

UCL STUDENT AND REGISTRY SERVICES
Academic Policy and Quality Assurance



UCL

Programme Development

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1) A good practice guide – Programme Development

As well as seeking advice and support from colleagues, support for programme design and development is available from the Programme Development team in the Arena Centre¹. The following key questions should also help in the development of proposals for Programme Approval through UCL's approval process.

- A. What are the distinctive features of the programme?** 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 is the vision?** As part of approval, proposers will need to align the educational approach, learning outcomes, assessments and resources to meet a clearly articulated vision for the programme. It is essential to articulate what the programme learning outcomes will be - what will a student be expected to know and be able to do after completing the programme? Learning outcomes should be easily understandable by non-specialist audiences².
- C. Does the structure of the programme enable students to succeed?** Proposers will need to consider how individual modules build and connect within the structure of the programme to produce a coherent whole. For example, how will individual module learning outcomes align to the programme level learning outcomes? How much choice can be offered which still maintaining programme and degree coherence? Attention should be given to how skills and knowledge are developed so that students can progress, for example by developing research skills in modules before undertaking an extended piece of independent research. UCL's student assessment load model³ provides guidance for assessment consistency. Components of the programme should link together including routes through the award.
- D. Is the programme viable?** Proposers will need to consider 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. If programme teams are at an early stage, the participants will develop the initial feedback received from early stages of the new programme development from Finance

¹ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/teaching-resources/designing-programme-or-module/programme-design-workshop>

² It is intended to offer a toolkit for writing programme and module learning outcomes in 2022-23

³ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/assessment-resources/ucl-assessment-load-model>

(Annex 7.2.1 Business case) as well as (Annex 7.2.2 Market Research) and further develop the educational strategy for their new programme proposals.

- 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 should take account of the market research, including information about rival programmes offered elsewhere, and draw 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 7 Part B 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 Placement Pack has been considered and completed.

L. Where a Level 7 Masters Apprenticeship is involved? Where there is a Level 7 Masters Apprenticeship proposed in the programme, proposers will need to see the advice of the UCL Apprenticeships Steering Group and evidence that the Group has endorsed and advised on the programme prior to submission to PMAP for approval .

2) New Programme and Module Development Workshop by Arena Centre

Workshop Description

The Programme Development Team in UCL's Arena Centre offers workshops for UCL staff who are developing new programmes and modules. These can include partnership with student quality reviewers. Whilst workshops can be taken at any stage in the development process, it is preferable to engage early. Representatives from UCL Careers can be involved to assist participants to delve deeper into employability and careers development.

The workshops are aligned to the development of PMAP documentation and will bring out key marketing messages that can be used to develop the marketing plan, along with the market research findings.

First session topics

1. Articulating the vision for the programme
2. Exploring critical characteristics of the initial design
3. Articulating programme learning outcomes

Second session topics (tailored to the outcomes of the first session)

1. Mapping modules against programme-level outcomes
2. Visualizing aspects of teaching and assessment strategy
3. Considering barriers to implementation
4. Sense-making with students

Completion

1. By the end of the workshops, programme teams will be able to complete all necessary documentation to proceed to PMAP.