

QA54 Programme and Module Modification

Procedures for the approval of major and minor modifications to academic programmes at Arden University.

Classification – *Public*

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1. Introduction and Objectives

- 1.1 Arden University's procedures for the management and approval of programme modifications are designed to work in conjunction with the University's annual monitoring and continuous review processes. Together they provide a timely and structured mechanism for proposing changes to enhance the student experience and ensure academic programmes and modules remain current, academically rigorous, and aligned with external regulatory requirements.
- 1.2 These procedures support ongoing compliance with the Office for Students (OfS) ongoing conditions of registration, specifically in relation to Quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for students.
- 1.3 They are also designed to ensure that, when making modifications, the University meets its obligations under the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) by providing applicants, offer holders, and students with accurate and timely information about their programme.
- 1.4 For apprenticeship provision, these procedures ensure compliance with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and the rule set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) regulation.
- 1.5 This document sets out the University's formal process for managing programme and module modifications, ensuring that all changes are implemented in a consistent, transparent and compliant manner.

2. Scope

- 2.1. These procedures apply to all credit bearing taught provision validated by Arden University.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The following must be aware of and/or comply with the procedure set out within this document:

- Faculty Senior Management Teams;
- Heads of School;
- Heads of Department;

- Programme Team Leaders and Module Leaders;
- Senior Quality Officers (SQO);
- Faculty Academic and Quality Committee (minor modifications);
- University level Programme and Module Modification Committee (PMMC) members (major/major (substantive) modifications);
- Portfolio Management Committee (PMC) members (major (substantive) modifications);
- Internal stakeholders i.e. Library, Registry (including systems and the assessment team), Digital Learning, Admissions, Centre for Academic Partnerships (CAP) (as required), Planning, IT (as required), Estates (as required), Academic Resources (Staffing and Timetabling) and Corporate Learning;
- External stakeholders e.g. External Examiners and/or External Advisors, Students and/or Apprentices, Employers, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB).

3.1 Failure to follow the procedures set out within this document could potentially lead to loss of OfS registration, the inability to meet CMA, and for apprenticeship programmes, Ofsted and ESFA requirements.

4. Procedures

4.1 The detail of the modification types under each category outlined below are published here along with the approval committee, and should be considered in conjunction with this document. The documentation requirements are outlined in Appendix 1.

Category A: Administrative changes

4.2 Changes made to ensure that module and programme documentation remains accurate and up-to-date. These changes can be made at any time of year and require an update to the published module and programme documentation. These changes do not impact on material information.

4.3 These changes can be requested via the QA54a Modifications Form on the PowerApp platform, approved by the Head of School or nominee, for submission to the Senior Quality Officer. These will be recorded on a central modifications grid for reporting to the Faculty Academic and Quality Committee (FAQC), and to the Students, Quality and Standards Committee (SQSC).

Category B: Minor changes

- 4.4 These changes can be approved at Faculty level by the FAQC; these can be a mix of both non-material and material change. These changes require internal and external consultation with key stakeholders as well as consultation across School or Faculty on shared modules. A timeline of key committee dates and implementation timeframes can be found in Appendix 2.
- 4.5 These changes can be requested via the QA54a Modifications Form on the PowerApp platform, for submission to the Senior Quality Officer along with the relevant supporting documentation, for consultation on the proposed changes in advance of receipt by the FAQC. These will be recorded on a central modifications grid for reporting to the FAQC, and to the SQSC. Quality manage and maintain the definitive Module Descriptor Forms (MDFs) and programme specifications on iQuality throughout.

