Higher Education Course Approval Policy

2021-24

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HIGHER EDUCATION
Course Approval Policy

1.0 Introduction

All new Higher Education programmes are subject to the CCCG HE Course Approval Policy that includes a cross Group Course Approval Panel. This Policy is to be read and used in conjunction with the CCCG HE Timelines for Course Approval.

The purposes of the HE Course Approval Policy are to:

- Ensure that all new HE courses are consistent with the Group's Strategic Plan and HE Strategy to aid the integration of academic and business considerations in an objective and strategic manner
- Ensure and maintain the continued high quality of CCCG's HE courses throughflexible and accessible processes for course approval and design that are proportionate to risk
- Ensure external feedback is used to inform fully course design and approval
- Give all staff, students and other participants appropriate information and guidance in planning and developing a course and in preparing for external validation
- Ensure definitive course documentation is produced to assist with compliance with external and legal expectations for public information e.g., CMA
- Provide a framework for course design, development and approvals that can be reviewed and enhanced to contribute to the enhancement of the CCCG HE provision
- Ensure that the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance for *Course Design and Development* is referenced in CCCG course approval policy andprocedures.

2.0 Scope

All Higher Education courses are subject to this policy. Higher Education for the purpose of this policy means both prescribed and non-prescribed provision. It covers new courses, revised courses, new pathways to existing courses, foundation years, new credit bearing awards including stand-alone units/modules or micro qualifications. Non-credit qualifications or modules at level 4 or above should be recorded at the central database that is overseen by Performance and Quality.

3.0 Timelines

It is not good practice nor desirable to attempt to have an HE programme be approved in January for September delivery. First, significant consultation with employers and externalexperts as well as staff and students should be a key part of the course design process according to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. This takes time to coordinate and feedback into the course content and design.

Secondly, recruitment to the new course may be considerably hampered by a lack of time foran effective marketing campaign to support it. In addition, tight turnarounds for public information on course content risks inaccuracies and omissions thereby breaching Competition and Markets Authority legislation.

Thirdly, access to student loans may be delayed by a course's late registration with theStudents Loans Company causing unnecessary financial hardship to eligible students.

Please refer to the CCCG HE Timelines for Course Approval for further guidance.

4.0 Procedure

The new programme approval process for higher education programmes consists of two stages: Initial Approval (stage 1) and Full Approval (stage 2).

4.1   STAGE 1: INITIAL APPROVAL

Initial Approval (stage 1) is integrated within the Group's current business and curriculum planning process and timetable. Please refer to the **HE Timelines for Course Approval [Appendix 1].**

The proposing Directorate will be required to produce a business case for the proposed HE course that outlines how the programme will support the Group's /College's strategic objectives using the **HE Course Approval Proposal Form. [Appendix 2].** The following information is required:

- Evidence of intelligence-led demand (approaches/ responses to employers, PSRBs, student voice etc and staff input)
- Outline of the proposed learning programme (including Awarding Organisation information)
- Marketing and recruitment plan
- Progression opportunities / plans
- Resource requirements (including appropriately qualified staffing and physical resources)
- Training and Development needs
- Projected income and expenditure (first 2 – 3 years only)

It is expected that all relevant internal departments (e.g. marketing, learning resources) and external stakeholders will be consulted for the completion of the HE Course Approval Template.

All proposals are considered at the College HE Committees and by the Group HE Strategy Board (HESB). A decision will be made whether to grant Initial Approval and this will be communicated to the relevant Assistant Principal and other relevant managers. To support this process, HE Course Approval Panel will be convened using the **HE Course Approval Panel Guidance [Appendix 3]**. The Course Approval Panel will confirm the outcome of the proposal with the Chair signing the Approval Panel Record [Appendix 3] which then will also be reported at the HESB.

4.2 STAGE TWO: FULL APPROVAL

4.2.1 Following Initial Approval, the relevant department will be required to gain Full Approval. For HEI programmes this will be achieved as part of the relevant awarding organisation's approval (validation) process. The HE Quality Enhancement Manager can provide academic managers with additional support during the approval process. A completed **HE Course Information Sheet (Appendix 4)** will be required by the Marketing Department to ensure CMA compliance.

