

# QA51 Programme and Module Closure Policy and Procedure

Policy and procedure for the closure of academic programmes and modules at Arden University.

Classification – *Internal*

JANUARY 2026



## Introduction

This document sets out Arden University's policy and procedure for formally closing programmes and modules that it offers. It has been developed to align with the regulations and expectations set out in the Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework, and to ensure compliance with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

1. This policy seeks to:
  - 1.1 Ensure that in the event of programme/module closure, all students are fully informed and provided with accurate information, advice, and guidance on the options available to them.
  - 1.2 Ensure that all students continue to have a high-quality experience throughout the programme closure and transition periods and have the opportunity to complete the programme they are enrolled on within a specified time period or be transferred to an appropriate programme.
  - 1.3 Ensure that all Arden University stakeholders, partner providers and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are consulted and have full knowledge of programme closures.

## About this policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with, amongst others:

- QA51A Request to Withdraw programme from Recruitment
- QA51B Programme Closure Action Plan
- QA51C Module Closure Action Plan
- QA51D Committee Reporting template

## Who is covered by the policy?

This policy applies to all programmes and modules at Arden University, including those delivered in partnership.

It is important to note that the CMA definition of student includes applicants, offer holders, and current enrolled students.

- An applicant is an individual who has applied or is in the process of applying to study on a Higher Education programme at Arden University.
- An offer holder is someone who has received an offer to study on a programme at Arden University.
- A current enrolled student is an individual who has completed enrolment and is actively studying on a programme.

## Definitions

- AB – Academic Board
- CMA - Competition and Markets Authority
- FAQC – Faculty Academic and Quality Committee
- HoS – Head of School
- HoD – Head of Department
- PMC – Portfolio Management Committee
- PTL – Programme Team Leader
- PSRB – Professional, Statutory, Regulatory Body
- SQSC – Students, Quality and Standards Committee
- OfS – Office for Students

## Policy responsibilities

- Academic Board has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with internal and external regulatory requirements. The Academic Framework, Regulation and Policy Committee has delegated authority from the Academic Board for the approval and ongoing review of this policy.
- The maintenance of quality and academic standards is the collective responsibility of all staff at Arden University, including those involved in the delivery of programmes through a partnership franchise of validation arrangement.
- The Quality and Registry Team, under the leadership of the Head of Quality and the Head of Registry Services, is responsible for developing and implementing this policy, monitoring its use and effectiveness, and the ongoing review of procedures to ensure they are effective. The Academic Registrar has strategic oversight.

- Specific responsibilities for Faculty Deans, Heads of School, Heads of Department, Programme Team Leaders and key stakeholders are outlined in this procedure.
- Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them understand this policy and how it applies to them and/or students.
- All colleagues are responsible for ensuring they understand this policy and how it applies to them and/or students.

## Policy Principles

2. Arden University may decide to formally close a programme for one or more of the following reasons:
  - 2.1 Decline in student numbers following a portfolio review by Arden University; or
  - 2.2 Insufficient demand for a programme to cover the cost of delivery; or
  - 2.3 Change in strategic priorities, at Arden University; or
  - 2.4 Changes in the external environment (e.g., PSRB requirements); or
  - 2.5 Replacement of programme due to revalidation; or
  - 2.6 The outcomes of a Substantive Programme Review indicate that a programme and/or module does not meet the required standards for ongoing approval; or
  - 2.7 Termination of a memorandum of agreement, termination for another reason of a collaborative provision arrangement which results in the closure of a programme; or
  - 2.8 Request from a partner where a programme/module is delivered as part of a partnership.
3. All recommendations for programmes and/or module closures must be considered and approved by the Portfolio Management Committee (or by Partnership Committee where a programme/module is delivered as part of a partnership).
4. Programme closures that include the withdrawal of an entire subject area will be a reportable event to the Office for Students. Further information can be found [here](#).

## Procedure

5. A programme closure should be proposed by the Head of School (or Centre for Academic Partnerships where a programme/module is delivered as part of a partnership) using the QA51A: Request to Withdraw Programmes from Recruitment form and signed by the Faculty Dean.
6. Where a programme is offered: in different modes of delivery (full-time; part-time; distance learning; or blended learning); delivered at different campuses; delivered as part of an apprenticeship; delivered with a foundation year; or delivered in a partnership. This must be made clear on the form.
7. Wherever possible, the decision to close a programme should be made in good time, ideally within 9 months, to prevent the possibility of applications and subsequent offers being made to prospective students. The recommended 9-month timescale is from the point of approval of the programme closure plan by the Portfolio Management Committee (or Partnership Committee). Where different timescales are required, these should be negotiated and agreed as part of the Portfolio Management Committee/Partnership Committee approval process. For example, where a programme is delivered as part of a dual award, a longer lead time of 12 months may be required to allow for in-country reapproval of a programme.

