Programme and Module Modification Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1. The university's modifications procedure enables changes to be made to an approved module, short course or programme of study. Modifications may result from developments within the academic discipline, feedback from students or from external examiners, outcomes of quality assurance processes including annual monitoring and periodic review, changes in Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, and/or the identification of opportunities to enhance the delivery of teaching or assessment.

1.2. The modification procedure has been designed to support the university to maintain the academic quality and standards of its awards whilst supporting the continuous enhancement of the student learning experience. The procedure has taken account of external reference points and was designed in the context of clear external expectations regarding the level of information which the university must make available to applicants and current students as well as how any changes to taught provision are communicated to these groups. As such, this procedure has been developed to take account of the following external reference points:

- Conditions of Registration, including B1, B2, B4 and C1 (Office for Students) (2022)

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024), and the Advice and Guidance on Course Design and Development (2018) (Quality Assurance Agency)

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015), Standard 1.9 On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes (European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process)

- UK Higher Education Providers – Advice on Consumer Protection Law (2023) (Competition and Markets Authority)

1.3. Programme design and modification will also take account of university and/or Faculty strategies, with particular reference to the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

1.4. It is recognised that there is a balance between the need to make accurate information available to applicants, offer-holders and students and the need for the university's curriculum, teaching and assessment of programmes to be continuously improved.

1.5. This procedure is managed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team in the Registry. The Programmes Committee has responsibility for oversight of the procedure and for recommending approval of major modifications to QAEC. Departmental Teaching

Committees and/or Faculty Education Committees[1] are responsible for the approval of minor modifications. An annual audit of minor modifications will be presented to the Programmes Committee and issues arising from the consideration of the annual audit will be referred to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. Minor modifications can be approved by Departmental Teaching Committees throughout the year and should be recorded on the annual audit for implementation in the next academic year.

1.6.   This procedure applies to the following types of provision:

- Undergraduate programmes

- Postgraduate taught programmes (including MRes)

- Undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules (including BPES, Horizons, I-Explore, Centre for Academic English, credit bearing short courses and non-credit bearing modules)

- Taught material which forms part of a postgraduate research programme (including MPhil, PhD, EngD and MD(Res) programmes)

- Collaborative programmes and modules

1.7.   These procedures do not cover the following types of proposals:

- Proposals to offer a new short course, including proposals to offer an existing module as a short course. Please refer to the Short Course Approval Process and associated forms, published under 'New Short Courses' on the [Programme design and modification](#) webpages.

- Proposals to introduce an award not currently listed in the [Award of Degrees and Ordinance](#).

2.   Types of Modification

2.1.   Modifications are categorised as either 'minor' or 'major':

- Minor modifications are part of a programme's inherent flexibility and would not be expected to have an impact on the overall programme aims or learning outcomes. Minor modifications usually affect a single module or small number of linked modules; the programme as a whole should not be significantly different as a result of the change.

- Major modifications are more extensive and fundamentally change the educational experience. Major modifications generally affect the overall programme aims and learning outcomes or numerous modules across the programme.

- Late modifications are changes proposed to the current or subsequent academic year which are submitted after the relevant deadline. Proposals for late modifications should only be proposed where it is clearly demonstrable that students would be negatively impacted if the changes were not made. Late modifications require Programmes Committee to review and recommend approval to QAEC. Late modifications may also require additional communications with applicants, offer-holders and/or students to provide clarity. Where specific departments or programmes regularly have cause to submit late modifications, a review of their practice in relation to programme design and delivery may be undertaken on behalf of the Programmes Committee.

2.2. Proposed modifications as a result of operational reasons which make it difficult to deliver the programme or module as originally intended, such as the availability of key members of staff, facilities or other resources, will only be considered where the department is able to demonstrate that it has exhausted all other options to deliver the module or programme as published. Consideration of the risk in being able to deliver the programme or module as originally intended should take account of the Imperial Student Protection Plan.