4.2.2   **University validations:** University validation processes in particular, are complex, rigorous and time-bound. It can take at least a year to develop a new HE programme with a University as multiple revisions may be required within the timetable set by the University's course approval committee system.

4.2.3   **Other Awarding Organisations:**

Pearson validation for Higher Nationals: Full Approvals from Pearson can be a much faster process than from a University – approval taking only 6 weeks if 'off the shelf' modulesare selected. However, the same rigour must be applied to the business case in the completion of the HE Course Approval Form for the course to succeed at the HE Course Approval Panel and the subsequent production of course materials for review – see item 6.0.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) – these bodies have varying timelinesfor their course approval processes. The CCCG HE Course Approval processes will also apply.

5.0   Documentation required at Stage 2 will usually consist of:
- Programme Specification
- Programme Handbook
- Sample Assessment Material (e.g. assignment brief)
- Sample Assessment Schedule
- Full Curriculum plan
- Full staffing details including CVs

6.0 Once the Group has received notification of approval via the awarding organisation, the HE Curriculum & Quality Group (HE C&QG) will consider second stage Full Approval(definitive record checking).

7.0 Once Full Approval has been granted, the programme will be added to the Group's/ College's course file. In the exceptional circumstance that marketing information is published prior to Full Approval, all published information must state that the course is still 'subject to validation' with the permission of the University or Awarding Organisation.

Appendices

1.   **HE Timelines for Course Approval and the Flowchart**

2.   **HE Course Approval Proposal Form**

3.   **HE Course Approval Panel Guidance & Approval Panel Record**

4.   **HE Course Information Form (for Marketing Department)**

APPENDIX 1 HE Timelines for Course Approval and the Flowchart

1.   Introduction

All proposals for new Higher Education programmes are required to follow the HE Course Approval process that will include an Approval Panel. This document is to be read and used in conjunction with the CCCG HE Course Approval Policy.

2.   Timelines

All Appendices mentioned below are available online through SharePoint: P&Q: Higher Education: HE Course Approval

Stage 1 – INITIAL APPROVAL		
Activity		**Example Timing**
Initial Preparation **(Business Case focus for programmes with HEI partners as academic content will be scrutinised as part of HEI's own validation processes)** **(Initial preparation for Pearson /AOs includes Business case and Academic Content)**	Proposal originates – Proposer has initial discussions with Assistant Principal and other relevant staff, gets permission to take this further at HE Strategy Board. [This is likely to need to happen at least 9 months before the course is planned to first run. The Timelines give an indicative optimum schedule for an 18-month lead] **Completion of HE Course Approval Proposal Form** (Appendix 2) by the Proposer and teaching team must include input from external stakeholders/employers and students. Consults with HE Quality Enhancement Manager for Approval Panel date.	During Spring term to coincide with College budget meetings in Jan/Feb. Decision to proceed confirmed by HE Strategy Board in February. During Summer Term ready for Approval Panel in early autumn.

GROUP CONSULTATION: Panel Approval	**HE Course Approval Proposal Form** presented to Panel Approval for approval.	Approval Panel held in Autumn term in SEPT or early OCT. Read **HE Course Approval Panel Guidance (Appendix 3)** Paperwork received by Panel 7 days inadvance
	Any Panel recommendations or conditions must be fulfilled by the Proposer before proceeding.	
	Liaison begins with HEI/AO for validation timetable.	[All proposals for HE must be <u>considered and internally approved</u> by no later than end OCT for planned programme start for the subsequent academic year.]
	The programme cannot be advertised without the validating partner's written agreement TO PROCEED to validation and the completion and return of an **HE Course Information Sheet** to Marketing (Appendix 4).	
	Marketing may then advertise the programme as 'subject to validation'.	