## **Consultation with University Departments**

8. It is essential that programme and/or module closure plans are discussed with other departments before being submitted for approval. This will ensure all possible implications for applicants, offer holders and current enrolled students have been considered and mitigated. All proposals must be discussed with:
  - 8.1 Marketing and Recruitment;
  - 8.2 Admissions;
  - 8.3 Registry and Quality;
  - 8.4 Academic Resources;
  - 8.5 Finance; and
  - 8.6 Student Success.
9. The following departments must be consulted if applicable to the proposal:
  - 9.1 Where a programme/module is shared, the relevant Head of School(s) must be consulted and sign the closure form;
  - 9.2 Where a programme/module is delivered as part of an apprenticeship, Corporate Learning must be consulted and sign the closure form;
  - 9.3 Where a programme/module is delivered as part of a partnership, the Head of Partnerships Operations and Development, Centre for Academic Partnerships (CAP), the Head of Quality (Partnerships),

- Registry and Quality, and the Legal team must be consulted for advice on the terminating clauses in the relevant agreement prior to communicating with the partner institution, students, and other stakeholders. This is to ensure the closure is conducted in line with the agreement and if the agreement will need to be regenerated, varied, or terminated. CAP must sign the closure form;
- 9.4 Where a programme is approved by overseas regulators for in-country delivery, the Head of Partnerships Operations and Development and Head of Quality (Partnerships) must be consulted;
- 9.5 Where a programme/module is professionally accredited/approved, the PSRB must be consulted. A central register is held by Registry of professionally accredited/approved programmes and modules;
- 9.6 Where a programme/module has current enrolled students/offer holders, or where the supplier and contractor terms and conditions are or may be affected, the Legal team must be consulted. The [Student Protection Plan](#) states that current enrolled students/offer holders should be given at least six weeks' notice of a change to the original offer, but legal advice must be sought in all cases; and
- 9.7 Where employee terms and conditions or service are affected or there are potential redundancies, the People Services Team must be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

### **Stages of Approval - Committee Review**

10. The programme/module closure request (QA51a) must be presented to the Students, Quality and Standards Committee (SQSC) for approval. This Committee will consider the University's contractual obligations with applicants, offer holders and current enrolled students and establish whether the closure is a reportable event to the Office for Students.
11. Once approved by the SQSC, the Faculty Dean will present proposal to the Portfolio Management Committee (or Partnership Committee where a programme/module is delivered as part of a partnership) for final approval to formally cease recruitment to the programme on behalf of the Arden University's Executive team. The Portfolio Management Committee will confirm the final date for recruitment for programmes being closed.

### **Internal Communications**

12. Once the programme closure has been approved, an email will be sent by the Secretary of the Portfolio Management Committee (or Partnership Committee where a programme/module is delivered as part of a partnership) to the below relevant departments to alert them to the decision and confirm the last intake date:
- 12.1 Owing Faculty Dean and Head of School (other Faculty Dean and Heads of School for shared programmes);

- 12.2 Marketing and Recruitment – to remove the programme from recruitment;
  - 12.3 Admissions – to update programme record to mark programme as 'out of use' across all channels. Work with Head of School on communication to offer holders (see next section);
  - 12.4 Registry Services – to update SITS and the PSRB database (where appropriate);
  - 12.5 Academic Resources – to ensure no teaching is timetabled/staffed for the programme;
  - 12.6 Head of Quality – to update Programme Portfolio Database and confirm arrangements for the ongoing quality assurance of the programme;
  - 12.7 Director of Corporate Learning (where appropriate, for apprenticeship programmes); and
  - 12.8 Head of Partnerships Operations and Development (CAP), Head of Quality (Partnerships) and Partnership Committee Secretary (where appropriate, for programmes delivered in partnership).
13. Receipt of the internal communication will initiate departments to commence tasks associated with programme closure, as detailed within QA51B Programme Closure Action Plan. The relevant Head of School or nominee will oversee the action plan and are responsible for ensuring that all tasks are completed within the required timeframe.
14. A list of programme and modules closures and associated paperwork will be maintained by the Secretary of the Portfolio Management Committee and reported annually to the Students, Quality and Standards Committee.

### **Consultation with current enrolled students**

15. In the event of programme closure, current enrolled students must be given the opportunity to complete their studies within an appropriate specified timeframe, and this should be supported by a comprehensive teach-out plan. Current enrolled students should be informed of the planned teach-out arrangements and should be assured that the quality of the learning experience will be maintained throughout this period.
16. Where the closure plans have implications for current enrolled students (including those on a Break-in-Learning), they must be consulted on the proposed arrangements and informed of any options available to them.
17. The consultation must be carried out by the Head of School or nominee, and include, where applicable:
  - 17.1 Confirmation that the students will have the opportunity to complete their programme, along with a clear timeline for completion.