2.3. Major modifications will not normally be approved after the major modifications deadline (31 March). Minor modifications submitted after the minor modifications deadline (31 July) will be processed as a major modification.

2.4. Where a change to a programme title is approved, offer holders and/or current students who are affected by the change must be given the option to graduate with either the original or amended programme title.

2.5. A change to programme entry requirements must be approved by the Admissions Sub-Committee. All approved entry requirement changes will be logged with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team so that relevant programme specifications can be updated for the following academic year.

3. Process and Deadlines

3.1. Modifications for the **following** academic year must be approved by the appropriate Committee by the following deadlines:

- 31 March for major modifications (to Programmes Committee; for reporting on to the next Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee)

- 31 July for minor modifications (to Departmental Teaching Committees[2]; for reporting on to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement team under the annual minor modifications audit).

3.2. Modification deadlines for programmes with entry points which do not follow the normal academic cycle will be agreed separately on a case-by-case basis. Deadlines will be set based on the principle that major modifications must be approved six months prior to the start of the programme and minor modifications must be approved two months prior to the start of the programme.

3.3. Each application for a modification will need to address the areas set out in the following sections of this procedure. All relevant affected programme documentation (namely, the programme specification and/or module specification) must be submitted with the modification form.

3.4. The modifications table at the end of this procedure indicates the information and level of approval required for minor, major and late modifications. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team will advise on the appropriate level of approval required for modifications which are not listed.

4. Preparing a modification proposal

4.1. A modification form must be completed for each proposed modification. This ensures that the necessary information is available to the relevant committee to consider and that it is recorded for future reference.

4.2. For certain proposals it is necessary to provide supporting information to help the Committee to make an informed decision. This may include:

- Comments from a relevant external examiner

- Feedback from students (please see section 5 for more details on student consultation)

- A review of the proposal by academic and industry experts co-ordinated by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team

- Advice from relevant professional service departments

4.3. Proposals to change the title of a programme or stream should be discussed with the Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions team.

4.4. Proposals to amend a collaborative module or programme should be discussed with the collaborative partner(s). In some instances, approval may need to be sought from all partner institutions. Where a proposal affects the memorandum of agreement, teams must liaise with the Assistant Registrar (Partnerships, Monitoring and Evaluation) in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team.

4.5.   Proposals to suspend or withdraw a programme are considered major modifications. Details on the information needed to support a suspension or withdrawal modification are available in the [Policy on Programme Suspension and Withdrawal](#). Departments should be aware that suspending or withdrawing a programme could affect modules shared with other programmes within the university and are expected to make clear in the modification paperwork how any impact will be managed.

4.6.   Details of which modifications require supporting information can be found in the modifications criteria table.

5.   Consulting with Stakeholders

5.1.   As part of the approval of any modification proposal, evidence of consultation with stakeholders must be provided. Consultation should take place as early in the process as possible to allow feedback from stakeholders to be incorporated into the final proposal.

5.2.   Students are the main stakeholders and must therefore be consulted on all proposed major modifications. Departments may decide the most appropriate way to consult with students, taking into consideration both the scale and impact of the proposal.

6.   When to seek student consultation

6.1.   Student consultation must be undertaken for all major modification proposals which modify a programme or module for the following academic year. It is encouraged that the proposed changes are presented to students, highlighting the rationale and benefits of the changes. Students should be invited to comment, and any concerns raised should be documented. The department should consider adjusting their proposals in response to issues raised by students before submitting to the relevant committee.

Examples of student consultation:

- Organising a presentation for the affected cohort explaining the rationale of the proposed changes and inviting students to provide feedback.

- Emailing the affected cohort explaining the rationale of the proposed changes and inviting students for feedback.

- Liaising with the student representative of the affected cohort who can then meet with the students to gather feedback regarding the proposed changes.

6.2.   External Examiners must be consulted on all proposals for major modifications. Depending on the scope of the major modification, other stakeholders must be consulted as well;

these may include accrediting bodies, industry experts, graduate employers and alumni.