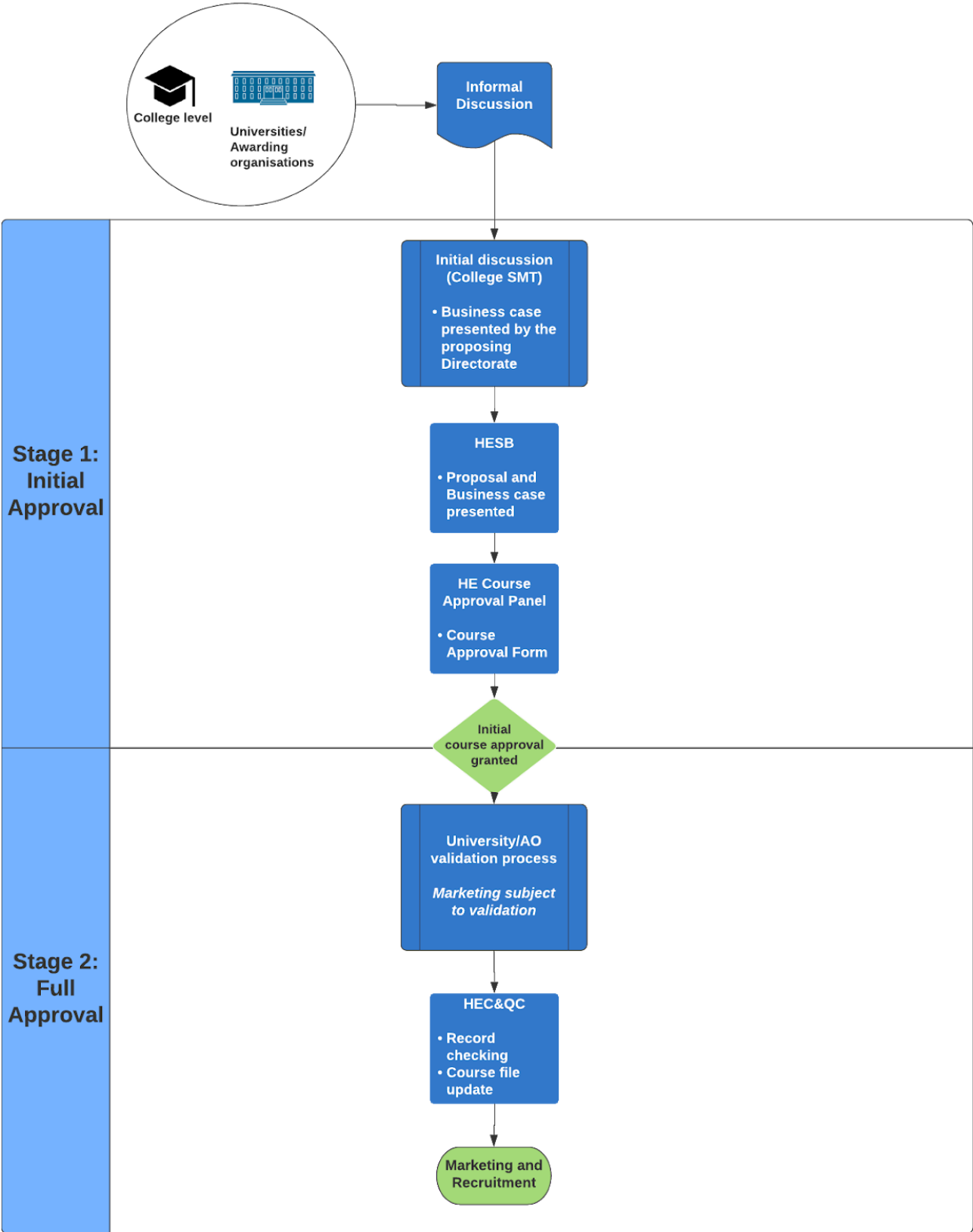| Stage 2 - FORMAL APPROVAL		
Activity		**Example Timing**
(Academic Content for HEIs)	Follow University or awarding bodies approval /validation timetable and process. The Performance & Quality Manager can provide academic managers with additional support during the approval process. Once the College has received notification of approval via the awarding organisation, the HE C&QG will consider second stage Full Approval	Nearest HE C&QG Meeting in the calendar [Definitive Record check]
Implementation	Academic managers should co-ordinate preparation for launch by liaison with: **a)** Marketing for accuracy of published information (definitive Programme Specification etc) following validation changes; **b)** other academic and resources staff to finalise content and prepare materials including Student Handbooks and INDUCTION activities to be checked; **c)** Registry (important for student loans company registration), Admissions and Exams for administrative support.	Across spring & summer, ahead of new academic year: Progress monitored in HE Committee meetings e.g. Programme Specification/Handbook checked before distribution
Launch	Programme runs with first intake of students in new academic year. Academic manager checks ILR for accuracy and liaises with Exams regularly for Registrations.	Either September, January, or February