5. Major Modifications

- 5.1 Major modifications can be classified as major (non-substantive) and major (substantive), both of these require a strengthened proposal as they are seen to be higher risk. These higher risk proposals usually have an impact on the institution, the student journey and/or a substantive change on the validated programme. When considering major modifications, the panel may identify additional aspects of the programme requiring further scrutiny to ensure its ongoing currency and coherence. This may lead to a full programme review or revalidation exercise.
- 5.2 Major changes must be approved at university level by the University **Programme and Module Modification Committee (PMMC)** as these constitute material change. They will require internal and external consultation with key stakeholders as well as consultation across School or Faculty on shared modules. Endorsement by the FAQC is required prior to PMMC consideration. A timeline of key committee dates and implementation timeframes can be found in Appendix 3.
- 5.3 Stakeholders should include Library, Registry (including systems and the assessment team), Digital Learning, Centre for Academic Partnerships (as required), Planning, IT (as required), Estates (as required) and Academic Resources (Staffing and Timetabling) (by correspondence).
- 5.4 The role of PMMC will ensure a consistent practice in relation to higher-risk proposals, enable cross-university management of programmes and manage staff workload/expectations around process timescales.

5.5 This committee will meet at three points each year and may consider up to a maximum of four major modification proposals at each meeting depending on capacity for implementation following approval.

5.6 The PMMC will ensure that:

- There has been sufficient consultation with the required stakeholders (including Arden University staff, externals, students, and employer groups where applicable)
- Confirm the validity of the proposals in terms of academic rationale impact on programme aims and intended learning outcomes
- Confirm that changes meet with relevant subject and qualification benchmark statements, professional, statutory, regulatory and/or accrediting body requirements, the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and Arden University's current strategic aims, policies and Arden Excellence Framework for Inclusive Curriculum
- Ensure that where changes impact the overall assessment strategy that the methods of testing student achievement against the intended learning outcomes remains appropriate.
- A clear plan for implementation is agreed with relevant stakeholders, including any transitional arrangements
- Ensure proposed changes and transitional arrangements are compliant with CMA requirements and external regulatory requirements

5.7 PMMC will decide whether modifications should be approved, or whether further is required.

Category C: Major (non-substantive)

5.8 Major (non-substantive) changes can be requested via the QA54a Modifications Form on the PowerApp platform, for submission to the Senior Quality Officer along with the relevant supporting documentation, for consultation on the proposed changes in advance of receipt by the PMMC. It is expected that these proposals will also be scrutinised by the FAQC prior to receipt by PMMC. The outcome will be recorded on the central modifications grid and reported to FAQC and SQSC.

Quality manage and maintain the definitive MDFs and programme specifications on iQuality throughout.

Category D: Major (substantive)

5.9 Major (substantive) modifications additionally require a strengthened proposal and PMC approval to proceed. In advance of PMMC consideration, as these have wider implications for the university as a whole, and would normally include market research and new/revised costings. Following PMC approval, the process would be the same as for the major (non-substantive) modification proposals.

5.10 It is expected that these proposals will also be scrutinised by the FQC prior to receipt by PMC and PMMC. The changes must be approved at university level by the PMMC as these constitute material change. They will require internal and external consultation with key stakeholders as well as consultation across School or Faculty on shared modules.

5.11 The changes can be requested via the QA54a Modifications Form on the PowerApp platform, for submission to the Senior Quality Officer along with the relevant supporting documentation, for consultation on the proposed changes in advance of receipt by the PMMC. It is required that the PMC rationale document will be submitted alongside the QA54a (modification) form for these proposals.

5.12 Once PMMC have considered the modification, the outcome will be recorded on the central modifications grid and reported to SQSC. Quality manage and maintain the definitive MDFs and programme specifications on iQuality throughout.

6. Student Communication, Consultation and Consent

6.1 In 2015, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published advice for universities on consumer protection law. This advice was revised and reissued in May 2023. The CMA's advice sets out the minimum requirements for compliance with consumer protection law. It is a condition of Arden University's registration with OfS that we comply.

6.2 This includes that the institution must ensure:

- That students get the information they need to make informed decisions in relation to products and services.

- That they interact with prospective and current students, including before they have made choices about which programmes and HE providers to apply to, (when deciding whether to accept an offer of a place) and any time after they have enrolled on a programme with a HE provider.

6.3 The CMA's guidance applies to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (taught and research) as OfS has made it clear that consumer law applies equally to both.

6.4 The definition of students includes applicants, offer holders and current enrolled students. It is the expectation that proposing teams engage with current enrolled students throughout the development of the modification proposal; student consultation should be seen as the end-point of on-going dialogue with students, providing a consistent, formal and auditable record of the outcome.