6.3.   There may be occasions when feedback from students or other stakeholders does not support a proposal however this does not prevent the proposal from being considered for approval.

6.4.   There may be occasions when academic judgement will take precedence over feedback received from students. Programmes Committee will consider the academic rationale in these circumstances.

6.5.   For minor modifications, it is best practice for departments to consult changes with students.

7.   Seeking the relevant approval

7.1.   All modifications must be approved by the relevant Departmental Teaching Committee and/or the Faculty Education Committee.

7.2.   Depending on the nature and scope of the proposals, modifications for cross-faculty programmes may need to be reviewed and approved by all relevant primary programme and primary module Departmental Teaching Committee(s) and Faculty Education Committee(s).

7.3.   Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions should be consulted on proposals to change a programme title, create a new programme stream and/or introduce significant structural changes. Depending on the type and nature of the proposed change, a Course Viability Report and/or approval from the Admissions Sub-Committee may also be required.

7.4.   The following table indicates what approval is required for specific major modification proposals. Evidence of approval should be included and/or appended to the relevant modification form.

	Course Viability Report required	Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions approval required	Admissions Sub-Committee approval required
New programme proposals	✓	✓	✓
Programme title change		✓	✓
Introduction of new programme stream		✓	✓
Substantial content/delivery changes (considered on a case-by-case basis)		✓	✓

7.5.   Following approval by the Departmental Teaching Committee and/or Faculty Education

Committee, major modifications and late modifications must also be considered by the Programmes Committee. Proposals should be submitted via the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team. Submission deadlines for the Programmes Committee can be found on the academic calendar and academic governance webpages:

https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/senate-subcommittees/programmes-committee/

7.6. Recommendations made by the Programmes Committee must be approved by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. A report will be provided from the Programmes Committee to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee requesting approval for the endorsed modifications.

7.7. When considering a proposal for approval the relevant committee should consider:

- Whether the grounds for making the change are academically sound and clearly enhance the students' learning opportunities.

- Whether the extent of the consultation with stakeholders was appropriate given the scale and impact of the proposal.

- Where feedback from stakeholders does not support the proposal, whether the grounds for making the change are sufficiently robust.

- Where a proposal affects current students, whether the grounds for making the change are sufficiently urgent to warrant immediate implementation or whether the change could reasonably be postponed.

- Whether the proposal is in line with relevant university and/or Faculty strategies, with particular reference to the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

7.8. For minor modifications the relevant committee may make the following decisions in respect of a proposal:

- To approve the proposal

- To approve the proposal subject to conditions

- To reject the proposal

7.9. For major modifications and late modifications, the relevant committee may make the following decisions in respect of a proposal:

- To recommend the proposal for approval

- To recommend the proposal for approval subject to conditions

- To reject the proposal

8.   Recording and communicating the outcome

8.1.   Departments are responsible for keeping an audit trail of all the modifications made to a programme. This should include:

- The completed modification form.

- Details of any supporting information submitted as part of the proposal (including a programme specification and module specifications)

8.2.   Departments are responsible for informing the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team of approved minor modifications and must provide an updated version of the programme specification and/or module specification for the relevant cohort(s).

8.3.   Departments are also responsible for updating any additional sources of information including the departmental website, virtual learning environment and programme handbook.

8.4.   The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team are responsible for providing the updated programme information (e.g. programme and module specifications) to the relevant teams. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team are responsible for providing the Prospectus with the updated programme specification so that the relevant study webpages can be updated.

8.5.   Once a modification is approved Departments must inform affected students that a change to the programme has been made. Communication templates and guidance are available from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team.

8.6.   Where a modification affects offer holders this will be communicated as part of the admissions process.

Approved by QAEC June 2020
Revised October 2024

Document title:		Programme and Module Modification Procedure	
Version:	3	**Date:**	September 2020
Location and filename:		R:\7.Quality Assurance\3. Policy Framework\1. Programme Design & Modification\Modification Procedure	
Approved:		QAEC	
Effective from:		AY 2020/21	
Originator:		Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team	
Contact for queries:		Assistant Registrar (Programme Development)	
Cross References:		Modification Form Modification Communication Template - TBC	
Notes and latest changes:		October 2024 – rebrand and clarification of consultation required for changes to programme titles, introduction of new programme stream and/or significant or cumulative modifications. Clarification regarding modifications to module grading schemes, module suspensions, and cross-Faculty programmes.	

