

## A good practice guide - Programme Development

As well as seeking advice and support from colleagues with experience of programme design and development, there is further information and guidance available from the Arena Centre and Digital Education. The following key questions should also help in the development of proposals for Outline and Final Approval through UCL's approval process.

- A. What are the distinctive features of the programme?** At Outline and Final Approval, proposers must make the case to their Department and Faculty, and eventually to UCL for the development of the programme. The case should be compelling, for example through direct links to research. The rationale should also explain how the new programme fits within local and institutional strategy – why this programme? And why now?
- B. What are the aims of the programme for its students?** As part of approval, proposers will need to develop the materials which will be used by staff managing the programme, by prospective students, and by students on the programme. It is essential to articulate what the learning outcomes will be – what will a student be expected to know or be able to do after completing the programme? Learning outcomes should be easily understandable by non-specialist audiences.
- C. Does the structure of the programme enable students to succeed?** Proposers will need to consider both individual modules and the structure of the programme as a whole. For example, thought will need to be given to the mix of assessment methods and the volume of assessment. Students should also be able to progress through the programme, for example by developing research skills in modules before undertaking an extended piece of independent research. Components of the programme should link together including routes through the award.
- D. Is the programme viable?** Proposers will need to give consideration to how likely the programme is to attract students, what numbers of students will make the programme intellectually and financially successful and what the resources required to deliver the programme will be. Only programmes agreed by the Faculty with the Planning Team will be approved, and the Faculty Dean, as well as the School Finance Director, will need to sign off the business case.
- E. Is there a market for the programme?** In the process of developing the business case, proposers should consult the good practice guide for market research. It is essential to consider both internal competition as well as external – will the new programme take away students from other UCL programmes?
- F. Are the entry requirements suitable?** UCL has standard entry requirements. Proposers should give thought to whether there are any variations required to these, for example a specialist numerical or language skill. For Masters programmes, it is particularly important to consider what

specialist knowledge/skills/experience are required to undertake the programme, for example would professional rather than academic experience be acceptable? Examples of Professional experience required should be provided.

- G. Have external reference points been taken into account?** Good practice in programme development means considering both rival offers as part of the market research and drawing upon external academic and non-academic expertise. All programmes need to have comment from an External Scrutineer. Programme proposers should consider whether they can also obtain useful input from other external sources such as employers, potential future students or alumni from other programmes. Where a programme has a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) then its needs will need to be taken into account, for example in learning outcomes. Proposers should also look at Subject Benchmark Statements and Qualification Descriptors.
- H. Have internal reference points been taken into account?** UCL's Academic Manual contains the relevant information on the regulations and policies which apply to programmes. Chapter 3 of the Academic Manual explains the process for the approval and amendment of programmes and modules.
- I. What partnerships are involved?** Where there is a cross-UCL component of a programme, for example borrowing modules from another Faculty, it is essential to provide formal confirmation that this option will be available to students. Where partnership working is envisaged outside UCL then there is a suite of additional information required: in this case it is essential that advice is sought early to ensure that all the partnership due diligence can be completed in full. Contact the UCL Senior Policy Advisor (Academic Partnerships) for further advice and guidance.
- J. Where Study Abroad is involved?** Where there is an element of study abroad proposed in the programme, proposers will need to evidence that the UCL Study Abroad team has been consulted and advice sought.
- K. Where Placement or time spent in Industry is involved?** Where there is a placement and/or time spent in Industry as an element of the proposed programme, proposers will need to evidence that the UCL Careers team has been consulted and advice sought.