

New Programme Approval Procedure Guidance

1. Introduction

Scope

This procedure and the associated proformas should be used when seeking approval for new undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study that lead to a named award of the University. This document provides general guidance on the approval process.

Overview of the programme approval process

There are two stages to the procedure for approving a new programme. The first stage is to gain approval in principle for the development of the programme. This stage essentially approves the business case for a programme proposal and ensures that it fits strategically with the School, the Faculty and the University ([Manchester 2020 Strategic Plan](#)). Therefore, programme proposers are asked to complete [NPP1 - approval in principle](#). The second stage is the development and approval of the detailed structure and content of the programme. Programme proposers are asked to complete [NPP2 - approval of programme content](#).

The process is summarised in the following flowchart:

[Programme Approval Process Flowchart](#)

Sources of Support

- Your Faculty Quality Administrator: for advice on each stage of the approval process.
- Administrative staff within your School or Faculty: for support with the preparation of documentation.
- Staff in the Teaching and Learning Support Office can also offer advice.
- [Market Research Services](#): for help with market research into the demand for a programme.
- [Guidance notes on providing evidence for programme approval](#)
- For collaborative proposals, the academic advisor assigned to the programme.
- For Distance Learning programmes, information can be found on [the Distance Learning 'Teaching' page](#).

Timeframe for approval of programmes

The timeframe for the approval of new programmes will be tailored, within reason, to meet the demands of the environment in which programmes are offered. Approval schedules should also consider the advertising deadlines for the different promotional media such as the prospectus and UCAS. All programmes must be fully approved by

31st March of the year they are intended to be delivered for the first time in order to be operational on Campus Solutions for student registration and unit selection.

Proposals can be considered quickly and out of the Faculty committee cycle provided that the Faculty is satisfied that the development of a coherent proposal will not be compromised. Your Faculty Quality Administrator will be able to develop an approval schedule with you.

All programmes must be fully approved by **31st March** of the year they are intended to be delivered for the first time.

A document showing the key dates of the programme approval procedure has been produced by the Faculty of Humanities and is available for reference on the Humanities website:

- [Humanities NPP key dates](#)

Nomination of External Examiners

As part of the programme approval procedure, programme teams should arrange to appoint an external examiner for each new programme, in accordance with the guidance contained within the Code of Practice for External Examiners. This can be found under the 'Information for University Staff' section of the TLSO External Examiners webpage.

- [TLSO External Examiners webpage](#)

2. NPP1 Approval in principle documentation

The first stage of the programme approval process is to gain approval in principle for the development of the programme from the School and Faculty. If the proposal is a [cross-school or cross-faculty programme](#) then evidence of the approval of collaborating schools must be provided. Approval in principle requires a commitment from the School to develop the proposed programme, therefore applications should be submitted as early as possible in order to allow sufficient lead-in time for the full development, approval and marketing of the programme.

Programme proposers are asked to complete a [NPP1 Proforma](#). When completing the proforma the programme proposer is asked to provide the following information:

Summary factual information

This will enable a provisional record of the programme to be set up on the Student Records System.

A detailed rationale for the development of the programme

This should

- set the programme in its School, Faculty, University ([Manchester 2020 Strategic Plan](#)) and wider context to enable the academic and strategic merit of the proposal to be considered by the School and Faculty
- for Undergraduate programmes, demonstrate how to support the development of graduate attributes, outlined in the '[The Purposes of a Manchester Undergraduate Education](#)' (The Manchester Matrix)
- demonstrate the academic case for the proposed programme
- demonstrate that the programme proposers have considered the potential impact of the new programme development on existing activities, including those of other schools and discipline areas (programme proposers are required to consult with other affected parties and to obtain their comments on the proposal)
- provide evidence of demand for the programme

NB. This is an important section of the proposal as the School/Faculty will consider this information when determining whether the programme proposer can proceed to the NPP2 stage.

Resources

If additional resources are required to support the proposed programme then confirmation that they will be provided will be required. The following resource approval forms, which can be downloaded in Word format, should be completed and signed by the relevant resource manager and submitted with the NPP1.

