



# UCFB\*

## Course Accreditation, Approval, Revalidation and Modification (CARM) Strategic Approval Policy

|                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Owner:</b>                | Head of Academic Quality  |
| <b>Author:</b>               | Head of Academic Quality  |
| <b>Version Number:</b>       | 1.1                       |
| <b>Approved Date:</b>        | 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 |
| <b>Approved By:</b>          | Academic Board            |
| <b>Date of Commencement:</b> | 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 |
| <b>Date of Last Review:</b>  | April 2024                |
| <b>Date for Next Review:</b> | September 2025            |

\*UCFB is a trading name of University Campus of Football Business Limited

## 1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This Policy applies to all course accreditation, approval, revalidation, and (major and minor) modification (CARM) activity and the student experience of all students enrolled on undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses.
- 1.2 This Policy aims to be proportionate, evidence-driven, and peer-led and is informed by the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#). CARM proposals should be evidence-based with reference to external sector reference points and supported by appropriate external independent scrutiny. Decision-making processes should be risk-based, proportionate and empower academic schools. Our approach must be agile and efficient, while assuring coherence of our portfolio and the quality and standards of our provision.
- 1.3 There is a two-stage approval process for CARM proposals: Strategic Approval and Academic Approval. The awarding institution has strategic responsibility for setting and overseeing their academic partnerships portfolio, hence the involvement of UEL in strategic review.
- 1.4 Strategic Approval is the consideration of the financial and business case for a proposal and its alignment with both the [UCFB Institutional Strategy 2025](#) and the [UEL Vision 2028](#). Academic Approval is the consideration of the overall academic coherence; the quality of the curricula, and its associated teaching, learning and assessment; opportunities for enhancement; and the UEL host School's capacity to manage its responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement will also be considered in accordance with the [Quality Manual, Part 11: Collaboration with Other Institutions](#).
- 1.5 The information gathered, tested and affirmed through the CARM process informs a range of core UCFB business processes, including:
  - Strategic planning and portfolio management;
  - Recruitment and admissions;
  - Marketing and promotion;
  - Set-up and management of the operational curriculum; and
  - Quality assurance and enhancement.

## 2. Stage One: Strategic Approval

- 2.1 The purpose of Strategic Approval is to identify whether proposed or existing provision is:
  - Academically and financially viable;
  - Deliverable from a staff and resource perspective;
  - Aligned to the strategic aims of the relevant School(s); and
  - Aligned to the strategic aims of UCFB and the awarding partner.
- 2.2 Strategic Approval provides an opportunity to identify and approve core curriculum information that will allow provision to be marketed securely following sign-off by the relevant Dean(s), UEL ALT, and awarding partner. Core curriculum information is consistent with Competitions and Market Authority (CMA) requirements, and includes:
  - Course title;
  - Duration;
  - Core module titles and overviews;
  - Mode(s) of study;
  - Fee band and additional course fees; and
  - PSRB accreditations.

- 2.3 Strategic Approval for CARM proposals must be sought before the Academic Approval. Once Strategic Approval has been secured and provision has been advertised, core curriculum information is considered 'locked', and may not be changed or deviate during Academic Approval.
- 2.4 Strategic Approval requests will only be considered where they include a full overview of market intelligence. An overview of market intelligence should include, as a minimum, an overview of competitor analysis, employer demand, and evidence of local, national, and/or international needs.

## **2.5 Strategic Approval: UCFB**

- 2.5.1 Completion of the Request for Strategic Approval by the proposer is the first part of the process for developing: new taught courses; new professional, statutory, and regulatory body (PSRB) accreditations; course revalidation; course recruitment suspension; course withdrawal; new campus(es)/delivery site(s); and changes to delivery sites. This form provides information about the initial proposal including the strategic reason for its development, market research to evidence student and/or employer demand, and an indication of initial resource requirements to determine an early assessment of the scale of curriculum development and associated resources.
- 2.5.2 Discussion should take place between relevant UCFB Dean(s) and the relevant UEL Academic Link Tutor(s) (ALTs) toward completion of the Request for Strategic Approval.
- 2.5.3 In all cases, the completed Request for Strategic Approval should be supported, approved, and submitted by the relevant Dean(s) to the Academic Quality Team (AQT) via: [CARM@ucfb.ac.uk](mailto:CARM@ucfb.ac.uk) for consideration by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The proposer must work with the UEL ALT(s) to reach agreement in principle with the awarding institution prior to submission of the form to the AQT. The proposer must work with Finance and Marketing & Recruitment to determine detailed student number forecasts and financial costings prior to submission of the form to the AQT
- 2.5.4 Upon ELT approval of the Request for Strategic Approval, the proposer should proceed to the UEL Strategic Approval process as outlined below.

## **2.6 Strategic Approval: UEL**

- 2.6.1 The Academic Quality Team will work in collaboration with the UEL Academic Partnerships Oversight Committee (APOC) toward Strategic Approval for proposals to deliver new taught courses; new professional, statutory, and regulatory body (PSRB) accreditations; course revalidation; course recruitment suspension; course withdrawal; new campus(es)/delivery site(s); and changes to delivery sites in accordance with the [UEL Quality Manual, Part 11: Collaboration with Other Institutions](#) via the UEL Business Case.
- 2.6.2 If Strategic Approval is granted by UEL, the Academic Quality Team will support academic and professional services teams throughout the Academic Approval process.

