

# Creating, Reviewing and Modifying Courses, Programmes and Qualifications Guidelines

<b>Last Modified</b>	April 2018
<b>Review Date</b>	July 2020
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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## Introduction

This document outlines the process to use to gain academic approval when creating, modifying or reviewing courses, programmes or qualifications at the University. Areas covered include adding or restricting a limitation of entry, cancellation of courses with low enrolments, special topics, as well as degree and regulation changes, use of the Minor Course Change System (MCCS), proposals requiring Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) approval and all types of reviews.

This document is expanded upon in “Procedures for creating, reviewing and modifying courses, programmes and qualifications”, informally known as [The Blue Book \(Blue Book intranet\) \(Staff Only\)](#). Further details and deadlines for the current year can be found via the [Academic Services Group \(ASG\) web pages \(University Academic Services website\)](#).

## Definitions

**Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)** – a committee of Universities New Zealand. Charged with considering academic matters across the university system.

**Minor Course Change System (MCCS)** – a web-based procedure used to make changes to existing courses within the University.

**Universities New Zealand (UNZ)** – the representative body for New Zealand’s eight universities. Formerly known as the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (NZVCC).

## Policy

### Approval of Academic Proposals and Other Changes

All new academic proposals will go through a process of peer review. Prior to their approval at College level, CUAP proposals will be circulated to fellow academics, professional bodies and other stakeholders for comment.

They will then be forwarded to the Academic Administration Committee (AAC), Academic Board and University Council (Council) for approval.

After completing these internal approval steps, CUAP proposals undergo a rigorous peer review process with the other New Zealand universities. Academic Managers are available to advise on all academic proposals. The Academic Quality Assurance Coordinator can discuss proposals and advise on CUAP requirements.

Minor changes processed through the MCCS will be approved by ASG and reported to the Academic Board. University of Canterbury degree and regulation changes will receive scrutiny from ASG prior to them being reported to Academic Board.

## Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to assist staff to

- make a change to an existing course or qualification (Sections 1–3 below);
- create a new course or subject major (Sections 4–5 below);
- prepare a proposal for a new programme or qualification (Section 6 below);
- discontinue a qualification or subject major (Section 7 below); and/or
- review a course, programme or qualification (Section 8 below).

### 1. Minor Course Change System (MCCS)

Approval of changes made through the [Minor Course Change System \(University Intranet MCCS Requester Home Page\) \(Staff only\)](#) is delegated to Deans. Once approved and verified by ASG, changes are added to the UC Student Management System (UCSMS). ASG reports these changes to the Academic Board.

Changes that should be processed using the MCCS include

- Changing a course description or course title;
- Changing the mode of delivery;
- Discontinuing a single course;
- Changing availability (i.e., offered/not offered);
- Changing prerequisites, co-requisites, restrictions or recommended preparation;

- Changing semester;
- Changing the total number of contact hours (lecture, laboratory and tutorial hours);
- Changing course EFTS weighting by less than 25% (changes the points);
- Changing course end date;
- Liberalising or removing a limitation of entry;
- Changing the minimum number of enrolments for a course to be offered;
- Changing the geographic site; and
- Changing the course occurrence code.

The MCCS will open each year in March, with a closing date set for ensuring that the changes are captured in order to schedule the teaching timetable for the following year, and for the publishing of the Course Catalogue.

Minor changes after the closing date may only be made on a limited basis until enrolment opens in early October. The proposer must include a justification for the change acceptable to the Academic Manager and ASG. Such changes will **not** be published in the University Calendar.

In exceptional circumstances minor changes may be approved after enrolment opens. These will only be displayed on the University course webpage. It is the proposer's responsibility to inform students of changes at this time and address consequential issues.

Exceptional circumstances include events that could not have possibly been foreseen, i.e. death, serious illness or sudden resignation of a staff member teaching the course and consequent changes that need to be implemented as a result of that event.

Staff wishing to use the MCCS should consult their Academic Manager for further advice.

## **2. Adding or Restricting a Limitation of Entry**

Departments/schools may sometimes need to limit the maximum number of students a course can cater for, or decrease an existing limit. This may be due to constraints on:

- Staff availability;
- Access to teaching facilities (e.g. lecture rooms, tutorial, laboratory, studio space, fieldwork or field placement requirements); and/or
- Availability of resources (e.g. limited access to library resources or computer facilities).