[General resources approval form](#)

[Library resources approval form](#)

[IS/ eLearning resources approval form](#)

Financial Cost

For both undergraduate and postgraduate proposals the financial case should be demonstrated for a minimum 3 year period or an estimated period before recruitment reaches a steady state. This should include full estimates of costs, revenues and the impact of the proposed programme on the School, as indicated in the suggested model below, which can be downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet:

[Financial model](#)

Please confirm that the fees payable by students for the programme have been agreed and submit a Tuition Fee Approval Form.

[Tuition Fee Approval Form](#)

Recruitment and Admissions information

Once approved in principle a programme proposal can be advertised as 'subject to approval'. Information for the Recruitment, Admissions and International Development

is requested as part of the NPP1 process and will be used for marketing the programme.

For undergraduate programmes a Marketing and Admissions Information form should be completed, which includes UCAS Entry Profile and keywords. This form can be downloaded as a Word document from the link below:

[Marketing and Admissions Information for Full-Time Undergraduate Programmes](#)

For postgraduate programmes a Postgraduate Marketing Information template, which can be downloaded from the link below, should be completed:

[Postgraduate Marketing Template](#)

Marketing information will be input to Campus Solutions for the University website and will be attached to the academic plan code.

Nomination of an external adviser

An [external adviser](#) should be nominated by the School, approved by the Faculty, and asked by the School to provide feedback on the academic coherence of the new programme during the drafting of the NPP2 submission. S/he should be a subject specialist but should not be a current External Examiner.

3. Submission and approval of NPP1

Once completed, the pro forma should be signed by the Head of School (or approved by appropriate committee) and forwarded to your Faculty Quality Assurance Administrator who will arrange for it to be considered by the appropriate Faculty committee. The School representative on the committee is expected to be able to speak about the proposal. Please note that cross-faculty programmes will require approval from all faculties involved.

When NPP1 is not approved

If approval in principle is not given on the grounds of academic, strategic or resource issues, the School (or lead School) will be given feedback and informed whether a revised proposal can be resubmitted.

When NPP1 is approved

The programme can be set up on Campus Solutions by an [approved administrator](#). The 'notify' function should be used by the administrator to inform the following colleagues that the programme has been approved in principle:

- the Director of Teaching and Learning Support
- the programme proposer and administrator
- Faculty/School Recruitment and Admissions and Marketing Officers

- Central UG/PGT Recruitment, Admissions and International Development officers as appropriate
- School Finance Officer
- Faculty/School IS Managers
- University of Manchester Academic Engagement Librarian
- the colleague responsible for inputting marketing information into Campus Solutions

Staff in the Teaching and Learning Support Office will prepare a summary of all programme proposals that have been approved in principle for the information of the Vice President (Teaching, Learning and Students). This summary will be copied to all Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) for information and to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.

Marketing

Once the programme has been granted approval in principle it can be advertised with the caveat 'subject to approval'. The programme will be set up on Campus Solutions so that applications received can be recorded. Offers can be made and letters will reflect that the programme is subject to approval.

Internal advisers

If approval in principle is given, two [internal advisers](#) will be allocated to assist the programme proposer during the [NPP2](#) stage of the programme proposal. It will be the role of the internal advisers to give formative feedback on draft documentation at appropriate points in the drafting stage agreed between the proposer and the Faculty Quality Administrator. Internal advisers work to ensure that the programme proposal is fit for approval by the Faculty and provide recommendations to the Faculty UG/PGT Committee and Associate Dean regarding the viability of a proposal.

4. NPP2 Documentation

Stage Two of the process involves developing the details of the proposal and required the completion and submission of a NPP2 proforma and related documentation. The programme proposer will continue to be supported by the Faculty Quality Administrator (and for collaborative programmes, the Academic Advisor).

When completing the NPP2 the proposer may want to refer to the [Teaching and Learning, and the Assessment](#) section of the TLSO website for guidance.