## **2.7 Approvals and Decisions**

- 2.7.1 The UCFB ELT and the UEL APOC will either approve the proposal; approve the proposal subject to conditions; defer for additional work to be undertaken before resubmission; or not approve the proposal.
- 2.7.2 Dean(s) will be responsible for overseeing and formally confirming all conditions of approval are met on behalf of the proposer. The Academic

Quality Team will be responsible for confirming all conditions of Strategic Approval are met on behalf of UCFB. Conditions of Strategic Approval must be met before the Academic Approval process can commence.

- 2.7.3 Following UEL APOC approval, the approved course proposal(s) may be set-up in EBS/SITS and advertised 'subject to validation'. **Please note: all information provided in the Material Information section of the Request for Strategic Approval will be 'locked' following confirmation of Strategic Approval by UEL APOC and may not change prior to commencement of delivery.**

### 3. Stage Two: Academic Approval

- 3.1 To ensure that proposals remain current, no more than 12 months should normally have passed from the date of UEL APOC Strategic Approval to the date of Academic Approval consideration. If more than 12 months has passed, the proposal must normally be reconsidered for Strategic Approval.
- 3.2 The Academic Approval process is outlined in the [UEL Quality Manual, Part 11: Collaboration with Other Institutions](#) with oversight and support from UCFB Course Portfolio Committee (CPC) and the Academic Quality Team.
- 3.3 Courses will be approved indefinitely but will be reviewed through periodic revalidation to ensure that the quality is maintained and enhanced, and provision remains in alignment with the relevant institutional academic strategies.
- 3.4 As part of the development of CARM proposals, the proposer should work with/seek the opinions of relevant stakeholders such as students, professional services teams, employers, professional bodies, service users and UEL ALTs.

### 4. Responsibilities of Key Decision-Making Bodies

- 4.1 The UCFB approach to CARM proposals reflects the convention that Schools are ultimately responsible for the academic quality and sustainability of the courses they offer. The processes provide the mechanisms and support through which senior staff can make informed and transparent decisions regarding commitment to delivery, or continued delivery, of academic provision.
- 4.2 All Strategic Approval bodies are responsible for ensuring that CARM proposals within their remit meet the following criteria:
- Strategic fit with [UCFB Institutional Strategy 2025](#) and the UEL Vision 2028;
  - Financial sustainability; and
  - Viable market and relevance - as evidenced via educational pipeline, employer needs, and USP among competitors.
- 4.3 All Academic Approval bodies are responsible for ensuring that all proposed courses meet the following criteria regardless of where or how the CARM proposal is delivered:
- The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework, including the FHEQ.
  - The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognized standards, including relevant Subject Benchmarks (designed with key employer groups) and PSRB requirements.
  - Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable student achievement to be reliably assessed.

- From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

## **5. Empowering Schools to drive CARM**

- 5.1 In addition to the approval routes described above, Schools will be empowered through the following mechanisms:
- Deans and their teams will have oversight and involvement at every touch point in the approval process.
  - Access to applicable policy, procedure, and standard templates for course and curriculum design to guide staff through the approval process will be available via the [Academic Quality SharePoint site](#).
  - Staff training and development.
  - Professional advice and facilitation provided by the Academic Quality Team at all stages, through sharing good practice and sector developments at key points throughout the academic year and working collaboratively with Schools to review and support the preparation and approval of proposals.

## **6. Academic Governance and Oversight**

- 6.1 Outcomes from all Strategic Approval bodies will be reported to the UCFB Course Portfolio Committee (CPC).
- 6.2 PPC will be responsible for initial consideration of the composition, review, development and management of the UCFB academic portfolio via the institutional Course Portfolio Plans.
- 6.3 PPC will be responsible for the initial consideration of Academic Approval proposals and will make recommendations to the Academic Board for decision.
- 6.4 The Academic Board has institutional responsibility for all academic matters relating to scholarship, teaching and learning, research, courses and student experience and will either approve Academic Approval proposals; approve Academic Approval proposals subject to conditions; defer Academic Approval proposals for additional work to be undertaken before resubmission; or not approve Academic Approval proposals.
- 6.5 The Academic Board will report Strategic and Academic Approval activity to the UCFB Board of Directors.
- 6.6 In addition to tracking of the status and progress of CARM proposals through the process, the Academic Quality Team will continue to identify and share enhancement opportunities, both in terms of curriculum and course design and the support and infrastructure, for Schools (including continuous review and improvement of this Policy and associated procedures).

## **7. Links to Other Institutional Policies and Processes**

- 7.1 UCFB Policies
- [UCFB Institutional Strategy 2025](#)
  - UCFB Course Portfolio Plan
  - UCFB Request for Strategic CARM Approval Form
  - UCFB Course/Module Amendment Request Form

- UCFB CARM Stakeholder Consultation Policy
- UCFB Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body (PSRB) (Re-)Accreditation Policy

## 7.2 UEL Policies

- [UEL Vision 2028](#)
- [Quality Manual](#), Part 11: Collaboration with Other Institutions
- [Manual of General Regulations](#), Part 3: Academic Regulations