

## **Amending and Cancelling Programmes of Study**

### **1.0 Introduction and background**

- 1.1 The University promotes various programmes of study to prospective students. The nature of these programmes of study are important to prospective students in making decisions on whether to apply to the University and to which programme.
- 1.2 Once an offer has been made to and accepted by an applicant, they have signed up to study a certain programme at the University. As such, varying substantially or cancelling that programme after that point can only be done in defined circumstances. The same is true once students are enrolled on, and studying, a programme.
- 1.3 This policy seeks to ensure that the University can make appropriate variations to programmes of study in an effective and efficient manner whilst also ensuring that the rights of those holding an offer or studying on that programme are protected.
- 1.4 This policy aligns with the University's Change of Approval process, which is the mechanism through which changes to existing programmes of study are approved. It is also delivered in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the University Modular Framework, which provide an institutional framework for programme and assessment design and delivery.

### **2.0 Purpose and scope**

- 2.1 To identify the circumstances in which programmes of study can be varied substantially or cancelled.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all programmes of study which lead to an award of the University of Northampton, including those delivered via Partner institutions under the various types of arrangement (including Validation Service).

### **3.0 Definitions**

- 3.1 Substantial variation: a change to a programme of study for those holding an offer/studying on the programme that alters:
  - Award title
  - Award level
  - PSRB recognition or accreditation
  - Fees/additional mandatory costs associated with completion of the programme

- Location of study
- Length of study
- List of compulsory modules
- Focus of compulsory modules
- Assessment strategy of the programme in question
- Mandatory placement opportunities
- Major changes to the range or number of designated modules that are included in the final degree classification

#### **4.0 Key principles**

4.1 The University is committed to delivering approved programmes of study that it has communicated as active to prospective students and offer holders. As a result, it will endeavour not to vary those programmes substantially, nor to cease their delivery, once those programmes have people holding an offer and/or have students studying those programmes.

4.2 Notwithstanding this, there are situations in which the University may need to vary programmes substantially or cease their delivery once those programmes have people holding an offer and/or students studying those programmes.

4.3 The University may need to vary a current programme substantially:

- Where an unexpected change of staff means that the compulsory components of the programme can no longer be delivered due to the loss of subject expertise
- Where feedback from stakeholders, including offer holders, students, external examiners or PSRBs, identifies matters that need to be resolved through changes to the current programme because they will lead to an enhanced student experience or a more appropriate curricular offer.
- Where the PSRB accrediting a programme (where relevant) requires changes to be made due to statutory or other obligations.
- Where events or changes in the external environment require immediate changes to the curriculum in order to remain relevant.

4.4 When there is a proposal to vary a current programme substantially:

- Those holding an offer, but not yet studying the programme, will be provided with information on the changes and a rationale for those changes. The offer holders will then be able to choose whether to accept those changes, by enrolling on the programme at the appropriate time, or reject their offer with the University.
- Academic staff must engage current students actively in discussions on those changes and provide evidence of student awareness of, and views on, the proposed changes. The University will expect reasonable

efforts to be made to engage with current students in order to ensure consultation has been meaningful.

4.5 The University may cancel a programme in the following situations:

- The University may cancel a programme intake which does not recruit sufficient numbers to make delivery financially viable. Where there is a requirement to take this action the University will cancel the intake and communicate with offer holders prior to the expected start date. Where possible an alternative intake or alternative programme will be offered. The timeframes within which this decision will be made and communicated will take account of the market for that programme and the environment in which that programme operates.
- The University will not normally stop running the stages of programmes on which current students are still studying according to the standard progression of students through the programme (e.g. 3 years for the standard UG programme), although recruitment may be withdrawn for new cohorts of students. Where recruitment to a programme is withdrawn for new cohorts of students, current students will be made aware of this and the final year of the delivery of the programme. There may be situations where one or more students are taking longer than the standard period of study for a programme and where recruitment has been withdrawn for new cohorts of students. Where this means that stages or components of that programme are no longer available to those students, alternative options will be discussed with those students to support them in completing a programme of study with the University.

4.6 External factors that cause immense disruption, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, may create circumstances where adjustments to some teaching, learning and assessment delivery outside the timeframes set out in this policy are required.

Where this occurs, the principles of this policy will continue to be met, even where timeframes may need to be managed differently. Any adjustments will be documented via emergency documentation, for example Institutional Statements, Emergency Protocols and Emergency Academic and Student Regulations, and via the use of the Change of Approval process where necessary.

Assessment against and achievement of approved and published Module and Programme Learning Outcomes, including any Learning Outcomes and associated supplementary regulations mandated by Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Bodies, will remain the cornerstone of the University's approach to the delivery of its provision and the award of credit.

## 5.0 Key responsibilities

5.1 Offer Holder/Student – respond to request for approval of any substantial changes

- 5.2 Marketing – communicate with offer holders about substantial changes/programme cancellations
- 5.3 Admissions – work with Marketing on communications to offer holders about substantial changes/programme cancellations
- 5.4 APO – engage with Partner institutions to ensure compliance with this policy
- 5.5 Quality Unit – oversee the revalidation and change of approval processes that can result in substantial changes to programmes being approved.
- 5.6 Module and Programme Leaders – liaise with current students to gain their approval of substantial changes to current programmes; ensure changes to current programmes are proposed and managed within the timeframes set out by the Change of Approval Handbook.

## **6.0 Links to related UN Policies/Guidance/Regulations**

- 6.1 Change of Approval Handbook

## **7.0 Links to related external documents (e.g. QAA)**

- 7.1 Competition and Markets Authority – UK Higher Education Providers: Advice on Consumer Protection Law  
([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/428549/HE\\_providers\\_-\\_advice\\_on\\_consumer\\_protection\\_law.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf))

## **8.0 Appendices**

- 8.1 Summary sheet

### **Summary Sheet:**

<b>Policy Title:</b>
Amending and Cancelling Programmes of Study
<b>Purpose of Policy and to whom it applies (please specify cohorts):</b>
To clarify when programmes of study can be amended or cancelled, either prior to the start of that programme or whilst that programme is running
<b>Owner and Department:</b>
Julie Martin, Academic Registry
<b>Principal contact:</b>
Julie Martin and Gillian Simpson
<b>Dissemination and implementation plan:</b>
Via SSECs and SEC

Amending and Cancelling Programmes of Study

<b>Date of initial committee approval (state committee name):</b>	SEC, November 2016
<b>Date of Senate approval:</b>	Senate, February 2017
<b>Date for implementation and cohorts to which it applies:</b>	From September 2017, all cohorts
<b>Proposed date of annual update:</b>	June 2022
<b>Date of last annual update:</b>	June 2023
<b>Proposed date of full review:</b>	June 2024
<b>Date of last full review:</b>	n/a
<b>Version number and date:</b>	2.0 June 2020