Appendices
- HE Course Approval Proposal Form
- HE Course Approval Panel Guidance and Record
- HE Course Information Sheet

Glossary
- HE C&QG – HE Curriculum & Quality Group
- HEI – Higher Education Institution

The Flowchart of HE Course Approval process

College level

Universities/
Awarding
organisations

Informal
Discussion

**Stage 1:
Initial
Approval**

Initial discussion
(College SMT)

• Business case
presented by the
proposing
Directorate

HESB

• Proposal and
Business case
presented

HE Course
Approval Panel

• Course
Approval Form

Initial
course approval
granted

**Stage 2:
Full
Approval**

University/AO
validation process

*Marketing subject
to validation*

HEC&QC

• Record
checking
• Course file
update

Marketing and
Recruitment

APPENDIX 2 HE Course Approval Proposal Form

OVERVIEW

Submission Date			
Originator/College Contact			
Curriculum Team Area			
Awarding Organisation			
Partnership: New or Existing to CCCG?			
Is Institutional Approval (IA) required?			
Awarding OrganisationContact / Link Tutor & Collaborating Faculty			
Named Entry award(s) i.e.,what do students enrol onto?	**Award e.g.,BSc, FdA, HNC,**	**Programme Title e.g., Marketing**	
Named Exit award(s) i.e.,what <u>named</u> awards canstudents exit with?			
Type of collaborative programme	Please tick box as appropriate		
	Franchised		
	Joint		
	Validated		

Please limit each answer below to 1- 2 paragraphs

1. Rationale for why the programme is being developed [strong evidence of intelligence-led demand and strategic alignment]
2. Target audience & Entry requirements
3. External Consultation (Employers, Students, PSRBs, sector specialists etc)
4. Marketing and Recruitment Plan (include internal progression activities)
5. Evidence of progression opportunities post-graduation
6. Delivery method – please confirm if the programme runs via Distance or Blended delivery
7. Additional material resources required (e.g. software, academic journals)

8. Staffing and Training & Development needs

9. Projected Income and Expenditure (first 2 – 3 years) (costs set againstincome)

Programme Information *(to be also completed for micro-qualifications or stand-alone units)*					
a) Study Mode(s) (FT/PT/Day Release) (and Programme Title if more than one)	b) Length of Programme (please ensure all study modes are listed)	c) Date of first/next intake and term(s) of intake e.g., Autumn 2022/23	d) Other intakes (please specify)	e) Study site(s) for each programme	
f) Does this programme replace any other programmes?					
g) If yes to the above question, the proposer confirms that all affected students wereconsulted and agree to this change. *(Please refer to the Student Protection Plan)*					
h) What is the intended Validation schedule? *(Provide milestone Dates)*					
i) Location of Awarding Organisation Validation event					
j) Combined IA visit?	Yes/No				
k) Is this a joint (Re-) Accreditation event with a PSRB? Pleaseprovide details and contact information					
l) Are Articulation Agreements involved?	If yes, for top-ups, will a new/existing Articulation Agreement beinvolved?				