Minor Modifications

Details of the level of approval and supporting information required for the most common minor modifications can be found in the table below. Please contact the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team for advice on the level of approval required for any modifications which are not included in this list.

Type of Change		Before 31st July	After 31st July
		Consultation and approval from the following should be sought:	
Elective modules	Add an elective module (existing/new) on a programme	1. Departmental Teaching Committee[1]	1. Students 2. External Examiner(s) 3. Industry 4. Departmental Teaching Committee 5. Faculty Education Committee 6. Programmes Committee
	Change the learning outcomes of an elective module		
Assessment of a module (core, compulsory or elective)	Remove an assessment from a module and change the weighting of remaining assessments		
	Introduce a new assessment to a module and change the weighting of existing assessments		
	Change the weighting of assessments within a module (without changing the assessment)		
	Remove one assessment and replace it with another (without changing the assessment weighting)		
	Change to the 'must pass' assessment rule		
Main details of a module (core, compulsory or elective)	Change the title of a module		
	Change the content of a module (without changing the learning outcomes)		
	Change the allocation of study hours within a module (without changing the credit value). For example, reducing contact hours and reallocating hours towards independent study.		

[1] Where a local Departmental Teaching Committee is not present, the Faculty Education Committee (or equivalent) should take precedence, Minor modifications should be collated and reported to the Faculty Education Committee.

Major Modifications

Details of the level of approval and supporting information required for the most common major modifications can be found in the table below. Please contact the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team for advice on the level of approval required for any modifications which are not included in this list.

Type of Change		Before 31st March	After 31st March
		Consultation and approval from the following must be sought :	
Core and compulsory modules	Add a module (new or existing) as a core/compulsory module on a programme	1. Students 2. External Examiner(s) 3. Industry 4. Departmental Teaching Committee 5. Faculty Education Committee 6. Programmes Committee	1. Students 2. External Examiner(s) 3. Industry 4. Departmental Teaching Committee 5. Faculty Education Committee 6. Programmes Committee
	Remove a core/compulsory module from a programme		
	Change the learning outcomes of a core/compulsory module		
	Change the designation of a module from core/compulsory to elective/compulsory (or vice versa)		
Elective Modules	Remove an elective/compulsory module from a programme[2]		
	Change the designation of a module from elective to core/compulsory		
Programme Structure	Change the overall study hours and the credit value of a module		
	Change the rules by which students choose their elective modules		
	Change the assessment structure for the programme (including module weightings and module grading methods)		
	Change the prerequisite/corequisite rules of modules within a programme		
	Change the title of a programme		
	Change the learning outcomes of a programme		
	Change the learning and teaching strategy of a programme		

---

[1] MRA should be consulted on proposals to change a programme title, create a new programme stream and/or introduce significant structural changes. Depending on the type and nature of the proposed change, approval from the Admissions Sub-Committee may also be required.

[2] Removal of an elective module is designated a major modification. However, exceptionally, electives may be suspended for a given academic year if the module cannot run due to low student numbers or if the Module Leader is taking a sabbatical. It is expected that if an elective is suspended, it will be suspended on all associated programmes for the given academic year, unless there are new restrictions to the number of module student registrations. Module suspension is not deemed a modification, but it should be logged with the QA team as part of the minor modifications audit.

Main details of a programme	Change the assessment strategy of a programme	1. Students 2. External Examiner(s) 3. Industry 4. Departmental Teaching Committee 5. Faculty Education Committee 6. Programmes Committee	1. Students 2. External Examiner(s) 3. Industry 4. Departmental Teaching Committee 5. Faculty Education Committee 6. Programmes Committee
	Change the length of a programme		
	Change to non-standard start dates of a programme		
	Change the main campus of where a programme is taught		
	Change the department of a programme		
	To add a programme specific regulation		
	Introduce intermediate/exit awards to an existing programme		
	Create a new programme stream based on an existing programme		
Withdrawal of a programme	To request the withdrawal of a programme(s) (including a named pathway/stream with award title)		
Suspension of a programme	To request the suspension of a programme (including a named pathway/stream with award title) (up to a maximum period of 3 years)		
Collaborative modules and programmes	To request a major modification (within the criteria listed above) for collaborative modules and programmes		

I M P E R I A L

I M P E R I A L

Programme and module modification form

Modifications for the following 2025-26 academic year and onwards must be approved by the appropriate Committee and have been reported to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team by the following deadlines:

- **31 March for Major Modifications**
- **31 July for Minor Modifications**

Modification deadlines for programmes with entry points which do not follow the normal academic cycle will be agreed separately on a case-by-case basis. Deadlines will be set based on the principle that major modifications must be approved six months prior to the start of the programme and minor modifications must be approved two months prior to the start of the programme.

An updated version of the programme specification and/or module specification must be provided indicating the proposed modification using tracked changes.

Programme / Module Details			
Programme Title	e.g. MSc Finance and Accounting	Prog. Code(s)	e.g. N302
Module Title	e.g. Stochastic Differential Equations	Module Code(s)	e.g. M5MR11
Primary Department	Choose a Department	Year of Prog.	e.g. Year 2

Modification Details			
Type of Modification	Choose modification type	Retrospective/Late	Yes/No
Collaborative	Yes/No	Affected cohort	e.g. Year 2 from October 2024
Number of years suspended	A maximum of 3 academic years	Curriculum Reviewed version?	Yes/No
Description	Brief description of the proposed modification (approx. 150 words per modification). An updated version of the programme specification and/or module specification must also be provided using track changes.		
Rationale	Brief description of reason for proposed modification (approx. 150 words per modification).		

			Please include the consequences of not making the modification and (where relevant) an explanation of why it is necessary to make this change retrospectively.
Consultation	Students:	☐	Student consultation should be sought for all retrospective/late modifications and where a change to a programme title is proposed. Provide details of the consultation and outcome.
	External examiner:	☐	Provide details of the consultation and outcome.
	Industry:	☐	Provide details of the consultation and outcome.
	Other:	☐	MRA should be consulted if substantial structural changes, or a change to programme title is proposed. Collaborative partners should be consulted if a proposal affects a collaborative programme and/or module.
Arrangements for any affected students	If a programme is being withdrawn or suspended, please note whether modules belonging to the programme should also be suspended or withdrawn- Departments should be aware that this will affect modules shared across programmes. If approved, what arrangements will be made for any interrupted, deferred or re-sitting students.		
Rationale for late / in-session modifications	Please provide a rationale as to why the modification has been proposed after the agreed university deadlines.		
Name of proposer	Name	Date	DD/MM/YY

Departmental Approval			
The Head of Department or relevant Director of Studies should confirm that:			
☐	The modification, including the provision of any relevant resource has been agreed	☐	Where the agreement of the external examiner is required that the external examiner has been consulted and supports the proposal (please attach evidence).
☐	Where a module is delivered on a programme outside the primary department that the additional departments have been informed of the proposal	☐	Where the proposal affects a collaborative programme and/or module that the collaborative partner has been consulted and supports the proposal (please attach evidence).
Head of Department or Director of Studies	Name		

Committee(s)	e.g. Teaching Committee and/or Faculty Education Committee	Date(s)	DD/MM/YY
Additional Notes/Comments	Please include any additional comments or notes from the Faculty Education Committee.		

Please include the number of affected students			
Cohort	# Enrolled	# Interrupted	# Resitting
October 2021 entry	136	5	5
October 2022 entry	136	5	5
October 2023 entry	151	2	7
October 2024 entry	153	0	0