A new or more restrictive limitation of entry must be approved by the relevant College and reported to Academic Board by its July meeting in order to ensure the restrictions are implemented in the following year and are included in the University Calendar.

Liberalising an existing limitation can be completed through the MCCS.

### 3. Cancellation of Courses with Low Enrolments

Departments/schools may reserve the right to cancel an advertised course where

- The PVC has determined that enrolments in that course, completed by 5pm on the Wednesday prior to the week in which teaching commences, are insufficient, or
- Applications to enrol do meet the predetermined minimum but enrolments at the end of the week (5pm Friday) prior to the commencement of teaching in that course do not.

### 4. Special Topics

Special topics allow for new undergraduate or postgraduate courses to be developed at short notice. Named special topics can be offered for two years before having to be discontinued or converted to a continuing course.

Reasons to use a special topic designation include

- To provide for the interests of a new staff member;
- To enable a staff member to develop a one-off course, for example one offered by a visiting academic;
- To trial a new course; or
- To cope with unanticipated staff changes.

### 5. Degree and Regulation changes

These types of changes are internal to the University. They are endorsed at the College level and are then reported to Academic Board for approval on Section B of the agenda.

They include

- creating a new course (including summer school courses),
- creating a new Special Topic (including independent course of study),
- adding or further restricting a Limitation of Entry,
- co-coding a course offered by another institution,
- changing the EFTS weighting of a course by 25% or more (a new course proposal),
- adding an existing course to a different degree schedule, and
- creating, modifying or discontinuing a subject that is not a major.

They do not include CUAP proposals or minor course changes.

## 6. CUAP Proposals

CUAP was established under the auspices of [Universities New Zealand \(Universities New Zealand website\)](#), with one of its major functions being programme approval and accreditation. New Zealand's universities work in conjunction to create national standards and undertake peer review of all new proposals requiring CUAP approval.

The following types of proposals require CUAP approval:

- The introduction of a new academic qualification.
- The introduction of a new subject.
- The introduction of a new conjoint programme.
- Changes in the structure of a qualification, for example
  - Changes relating to the duration or credit/EFTS value of a programme;
  - Changes relating to the configuration of a programme affecting the programme structure, e.g. the balance between the levels of the courses, or the quantum of papers required for the major; and
  - Changes to the rules for progression within a programme.
- Changes to the entry requirements for a programme or to regulations relating to admission to a university.
- A change in the name of a qualification or subject.
- Transfer of credit, cross-crediting or exemption arrangements falling outside arrangements currently in place.

Prior to their submission to CUAP these types of proposals require internal approval from the appropriate College/s, the AAC, Academic Board and Council.

Staff wishing to prepare a CUAP proposal should consult their Academic Manager or the Academic Quality Assurance Coordinator, for further advice. This advice will include the development of a preliminary proposal, Early Warning Template, which needs approval before the proposal should be developed.

## 7. Adding a new PhD subject

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is offered in a wide range of subjects areas and from time-to-time a new subject area is proposed. The [New Doctoral Subject Proposals and Approvals – Policy and Procedures \(PDF, 124KB\)](#) should be consulted in this instance.

Proposals for any new PhD subjects require CUAP approval (even if the subject has been taught at undergraduate or Masters level). The proposal must be considered by the Postgraduate Committee and College before being sent to the AAC.

## **8. Discontinuation of a qualification or subject major**

Discontinuing an entire subject major or qualification requires consultation with students, and approval at departmental/school, College, and University levels. Discontinuations are reported to CUAP, they do not require CUAP approval.

When qualifications need to be discontinued, it is the responsibility of the Programme Coordinator to consult with students.

## **9. Reviews**

### **Courses**

The regular review of courses is the responsibility of departments/schools. Ideally, each course should be reviewed annually. Results of reviews should inform course or programme changes, and can be used to justify major changes. They also provide the basis for reviews of the curriculum, and the learning and teaching outcomes of qualifications or programmes.

### **Courses with low enrolments**

Courses with low enrolments are reviewed annually by Colleges and reported to the Senior Management Team (SMT).

Low enrolment courses are defined as

- 300 level and above having fewer than 1.25 EFTS (10 students for a 15 point course);
- 200 level courses having fewer than 2.5 EFTS (20 students for a 15 point course); and
- 100 level courses with fewer than 5 EFTS (40 students for a 15 point course).

### **Programmes**

All awards of the University, except higher doctorates, will be extensively reviewed at least once every five years to assess whether they meet expected international, national and University standards. Additional specific objectives may be included where necessary.

There are four types of review:

#### **i. Programme Reviews**

The purpose of a Programme Review is to confirm the integrity of a programme or qualification; to identify areas for change, improvement and areas of good practice; to ensure the qualification meets national and international standards for comparable

qualifications in the same or comparable disciplines; and to ensure (where appropriate) that the programme or qualification satisfies professional expectations. The key characteristic of a programme is that it is a group of courses which are connected and which exhibit a progressive sequence of study.

ii. Ad-hoc Reviews

Ad-hoc Reviews do not replace Programme Reviews, which are externally benchmarked to both national and international standard. They may be carried out as “mid-cycle” checks; when there have been academic changes made to a programme or qualification; or when other aspects need assessing (e.g. relevance or viability of a qualification). The Ad-hoc Review process is similar to that of the Graduating Year Review.

iii. Graduating Year Reviews

Within three years of the first cohort of students graduating from a new qualification or major subject, a Graduating Year Review (GYR) will be conducted to ensure that delivery of the qualification or major subject has met the goals of the original proposal. The completion of the GYR is a CUAP requirement and will be reported to it.

iv. Professional Accreditation Reviews

Some qualifications are closely associated with professional organisations outside the University and professional reviews are required in order to maintain the accreditation of a qualification. These organisations generally have their own systems for the review of qualifications in order to maintain accreditation.

When relevant, Programme Reviews may be conducted in conjunction with Professional Accreditation Reviews.

## Related Documents and Information

### Regulations

- [Admission Regulations: Limitation of Entry \(University Regulations website\)](#)

### UC Policy Library

- [Assessment Policy, Principles and Guidelines \(PDF, 267KB\)](#)
- [New Doctoral Subject Proposals and Approvals- Policy and Procedures \(PDF, 120KB\)](#)

### University Website and Intranet

- [Academic Services Group \(ASG\) web pages \(University Academic Services website\)](#)

- [Minor Course Change System \(University Intranet MCCS Requester Home Page\) \(Staff Only\)](#)
- [Special Topics Guidelines \(University Blue Book Intranet \) \(Staff only\)](#)
- [The Blue Book \(Blue Book intranet\) \(Staff only\)](#)

### External

- [Committee on University Academic Programmes \(CUAP\) \(Universities New Zealand website\)](#)
- [Universities New Zealand \(Universities New Zealand website\)](#)

### Templates [see [Templates](#) on the [Blue Book](#) website] (Staff Only)

- Template 1: CUAP Proposals, new qualification/subject
- Template 2: CUAP Proposals, qualification changes
- Template 3: UC Regulation changes
- Template 4: New Courses
- Template 5: CUAP Report: Deletions
- Template 6: CUAP Report: Graduating Year Review

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	Action	Approval Authority	Action Date
<i>For document history and versioning prior to 2013 contact <a href="mailto:ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz">ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz</a></i>			
1.00	Conversion of document onto new template. Updated hyperlinks.	Policy Unit	Sep 2013
1.01	A/A changed from Chair, Academic Board to DVC(A&I).	Policy Unit	Mar 2014
1.02	Hyperlinks updated; general formatting.	Policy Unit	Jun 2014
1.03	Review date pushed out.	Policy Unit	Sep 2014
1.04	Review date altered at request of C/O.	Policy Unit	Mar 2015
1.05	Contact Officer updated.	Policy Unit	Apr 2015
1.06	'Faculty' references changed to 'College' to reflect College-Faculty merger; scheduled review date moved to June 2017 to align with regulations review.	DVC(A)	Jun 2016
2.00	Scheduled review by CO, minor changes, change of AA to DVC and CO title change.	AVC(A)	April 2018