Module information								
[Ensure that the rules of combination are correctly interpreted for Higher Nationals]								
Module Title	**Module Code**	**FHEQ Level**	**Year of Study e.g., Yr 1, Yr 2**	**Compulsory or optional**	**Credit value**	**Will this module be considered at this event?**	**New module**	**Study site**
Add additional rows where needed								

a) If any of these modules are shared with other programmes, please indicate which modules and programmes by completing the following:			
Programme code	**Programme title**	**Module code**	**Module title**

Please include a diagram of the programme structure for *all* modes of study e.g. FT and PT including placements *(not applicable for stand-alone units)*	
a) Total credits required for the programme by Level	
Total credits Level 4	
Total credits Level 5	
Total credits Level 6	
Total credits Level 7	

b) Total credits required for the programme by year	
Total credits Year 1	

Total credits Year 2	
Total credits Year 3	
Total credits Year 4	

Resources	
a) Are any additional resources required at the CCCG? If yes, please specify e.g., additional teaching resources	
b) Do you wish to recruit international (non-EEA) students? NB: If yes, this must be considered and approved by the Awarding Organisation - please provide details of your current Tier 4 sponsorship status to Academic Partnerships.	
c) Please confirm that CCCG has SLC (Student Loan Company) approval.	

HECoS code(s) – (*consult with MIS colleagues*)		
	Code	% split
Principal HECoS code		
HECoS code 2		

*HECos codes indicate the subject(s) of study. These replace the JACS codes from Autumn 2019. Where the programme covers more than one subject give the HECoS code for each area and indicate the split between the HECoS codes. Guides and a full list is available at: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos

Target numbers for each programme			
a) Insert Year 1 *Target* Student numbers for next 6 years *for each programme.*	**Academic Year**	**Student numbers - FT**	**Student numbers - PT**
	2022-23		
	2023-24		
	2024-25		
	2025-26		
	2026-27		
	2027-28		

Regulations	
a) Confirm what academic regulations will apply for the proposed course. It is expected that the Group will normally adopt a university's or Awarding Organisation's regulations for academic misconduct and also for taught programmes. This information must be included in the Programme Specification.	

SIGNATURES		
Title	**Name**	**Signature**
Assistant Principal with HE responsibilities at the College		
Assistant Principal from the proposing Directorate		
Head of School from the proposing Directorate		

APPENDIX 3   CCCCG HE Course Approval Panel Guidance & Panel Record

SECTION 1

1.0 Introduction
The CCCG HE Course Approval Policy and the CCCG HE Timelines for Course Approvals

The HE course approval process for higher education programmes at CCCG consists of two stages: Initial Approval (stage 1) and Full Approval (stage 2). The HE Course Approval Panel supports the Initial Approval (Stage 1) of the process.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of the CCCG HE Course Approval Panel (stage 1) is to ensure the:

- sound rationale for offering the course, for example in terms of student and employer demand
- course(s) are compatible with the existing curriculum portfolio
- courses are financially viable
- alignment with the Group's strategic plans (including partnership arrangements)
- provision of a high quality HE experience, ensuring that students are provided with learning opportunities of an appropriate quality
- appropriateness of staffing and resourcing levels
- external subject expert(s) are able to contribute advice on the course(s)
- Approval and recommendations rest with this Panel

The areas explored during the Approval Panel consideration are set out in **Section 2**. Guidance questions for the Panel are set out in **Section 3.**

3.0   Membership

Panel members are invited to ensure a cross Group approach and sufficient oversight and experience of the delivery of Higher Education to engage fully and impartially with the course approval process. The Chair is the Vice Principal with Group HE responsibilities or a delegated manager.

Reviews will be conducted by a panel comprising:

- Vice Principal with Group HE responsibility (Chair)
- Director of Group Quality and Compliance
- Director of Marketing and Communications
- Assistant Principals with HE responsibility
- Assistant Principal and/or Head of School outside the proposed course curriculum area
- HE Quality Enhancement Manager
- Head of Teaching and Learning (from relevant College)
- Learning Resources: Director Learner Services (WKC), Assistant Director Student Services (CANDI), Head of Learner Support (CONEL)
- Class Reps (independent and/or from the School)
- PA/Minute taker

Assistant Principal and/or Head of School for the area of the curriculum for the course (to present the proposals)

4.0   Procedure

Initial Approval (stage 1) is normally integrated within the Group's business and curriculum planning process and timetable. The proposing Directorate is required to produce a business case for the

proposed HE programme that outlines how the programme will support the Group's /College's strategic objectives using the **HE Course Approval HE Course Proposal Form.** The form must be signed by the relevant Assistant Principal and HoS for confirmation.