- 17.2 Confirmation that the programme will still be offered but there may be some variation to the original offer e.g., choice of modules, but the overall educational aims of the programme will not be affected.
- 17.3 Confirmation of alternative programmes available to the student should they wish to transfer to another programme within the University or another institution.
18. The consultation must be offered to **all affected current enrolled students**, and may take place using one or more of the following methods:
- 18.1 Student Staff Discussion Forum (to include partner and CAP for partner delivery)
- 18.2 1-2-1 drop-in sessions with Head of School or Programme Team Leader
- 18.3 Messages via iLearn
- 18.4 Emailing students
19. The evidence of consultation must be documented, with a summary of any objections made by the students. The evidence must detail each affected student, the method of consultation used and the agreed outcome. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the key principles for effectively managing student completion for programmes and modules approved for closure.
20. The University is committed to providing all students with a high-quality education and student experience. However, there may be instances where students have legitimate concerns or complaints regarding their programme of study. In such cases, students should be directed to follow the guidance outlined in QA48 Student Complaints Procedure.

### **Communication with Offer Holders**

21. All communication with offer holders (including partner offer holders) must be managed through Admissions who will produce a report containing offer holder information. Offer holders should not be contacted until a closure form has been fully approved at university level by the Portfolio Management Committee (or Partnership Committee where a programme/module is delivered as part of a partnership). The relevant Head of School, with the support of Admissions, must agree the options available to each offer holder (e.g., transferring to another programme) before they are informed of the programme closure. Liaison with recruitment teams must take place to ensure agents are informed of the programme closure and the last intake date.

## **Ongoing monitoring – expectations of the owning School**

22. The programme must continue to be actively managed and subject to university requirements of module evaluation, annual monitoring and external examining and must therefore retain a Programme Team Leader for the duration of the programme, to ensure equity of experience for students on the programme is maintained.
23. The relevant Head of School or nominee must ensure that the QA 51B: Programme Closure Action Plan is developed for managing the process for programme closures.
24. To enable effective tracking of current enrolled students, the Registry Student Systems Team will provide SITS data to the Head of School or nominee during week seven of each teaching block (for both distance learning and blended learning delivery) to facilitate a review of each student's progress at programme and module level. For staff who are new to reviewing SITS data, the Registry Systems Team will arrange an initial meeting to explain the data report.
25. Student data should be regularly monitored with progress updates provided to the relevant Programme Committee(s) and Faculty Academic and Quality Committee (FAQC) using the agreed template (QA51D). Where applicable, the report presented to Programme Committee(s)/FAQC(s) will also be circulated by the Programme Committee/FAQC Secretary to the Head of Partnerships Operations and Development, CAP, and appropriate partner Link Tutors for monitoring active partner students.
26. An annual update should also be provided to the SQSC through the Annual Monitoring Review Process. An annual update on the status of all approved programme closures will be provided to the Portfolio Management Committee until all current enrolled students have left the programme.
27. Template QA 51C Module Closure Action Plan can be used to assist the Head of School or nominee create a schedule for module closures (where required). This allows for better resource management by setting a module diet based on modules still required for student completion and directing students to the available modules for timely programme completion (where possible).
28. Modules having students with a status of 'withdrawn – pending board' should continue to be monitored, working with the Appeals Team, until a final decision has been made, as a student may be permitted to return to the module or study a replacement module. Appeal outcomes are normally confirmed within 3 months.
29. The programme is fully closed once all current enrolled students have left the programme.

## **Appendix 1: Key Principles for Effectively Managing Student Completion for Programmes and Modules Approved for Closure**

The principles detailed in this document have been developed to support adherence to the University's Programme and Module Closure Policy and Procedure, which aligns with the regulations and expectations set out in the Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework, and to ensure compliance with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

The University must ensure that in the event of programme/module closure, all current enrolled students are fully informed and provided with accurate information, advice, and guidance on the options available to them. Also, that all current enrolled students continue to have a high-quality experience throughout the programme closure and transition periods and have the opportunity to complete the programme they are enrolled on within a specified time period or be transferred to an appropriate programme.

With this in mind, the following key principles and categories of student status have been created to support Heads of School or their nominee make consistent decisions regarding options for students studying programmes and modules on teach-out.