The NPP2 proforma can be downloaded from the link below:

[NPP2 Proforma](#)

The NPP2 requires:

- Information on the programme structure, content, design and delivery, including details of any [specialisations or pathways](#) that will be available. A [programme](#)

[specification](#) and [unit specifications](#) for all core units and any new option units should be provided.

- Information on teaching, learning and assessment methods. A statement of how these methods can be adapted to meet the needs of students with additional support needs and details of placement learning and field trips (where applicable) should also be included.
- For Undergraduate programmes, provide a statement on how student learning will be personalised in accordance with the [Policy on Personalised Learning](#).
- An overview of how the programme will be managed within the School and, for collaborative provision, within the partner institution(s).

Please note: If the programme does not comply with the [University's Undergraduate/Taught Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#), this should be highlighted and dispensation requested.

In addition to the completed NPP2 proforma and programme and unit specifications, this stage of the process also requires:

- A revised NPP1 pro-forma if anything has changed from the original approval in principle. This is essential to ensure that the information on Campus Solutions is accurate. The proposer should also consult with the Head of School, IS Manager and Librarian to ascertain that the required resources to deliver the revised programme will be available. If necessary revised resources approval forms should be appended.
- Comments from the [external advisers](#). Evidence of feedback from the external adviser, plus the response from the School where appropriate, must be included with the submission to demonstrate that the feedback has been considered as part of this process.
- Comments and recommendations from the [internal advisers](#), together with the response from the School where appropriate.
- A review of the marketing information provided for NPP1 to ensure it continues to reflect the development of the new programme.
- A programme statement to be included in the HEAR (Undergraduate only).

5. NPP2 - Submission and approval

The complete NPP2 submission must be agreed at School level (either through committee or by Chair's action) and signed by the Head of School before it can be considered at Faculty level. If the proposal involves contributions from other Schools, a note of their approval of the NPP2 documentation must also be included with the submission.

The NPP2 submission should be forwarded to your Faculty Quality Administrator when the proposer and both internal and external advisers are satisfied with the proposal. An Associate Dean may also wish to act as a third internal adviser at this point. The programme submission will be considered by the members of the appropriate Faculty committee: by this stage, the internal and external advisers will normally be able to recommend to the committee that the submission should be approved. The decision of the Faculty committee will either be **approved** or **not approved**.

If the submission is approved, it is forwarded to the Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students) via the Head of the Teaching and Learning Support Office, for ratification on behalf of Senate. The Head of the Teaching and Learning Support Office will circulate a list of approved programmes to Associate Deans for information. The Vice-President will not expect to consider the submission in detail, but will wish to see whether it raises policy issues or may impact on other Faculties. Staff in the Teaching and Learning Support Office will prepare a summary of all programme proposals ratified by the Vice-President for receipt by Senate.

If the submission is not approved by the Faculty committee, then the proposal may be amended and resubmitted to the committee. Clear feedback will be provided to the School on the actions necessary and the timeframe for resubmission. The Faculty committee has the right, if these actions are not implemented, to withdraw approval in principle for the programme proposal.

Campus Solutions

Once a proposal has received full approval from the Faculty, an [approved administrator](#) can set up the programme structures on campus solutions and upload the undergraduate programmes statement to be included in the HEAR.

6. Summary list of new programme approval proformas and associated guidance

NPP1 (Approval in principle)

[NPP1 Proforma](#)

[General Resources Approval Proforma](#)

[Library Resources Approval Proforma](#)

[IS/eLearning Resources Proforma](#)

[Financial Model](#)

[Tuition Fee Approval Proforma](#)

[Marketing and Admissions Information for Full-time Undergraduate Programmes](#)

[PGT Marketing Information Proforma](#)

NPP2 (Approval of programme structure and content)

[NPP2 Proforma](#)

[Programme Specification Guidance](#)

[Unit Specification Proforma](#)

[Guidance on the completion of Unit Specifications](#)

[Guidance on the role of External Advisers](#)

[Guidance on the role of Internal Academic Advisers](#)

[External Adviser Feedback Proforma](#)

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