The HE Course Approval Panel will consider the course proposals and make the decision whether to grant initial approval, including any conditions and/or recommendations. The considerations may take place through paper circulation or in a meeting. The considerations will be noted in the **HE Course Approval Panel Record** [Appendix 3] and signed by the Chair of the Panel. The decision will be communicated to the relevant Assistant Principal, other relevant managers and reported to the next HESB and Group SMT meeting. The signed HE Course Approval Panel Record (as PDF) will be returned to the HE Quality Enhancement Manager for upload to SharePoint – HE – Course Approval.

SECTION 2

The Panel is asked to consider the following in granting Initial Approval:
- Evidence of intelligence-led demand (approaches/ responses to employers, PSRBs, student voice and staff input)
- Outline of the proposed learning programme (including Awarding Organisation information) *
- Marketing and recruitment plan (including internal progression
- Progression opportunities / plans
- Resource requirements (including appropriately qualified staffing)
- Training and Development needs
- Projected income and expenditure (first 2 – 3 years only)

***University Validations:** The HE Course Approval Panel will not consider compliancewith the University's academic regulations etc. These will be considered in Stage 2- Full Approval as part of the HEI's own validation processes.

***Higher Nationals:** The HE Course Approval Panel will consider compliance with theAwarding Organisation's rules of combination with justification for modules chosen.

SECTION 3

Guidance for the Panel
The Approval Panel aim is to reach a consensus on the proposed course using constructive questioning and considerations. The questions below are **indicative** only to support this process.

1.   Rationale and Market Demand

➢ Is the course compatible with Capital City College Group Strategy including strategic partnerships e.g. with Middlesex University?
➢ Is the course compatible with the current curriculum offer and Curriculum Strategy?
➢ Will it compete with current courses for applicants?
➢ Is there market demand for the course?
  - From students?
  - From employers?
  - What is the marketing / recruitment strategy?

➢ *Projected income and expenditure (first 2 – 3 years only)*
➢ Have student entry profiles been considered? (Do they need higher level maths skills for example?)
➢ What progression pathways are planned for?
➢ Do the courses enable students to acquire skills and knowledge which will be of useto

them in their future careers?

➢ Will graduates be able to gain relevant employment?

2. Course Design

➢ How has the course been designed to reflect major developments in the discipline?
➢ How have student and employer demand impacted upon the curriculum?
➢ How have employers/industry experts been involved in the development of the course(s) and what impact has this had?
➢ Does course design take due regard for issues of equality and diversity?
➢ Does the course design correlate to the Awarding Organisation rules of combination?

3. Curriculum Outline

➢ Is the curriculum content appropriate to each stage of the course, and to the level of the award?
➢ Is each course balanced, for example in terms of academic and practical elements and the breadth and depth of the curriculum?
➢ Is there a balance and integration between employment related skills and academic study?

4. Assessment

➢ Is there an Assessment Strategy in place to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?
➢ What innovations in assessment methods are proposed?
➢ Is the Assessment Strategy adequately responsive to the varying needs of students (e.g. disability)?
➢ For courses embedding work-based or work-related learning:
    − If employers are involved in the assessment of students, how will they work with academic staff?

5. Learning and Teaching

➢ Is there a Teaching and Learning Strategy in place to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?
➢ Is there a suitable variety of teaching and learning methods to meet the needs of a diverse range of students, including those with disabilities?
➢ How will staff draw upon their research, scholarship or professional activity to inform their teaching?