There are three overarching principles to be aware of:

- 1) Students who have started a level, cannot have their already generated module diet changed mid-level. Module diet updates to closing programmes can only be made for students who are due to start a new level and where they have decided not to transfer and they have accepted the new programme.
- 2) Where a student is trailing failures from a programme approved for closure, they will not be eligible to transfer to the new programme unless modules from the 'old' programme map directly to the 'new' programme at the same level.
- 3) Where programme mapping (same module code and name) from 'old' programme to 'new' programme is not possible, the student will need to stay on the 'old' programme as a student cannot be awarded a degree based on a transcript with a mix of modules from the 'old' and 'new' programmes.

The role of reviewing student lists against these principles will be that of the Head of School or nominee. Registry will provide relevant student data in week 7 of each semester, which the Head of School or nominee should review and propose transfers based on the categories below. Registry will then review the proposals and, if in line with these categories, will advise when transfers can be completed. It is the Head of School or nominee's responsibility to manage all communications with the students and save copies to the Student Notes app.

For staff new to reviewing SITS data, the Registry Systems Team will arrange an initial meeting to run through the student data report.

### **Student Category and Action Required:**

| <b>Category</b>   | <b>How to determine category</b>  | <b>Communications</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| 1) Final year student at dissertation stage having released dissertation module and have at least 12 months remaining in maximum registration period.                       | Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision. | Confirm to the student that they will have 12 months to complete the dissertation and complete their award.  |
| 2) Final year student at dissertation stage but have not yet released dissertation module and have at least 12 months remaining in maximum registration period.             | Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision. | Encourage the student to register for the dissertation module and confirm they will then have 12 months to complete the dissertation and complete their award. |
| 3) Final year student on track to complete full University award within remaining 'Periods of Registration' as detailed in the <a href="#">Arden Regulatory Framework</a> . | Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision. | Advise student of deadline to complete and desired module running order (based on student numbers), if applicable.   |
| 4) Final year student unable to complete within remaining 'Periods of Registration' as detailed in the <a href="#">Arden Regulatory Framework</a> .                         | Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision. | Advise student of deadline to complete, desired module running order (based on student numbers), if applicable, and detail achievable exit award.              |
| 5) Final year student with opportunity to complete within remaining 'Periods of Registration' as detailed in the  | Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision. | Advise student of deadline to complete, encourage timely completion and desired module running order (based on student numbers), if applicable.                |

| <a href="#">Arden Regulatory Framework.</a>  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>6) Students at the end of level 5, can be transferred to new level 6 programme, if they agree and have understood that if level 5 modules are RPL'd to new programme, their modules results will not be used in their final degree classification as they will only have RPL for these modules on their new programme.</p>  | <p>Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision.</p> | <p>Advise student of options available to them including the impact of RPL on their classification.</p> <p>If they choose to remain on the 'old' programme, advise student of deadline to complete, encourage timely completion and desired module running order (based on student numbers), if applicable.</p> |
| <p>7) Students at the end of Level 4, who agree to transfer, can be offered one of three ways to transfer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 4 modules on old and new programme match in title, module code and assessment the modules can be transferred to the new programme and the student can start level 5 on the new programme and leave with 1 certificate at the end of the degree.</li> <li>• Level 4 modules on old and new programme have different titles, Learning</li> </ul> | <p>Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision.</p> | <p>Working with Registry Systems Team, review each student record and advise the student of the options available to them.</p>  |

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| <p>Outcomes or assessments but the overall programme level outcomes map from the old programme to new. The student can be RPL'd for the credits to the new programme. The student can start level 5 on the new version of the programme and leave with 2 certificates, 1 for level 4 and 1 for the final award (levels 5 and 6).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The above principles can be mixed in approach and the student may be issued with a transcript for modules that do not map across.</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <p>8) Students at the end of level 3 (Foundation year), should be transferred to the new programme at L4.</p>  | <p>Check students' module results in e:Vision.</p>                             | <p>Confirm to the student that they will be transferred to the new programme to complete their degree.</p>   |
| <p>9) Students on a Break-in-Learning</p>  | <p>Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision.</p> | <p>Advise student of options available to them on return from a BIL, including the impact of RPL on their classification if studying at level 5.</p> <p>If they choose to remain on the 'old' programme, advise student of deadline to complete, encourage timely completion and desired</p> |

|             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
|             |   | <p>module running order (based on student numbers), if applicable</p> <p>Where a student does not return from a Break in Learning on the expected date and fail to inform the University, the Break-in-Learning Policy advises they will be deemed to have withdrawn and shall be presented for formal withdrawal at the next Progression and Awards Board.</p> |
| 10) Dormant | Check students' first registration date and module results in e:Vision. | Where a student is dormant for more than 12 months with no response to attempts to contact, the student should be presented for formal withdrawal at the next Progression and Awards Board.   |

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