6.5 The exception to the above would be where a professional body has stipulated that the specification must be changed to preserve the accreditation of the programme. This applies to programmes where it is a requirement that PSRB recognition is needed for the programme to be delivered e.g. British Psychological Society (BPS) for BSc (Hons) Psychology, LLB and not added value. There is still an expectation that such changes will be communicated to students, but a formal consultation will not be required. Schools should instead forward a copy of the professional body decision to the SQO to publish an updated version of the Programme Specification and Handbook.

6.6 It is crucial that all changes are reasonable and communicated in a timely manner, as required by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

Communicate

6.7 Changes that require the proposer to communicate can be carried out by the following means:

Current enrolled students	Offer Holders	Applicants
through the relevant iLearn School page via email	Republishing of the Programme Handbook	Revised course web page Please note, no feedback is required from

on the iLearn Programme discussion board For this group of students this should be post-approval of the modification and the SQO should be notified that this has taken place.	Revised course web page	applicants when communicating change.
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Consult

6.8 Current enrolled student feedback must be sought on the proposed modification to inform programme and module development. The consultation must reach out to as many potentially affected students as possible and can be carried out by the following means:

- Online survey e.g. Microsoft Forms
- In-lecture 'Live' voting using an anonymous voting system e.g. Menti
- Focus groups that are minuted
- Student Representative summary of feedback received
- Via email

6.9 Whichever method above is chosen there must be durable evidence provided to the SQO as part of the modification proposal and uploaded to PowerApp as part of completion of the QA54a Modifications form.

6.10 The consultation must include the rationale for the modification and the consequences of the modification being approved or rejected for that cohort of students. Current enrolled students must be given at least 10 Working Days¹, during term time, to make a response to the consultation. There are no formal rules on the amount of feedback required, but where very little feedback is received

¹ Working Day means any day from Monday to Friday excluding any public holiday when the banks of London are open for business;

teams will be encouraged to reach out to students again or via a different forum or method to try to improve response rates.

- 6.11 Consultation with current enrolled students must take place prior to the modification proposal being submitted and considered by the FAQC or PMMC. Language of the communication to current enrolled students must be clear that the modification is subject to approval by the relevant Committee.

Consent

- 6.12 *“The CMA would be concerned if an HE provider were to say that a student had accepted or had to accept that there would be a new contract at re-enrolment for each year of study. Such a term could be interpreted or used as a means to bypass the requirements to obtain express consent to changes under the Consumer Contract Regulations (CCR) (see paragraphs 4.22 and 4.33 to 4.39) and/or as a way to vary terms of the contract (see paragraphs 5.18 to 5.33). In the CMA’s view, this may breach consumer protection law.”²*

- 6.13 To comply with CMA requirements, it is imperative that consent is sought when proposing certain types of Major (substantive) modifications to programmes which impact current enrolled students. Where a proposal is for new students only (Applicants and Offer holders), consent is not required.

- 6.14 As outlined in 4.2 Consult, it is firstly expected that programme team consult with the wider student body using methods outlined to inform the proposal prior to the modification being submitted to FAQC for scrutiny at Faculty level.

- 6.15 Following University PMMC approval of the modification, where modifications to programmes will be applied to current enrolled students, a communication plan must be drafted and agreed by Legal ready for distribution to students by the programme team. An example of wording previously agreed by Legal is included in Appendix 4 as a reference point only. The rationale for the modification and the consequences of the modification being approved or rejected for the individual student must be clearly outlined. Current enrolled students must be given at least 10 Working Days, during term time, to make a response and provide consent. Post the initial 10 Working Day deadline, time should be given for further discussion with students following any queries raised.

² [Consumer law advice for higher education providers](#) Paragraph 4.65 page 46.

6.16 If a student rejects the change the modification cannot be implemented for that student and where students do not reply this does not automatically mean consent is given. Where this happens, proposers should discuss with students to find a compromise or keep things as they are for that individual.

6.17 For further guidance please contact the Head of Quality or the relevant Senior Quality Officer.

Procedure Name:	Programme and Module Modification
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Last Approved:	October 2025
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Responsible SMT Lead:	Academic Registrar
Responsible Department:	Quality and Registry
Policy Contact:	Head of Quality
Review Frequency:	3 years
Policy Classification:	Academic

Record of Amendments			
Date	Version Number	Details of Change	Approval

APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

The following list details documentation required for each category of modification. Additional documentation may be requested as part of the approval process where necessary.

The following documentation is required for all proposals:

- QA54a form (submitted via the [PowerApp](#))
- Module Descriptor Form (MDF)
- Programme Specification(s) (to include assessment mapping) as required (unless not affected by the change requested)
- Programme Handbook(s) (unless not affected by the change requested)
- Student/Apprentice Handbook (unless not affected by the change requested)
- Evidence of Student/Apprentice consultation/consent (where applicable)
- Professional, Statutory, Regulatory Body (PSRB) mapping (where applicable)
- Mapping to the relevant [apprenticeship standard](#) (where requested)
- Other (e.g., Academic Calendar, Framework, Regulations exemption request) (where requested)

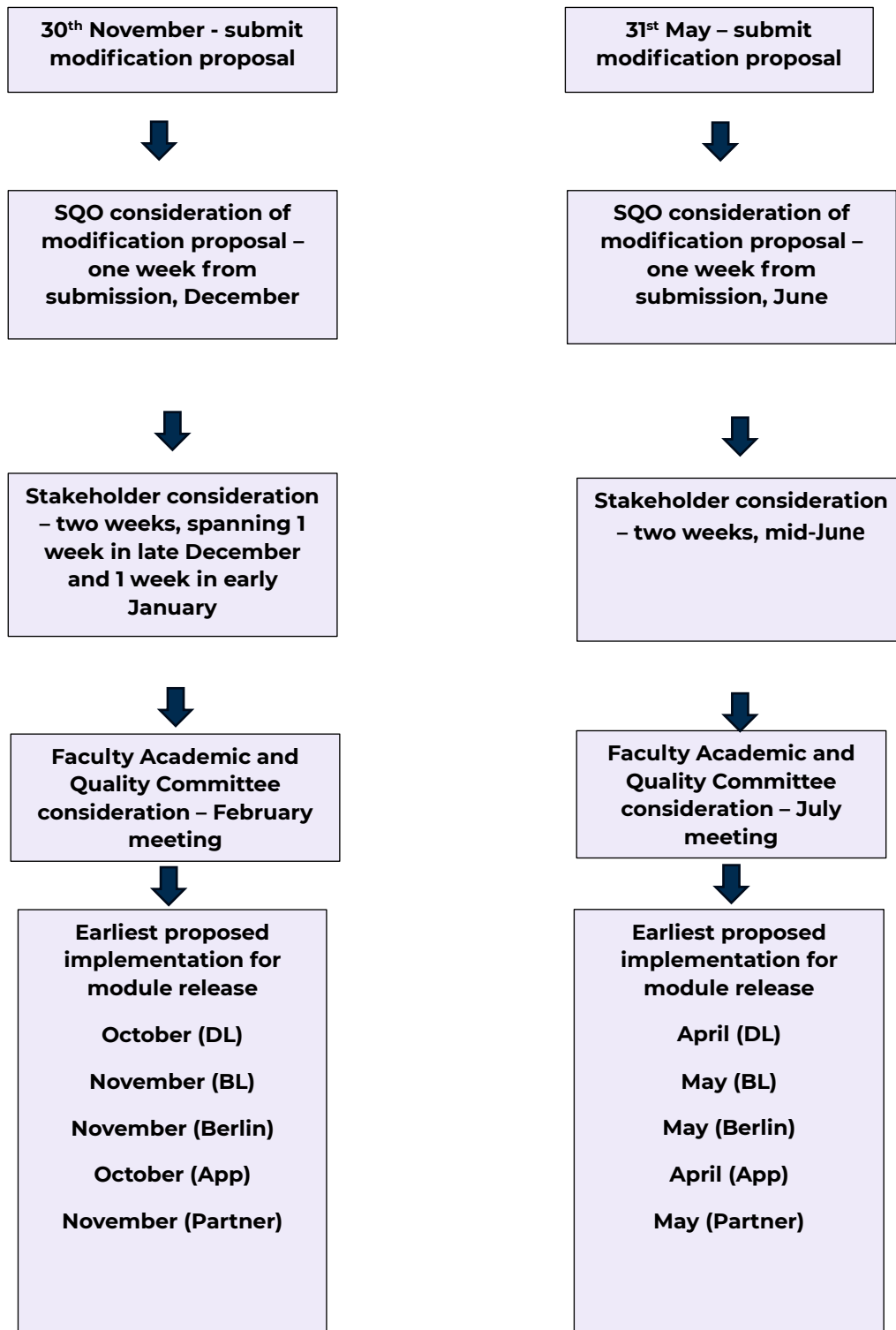
In addition to the above, the following documentation is required for Major modification proposals:

- Library Resources Checklist
- Staffing Plan (including staff CVs) (where requested)

In addition to the above, the following documentation is required for Major (substantive) modification proposals:

- PMC approved Rationale document/Business case and costings
- Library Resources Checklist
- Staffing Plan (including staff CVs) (where requested)
- Evidence of curriculum mapping (where requested)
- HECOS Coding template (where requested)

APPENDIX 2: MINOR MODIFICATION TIMELINE



APPENDIX 3: MAJOR MODIFICATION TIMELINE

Timescales for modification meetings to meet module review dates:



****UK International (formerly Student route) – February start only, latest proposal March-May major modifications window.***

N.B. These dates are linked with review windows.

APPENDIX 4: COMMUNICATION PLAN TO STUDENTS EXAMPLE

Subject line: Important information about your module change

Dear Students,

I hope you are all having a fantastic study time.

I'm (*insert name and role/position at Arden University*), and I am thrilled to share some exciting news with you about our business programme.

Effective (*insert when the changes will take effect*), we will implement changes to enhance your learning journey, specifically regarding the dissertation module.

What's Changing?

Your 40-credit dissertation module (RES6001) will be replaced with the Independent Study (BUS6017) and Project Management (BUS6018) units. This decision was based on feedback from past students, including discussions with your Student Representatives, previous dissertation students, input from dissertation supervisors, and insights from external examiners. Through collaborative efforts under our Students as Partners initiative, we've engaged in in-depth conversations with students across our blended and distance learning modes, fostering an environment of shared ideas and active listening. We believe these changes will enrich your experience at Arden University and enhance your chances of academic success.

Here's What's Changing:

Enhanced Support Mechanisms: We recognise the challenges posed by the dissertation module's independent self study nature and the requirement for ethics approval. Therefore, we're introducing two interconnected modules that offer continuous support within the classroom setting.

Structured Guidance:

Unlike the solitary nature of the dissertation module, the new modules will provide 10 weeks of classes, fostering continuous formative feedback to enhance your work before submission.

What Remains Unchanged:

You will still earn the same well recognised degree from Arden University, including CMI and ILM accreditations.

Why Are We Making These Changes?

Sequential Learning: Progressing through subject-specific modules sequentially will provide a solid foundation and cultivate the skills and knowledge necessary for better graduate outcomes.

Simultaneous Module Study: Studying two guided modules instead of one extensive dissertation allows for absorbing broader information, fostering a more holistic learning experience and promoting interdisciplinary connections.

Community and Support: You'll have the opportunity to forge stronger bonds with classmates and lecturers, fostering a supportive learning environment and enhancing your overall university experience.

Expanded Support Services: We remain committed to your academic, professional, and personal development.

Additionally, I want to highlight that the newly developed BA (Hons) Business Management programme has same two units, which students have broadly accepted. Thus, these changes further elevate the value of your BA (Hons) Business degree from the perspectives of both the university and potential employers, as supported by student representative feedback.

When Will These Changes Take Effect?

This change will apply to students who are currently studying at Level 4 and Level 5, as well as students who have completed Level 5 and are joining Level 6 on or after May 2024.

If you have any questions, clarifications, or disagreements, please feel free to contact me by *(insert date/deadline for response)*. I am more than happy to arrange one-to-one discussions to explain further how this change will enhance your learning experience and increase the value of your degree.

Best Regards,