/A	Cranfield	ICW	100%	50%

- **Assessment details**, outlining the type, length and subject of the assessment as well as the award ILOs assessed and details of formative and summative assessment;

Example: Individual assignment; 2000-3000 word profile of a social entrepreneur or corporate [social] intrapreneur and his/her social enterprise or intrapreneurial initiative, identified and selected by the students. Assesses award ILOs 1,2,3 and 4.

- **Learning Method(s) and Delivery Mode(s)** learning methods may include; lectures, seminars, example classes, practical work (laboratory/field/workshops), visits. Delivery modes may include; class-based (with or without VLE support), online only, blended/flipped classroom.
- **Student workload**, outlining class contact, practical work and independent learning to total the notional learning hours for the credit weighting. In addition the number of notional learning hours taking place prior to module delivery should be indicated in order to enable students to effectively plan their time;
- **Rationale/ aim**, outlining generic content, skills and relevance to the industry sector to enable students to consider why they should choose this module workload in the case of an elective;
- **Module Intended Learning Outcomes**, which outlines what a student should be able to do on successful completion of the module. Like course learning outcomes these should be written in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy (Appendix B.3);
- **Syllabus/ Indicative content**, which outlines content for the module. The detail of the content may vary with the subject area. Subjects that need to be responsive to recent developments may be more generic in their descriptions whilst other disciplines may be more prescriptive in the details;
- **Indicative reading**, outlines the essential and additional reading for a module. Essential reading should be texts that are frequently referred to noting that students may purchase the text. Course teams should consider whether students should have their own copy, whether it is available in the Library or through inter-library loans or as an extract or paper that can be provided. Advice can be sought from your Library Subject Specialist. Lists must include ISBN numbers.

Appendix I: Principles for setting up a Postgraduate Award

The University offers Postgraduate Awards (PgAwards) of 20 credits. Education Committee adopted the following principles for PgAwards:

- PgAward to be an entry award only, of 20 credits, and not to be used as an exit route for any other courses within the University (where a student fails to complete their intended award);
- PgAwards linked to a degree must be named after the parent course and the learning specialism of the modules taken, e.g. PgAward in Business and Management: Leadership and Organisational Behaviour;
- 3 x 20 credit PgAwards equivalent to PgCert;
- PgAwards to be surrendered to transfer to PgCert (following existing Transfer to a Higher Award process);
- PgAwards to be confirmed by an Exam Board;
- PgAward certificate and transcript issued with named integrated modules;
- PgAwards to be unclassified;
- Compensation not to be allowed on PgAwards – all assessments should have a minimum mark of 50%;
- For the Business Management stackable course, learners remain short course students until they register for the final assessment, at which point they become registered students;
- Any further PgAwards to be approved via an appropriate mechanism through Education Committee.

Students who register for a PgAward can:

- Leave the University with any number of PgAwards
- Complete 3 x PgAwards and convert these to a PgCert through the existing Transfer to a Higher Award (THA) process
- Complete PgAwards and, at any point, use these as Accredited Prior Learning (APL) when applying to join another award bearing course (PgCert, PgDip or MSc)

Each PgAward is individually assessed using the University's standard Assessment Rules for Postgraduate Taught Courses. As per these assessment rules, students may resit an assessment they have failed to obtain the minimum mark for at the first attempt. However, should a student wish to use more than one completed PgAward as Accredited Prior Learning (APL), they may only do so providing they have not failed to meet the minimum mark at the first attempt for greater than the number of credits specified for taught courses in the Assessment Rules (currently no more than 30 credits). In practice, this means that students cannot resit more than one 20 credit assessment as part of their accumulation of PgAwards towards a higher award.

Owner	Academic Registrar
Department	Education Services
Implementation date	September 2023
Approval by and date	Academic Registrar, September 2023
Version number and date of last review	Version 3.4; September 2023
Next review by	July 2025