6. Work-based learning (WBL)

➢ Are the arrangements for the management and supervision of workplace learning systematic and clear?
➢ Are mentors and employer representatives supported in understanding their roles and responsibilities (including assessment if relevant)?
➢ Are Learning Agreements in place to define the specific outcomes intended for the workplace learning, the responsibilities of the employers, students, mentors and academic tutors?
➢ Are appropriate checks in place to ensure the work-based learning/placement provider provides the learning opportunities necessary for the student to meet the intended learning outcomes?
➢ Does the WBL/placement provider give appropriate support to students during their placement?

➢ Is it clear who is responsible for WBL assessment, and is assessmentappropriate?
➢ How do you know that members of staff and employers understand and have consideration of their responsivities under health & safety legislation?

Learning resources

➢ Are the learning materials relevant, sufficient, and readily available (e.g. library resources, reading lists; hard copy or web-based learning materials, VLE and IT facilities)? <u>Have these been fully</u> <u>costed if not yet available?</u>
➢ Is suitable learning and teaching accommodation available? ☐ Isadditional specialist equipment required?

7. Staffing

- Are the existing staff proposed for teaching on the course appropriately qualifiedand experienced?
- Is appropriate technical and administrative support available?
- Are any additional staff appointments required to enable the course to bedelivered effectively?
- Are adequate staff development opportunities available to support staff in termsof their professional development? Are there adequate opportunities for scholarly activity?
- Do the overall staffing arrangements suggest that sufficient expertise will beavailable for the effective delivery of the intended curriculum, for the overall teaching, learning and assessment strategy, and for the achievement of thelearning outcomes?
- Where employers are contributing to the delivery of the course, how are these contributions designed and integrated?

HE Course Approval Panel Record

A. Group HE Course Approval Panel	
Date of panel	
Programme(s)	
Submitting tutor(s)	
Curriculum Area	
Panel members	
Chair	
AP for HE	
Director of Group Quality and Compliance	
Teaching & Learning	
Learning Resources	
Marketing and Communications	
HoS	
HE Quality	
Class Representative	
Proposing Managers	
AP	
HoS	

Key points of discussion:

Panel decision and outcome: Conditional approval/Unconditional approval/Not approved

Reasons for the panel decision (indicate conditions, recommendations or reasons for non-approval)

Date(s) for conditions to be met *(if applicable, see panels outcome section)*:

B. SIGNATURES – Final confirmation and sign off by the Panel Chair			
Unconditional Approval			
Chair	**Name:**	**Signature:**	**Date:**
Conditional Approval – Further actions required			
Condition /Actions:			**Deadline:**
Indicate conditions/actions			
Chair:	**Name:**	**Signature:**	**Date:**
Not approved			
Chair	**Name:**	**Signature**	**Date:**

Panel outcome will be reported to the HE Strategy Board and Group SMT.
Signed forms as PDF to be returned to HE Quality Enhancement Manager for upload to SharePoint – HE – Course Approvals

MARKETING COURSE INFORMATION LEAFLET TEMPLATE

Please complete the following information and return to the Head of Digital Marketing and Brand and website@capitalccg.ac.uk after you have received your course code (excluding apprenticeships and free short courses) from MIS.

Information should follow the college's tone of voice, talking to the applicant in first-person ('you will' and 'you can' and 'this course will give you' rather than 'learners can' or 'students will') – please remember to keep information succinct, relevant and exciting

College:

Course Code:

Course Title:

Exam Board/Ofqual Code:

Who is the course for?
☐ School Leavers (16-18)   ☐ Adults   ☐ International

When does the course run?
e.g. This course is run in the evening/This course is taught over 2 days per week

ABOUT THE COURSE

Please supply an overview of the course:

COURSE DETAILS – WHAT WILL I STUDY?

Please supply a detailed breakdown of the course, including units:

Topics covered can include:
-

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS – WHAT WILL I NEED?

Please supply a detailed breakdown of the entry requirements for this course:

You will need:

-

All applicants must have an assessment and interview to confirm that the course is suitable for them.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

Please tell us how the course is assessed, e.g. Each unit is assessed using a combination of course work and examination: