



UCFB*

Course Accreditation, Approval, Revalidation and Modification (CARM) Stakeholder Consultation Policy

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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.0 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. This Policy applies to formal CARM processes however, informal partnership working and co-creation with stakeholders is also encouraged.
- 1.1 Engaging a wide range of stakeholders in CARM activity recognises the essential nature of higher education, in which stakeholders not only receive a service from UCFB but are a fundamental part of determining its effectiveness. Engaging with and responding to stakeholder feedback allows UCFB to improve the learning and teaching offer. Stakeholder feedback provides valuable information for staff and the more we listen to those views and communicate with stakeholders on actions taken, the more likely it is that the overall student experience will improve.
- 1.2 This Policy is informed by the UEL Student Engagement in Quality Assurance Policy, the [Wonkhe/Pearson Building Belonging in Higher Education Report](#), and the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Student Engagement](#).

2. Students

- 2.1 Working with students as partners is an important feature of course design and development. The [Office for Students](#) conditions of registration include, in Condition B2, that higher education providers must “take all reasonable steps to ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students to ensure: a) a high quality academic experience for those students; and b) those students succeed in and beyond higher education”. Carrying out and evidencing consultation for certain types of changes also ensures that UCFB meets the regulations of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).
- 2.2 This Policy details requirements for consulting and notifying current students over changes being considered as part of CARM activity. For information on communicating with applicants over course changes, academic teams should consult the Marketing & Recruitment Team.
- 2.3 A distinction is drawn in this framework between student feedback and documented student consultation.
- 2.4 Inviting and acting on student feedback is a key expectation in all educational provision, and it is recognised that academic teams will do this in a wide variety of ways, both formal and informal. All course development can benefit from student input and feedback, and those designing and amending courses and modules are encouraged to seek this, wherever appropriate. This may include students who have completed a course or module giving suggestions and thoughts on how it could be improved for future students. Students also have the opportunity to give in-module feedback via the Mid-Module Evaluations, which can then be used to make in-year adjustments.
- 2.5 For certain types of change there is a need for documented consultation with affected students. The CMA requires that students are given certain information prior to commencing their studies - this information is called the core material information. Where a proposed change to a course or module would affect this core material information, consultation forms an important part of the CARM process to meet CMA regulations. In these cases, ensuring effective consultation with students **before** change proposals are submitted for approval allows students to have an opportunity to comment on proposed changes, and helps to ensure that changes

are not surprising to them when they receive confirmation of their course information. Providing details of student consultation as part of justifications for change ensures that UCFB can evidence student consultation ahead of changes being submitted to the awarding partner.

- 2.6 The matrix in Appendix 1 (below) sets out where this applies and so where documented consultation is required. In these cases, academic teams should ensure they consult with the student body in the widest possible way ahead of changes being introduced to confirm all students that would be affected have had the opportunity to comment on changes. This will mean students who will be impacted by the change in their next or subsequent years of study.
- 2.7 The minimum requirement for documented consultation is that, to ensure all students have received information about a change, academic teams should send a direct email to all students affected. This should set out the proposed amendments, the rationale for the change, and give the opportunity for students to feedback on proposals by a certain date. The academic team should then consider any feedback given and, as appropriate, make alterations to planned changes based on this. A summary of this activity can then be provided via the Report on Student Consultation (Appendix 2 (below)) as evidence of consultation.
- 2.8 Academic teams should also use Course Committee Meetings to ensure that CARM activity is sent to Student Representatives, who can then cascade the information to their cohorts for consideration and feedback. This allows the Course Committees to discuss potential changes and feedback can be sought ahead of time via Student Representatives for discussion at the meeting. Academic teams should also consider further working with Student Representatives and the Students' Union to gain student feedback.
- 2.9 Where a change applies to core material information, it must be communicated to all affected students in a format that can be saved and provided as supporting evidence. Where academic teams choose to consult with smaller groups of students in other ways, for example through focus groups, this should be in addition to using email to contact all affected students and to give them a chance to comment.
- 2.10 The matrix in Appendix 1 (below) therefore sets out minimum requirements for documented student consultation. It is not intended to suggest that gathering student feedback, including using the methods required for student consultation, would not be desirable or advisable in other cases. Similarly, it is good and expected practice to inform students of planned changes and of changes that have been made in response to previous student feedback, even where this does not affect core material information.
- 2.11 If concerns are raised by students about proposed changes to core material information academic teams should meet with students and have a full discussion of the issues raised to identify how this could be resolved. Academic teams should consider in advance what to do if students affected by proposed changes are unhappy with them, including whether alternatives could be offered or if the change could be deferred. In order to meet CMA requirements, we need to ensure, wherever possible, that students' concerns are fully addressed in order to secure consent and to maintain strong student satisfaction outcomes. Where this is not possible, the case should be discussed with the AQT in the first instance.
- 2.12 The matrix in Appendix 1 (below) also details how students receive notification of change. Students confirm that they are aware of and consent to any major changes as part of their annual registration.

- 2.13 Proposals which are identified as lacking evidence of necessary student consultation will not be processed through the CARM process(es).

3. Internal and External Stakeholders

- 3.1 Consultation regarding CARM activity should be collegial and approached by all parties in a spirit of collaborative exploration. It should not be viewed as a 'rubber stamping' exercise but as a means to receive and give valuable input and to strengthen proposals.
- 3.2 Consultation should be undertaken in a timely fashion, so that all parties have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the interaction. It is suggested that any necessary consultation commence at least four weeks prior to the intended submission of a proposal through the AQT and that it will be best practice for parties being consulted to respond as promptly as possible and, where possible, within ten working days. In the absence of a response at that point, the proposer may reasonably suppose that the area being consulted has no feedback to offer.
- 3.3 Academic Teams must record the parties consulted, key outcomes of the interaction and any consequential changes incorporated in the proposal via the Report on Stakeholder Consultation (Appendix 3 (below)).
- 3.4 Proposals which are identified as lacking evidence of necessary stakeholder consultation will not be processed through the CARM process(es).
- 3.5 Academic teams should disseminate and discuss internal and external stakeholder feedback via Course Committee Meetings. This allows the Course Committees to discuss potential changes and feedback can be sought ahead of time.

4. University of East London Academic Link Tutors (UEL ALTs)

- 4.1 UEL ALTs play an important role in CARM activities. As per the UEL ALT Role Descriptor, they are responsible for, inter alia: 1) Providing advice, guidance and support to the School in preparing all CARM documentation; and 2) ensuring that changes made to the courses or modules are in accordance with UEL CARM procedures. All CARM activities should be contemplated and proposed in collaboration with UEL ALTs.

5. External Examiners (EEs)

- 5.1 As per the UEL External Examiner's Manual, EEs: "play a vital role in the maintenance of academic standards, ensuring that assessment processes are conducted fairly, in accordance with our academic framework and without prejudice to any student. We take all comments that they make extremely seriously and make sure that EEs receive a response to any issues that they raise".
- 5.2 EEs have the right to comment on the overall development of the module(s) and/or course(s) they are responsible for. EEs should be consulted on all CARM proposals. EEs must be consulted on course modifications affecting 25% or more of the course design¹. However, in order to protect their independence, EEs should not concurrently be used as an External Adviser for course validation, revalidation or review purposes.

¹ For more information on the '25% Rule', please see Section 3 of the [UEL Quality Manual, Part 6](#).

- 5.3 EEs will make recommendations in discussion with the School/academic team, or in their Annual Report(s), that will aid in developing the quality of our courses. The School/academic teams should discuss the impact of any of these recommendations with the EEs and let them know the outcome.

6. Professional, statutory, and/or regulatory bodies (PSRBs)

- 6.1 When CARM activities are being contemplated, Schools must take into consideration, where applicable, the accreditation status of the course/module and consult with relevant bodies at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.2 CARM proposals must include details and copies of any particular PSRB requirements in relation to course and assessment design, which differ from standard UCFB and UEL regulations, e.g. different compensation rules, required module titles, etc. Where there is a potential conflict between the PSRB requirements/recommendations and UCFB and UEL regulations, the School must consult with the AQT at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 6.3 Should the terms of an accreditation state that the PSRB does not need to be consulted about changes, evidence of this must be presented along with the Report on Stakeholder Consultation (Appendix 3 (below)), e.g. the original accreditation report.

7. Links to other institutional policies and processes

7.1 UCFB Policies

- UCFB Vision 2026
- UCFB Course Portfolio Plan
- UCFB CARM Strategic Approval Policy
- UCFB Request for Strategic CARM Approval Form
- UCFB Course/Module Amendment Request Form
- UCFB Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body (PSRB) (Re-)Accreditation Policy

7.2 UEL Policies

- [UEL Vision 2028](#)
 - [Quality Manual](#), Part 6: Module and Course Modifications
 - [Manual of General Regulations](#), Part 3: Academic Regulation
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Appendix 1: Student consultation and notification on CARM activity matrix

This matrix refers to changes made *within standard timelines* as this means that the information is correct at the point of the notification methods shown. Late changes that will alter this information after the standard publication date may require consultation with students even if the same change made before the deadline would not have done.

CHANGES MADE ON A COURSE OR SCHOOL LEVEL			
Change	Is documented consultation with affected students required?	How are students notified of approved changes?	Further notes
Course structure (core and compulsory modules to be taken)	Yes as this affects core information provided to students.	Updated course information via the Online Hub	
Course aims and outcomes	Yes for a significant change as this affects core information provided to students. If the change is not significant, then documented consultation is not required.	Updated course information via the Online Hub	Whether a change is significant should be considered in light of the impact on the course, student learning and the information that students would have considered before selecting their course.
Information on the following factors across the course and/or School: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall methods of assessment • Number and type of contact hours, student workload • General information about level of experience or status of staff delivering the course 	Yes for any significant change as this affects core information provided to students.	Updated course information via the Online Hub	This refers to information at the course or School level and would not necessarily be updated as the result of changes to individual modules. Any change of approach across a School, course or subject would, however, need to be consulted upon.
Changing the modules available in option groups or changing the option groups available in a course structure	No, this does not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.	Updated course information via the Online Hub	Care should be taken when a large number of optional modules are removed or changed at once as this could be seen as significantly changing the course. This would then require consultation as it would affect core information.

CHANGES MADE ON A COURSE OR SCHOOL LEVEL			
Change	Is documented consultation with affected students required?	How are students notified of changes?	Further notes
Accreditation by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs)	If this is appropriate given the nature of the change.	The School should inform students of any change to their accreditation of their course as soon as this is confirmed.	Consultation may not be appropriate, depending on the nature of the change and whether it can be altered, but students should be informed at the first possible opportunity if the accreditation of their course changes.
Course award (e.g. BA, BSc) or course title	Yes as this affects core information provided to students.	Students should be notified by the School, following consultation, and informed of the options available to them. Schools should only communicate approved decisions following consultation.	This should be done as a change applying to current students by exception only.
Changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration of course • Location of study • Fees and extra costs 	Yes as this affects core information provided to students.	Students should be notified by the School, following consultation, and informed of the options available to them. The School should only communicate approved decisions following consultation.	This should be done as a change applying to current students by exception only.
Other terms and features that students might find surprising	Yes as this affects core information provided to students.	Students should be notified by the School, following consultation, and informed of the options available to them.	This should be considered in the light of factors that students will have considered and information they were provided when selecting their course.

CHANGES MADE TO MODULES			
Change	Is documented consultation with affected students required?	How are students notified of changes once approved?	Further notes
Changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module title • Credit value 	Yes as this affects core information provided to students.	Updated course and module information via the Online Hub	
Aims and outcomes	No, changes for a single module do not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.	Updated course and module information via the Online Hub. This information may be included in marketing collateral.	Care should be taken over changes that could be seen as significant to students, e.g. removing key topics, which might alter core information. If changes are being made across a course that could be seen as significantly altering it, then this would affect core information and affected students should be consulted.
Changes to module assessment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to balance of exams to coursework • Changes to balance of reassessment exams to coursework • Timing or length of exam • Weighting between existing approved coursework items • Addition or removal of an assessment type 	No, this does not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.	Updated course and module information via the Online Hub. This information may be included in marketing collateral.	If changes are being made across a course that could be seen as significantly altering it then this would affect core information and affected students should be consulted.
Amendment to, or addition/removal of, requisites	No, this does not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.	Updated course and module information via the Online Hub. This information may be included in marketing collateral.	Any resulting change in course structure would constitute a core change (see row for course structure). Adding requisites that would limit student choices after the students would already have taken or not taken the requisite modules should only be done by exception only.

CHANGES MADE TO MODULES

Change	Is documented consultation with affected students required?	How are students notified of changes upon approval?	Further notes
Changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Term delivered• Availability of module (e.g. outside option, study abroad)• Other aspects of the module with no impact on information identified as core	No, this does not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.	Updated course, module, and assessment information via the Online Hub. This information may be included in marketing collateral.	

Report on Student Consultation

<p>SECTION A: STUDENT CONSULTATION</p> <p>Consultation with students should be undertaken for CARM activity as provided via the CARM Stakeholder Consultation Policy. Please ensure that you allow enough time to carry out your student consultation. We advise that you start this process early on in developing your proposal(s) in order to accommodate and respond effectively to student feedback. When presenting proposals to students, please consider the likely effect of any changes on the student experience and specifically include this for students to comment and feedback on.</p>
<p>1. Title of course or module undergoing a change</p>
<p>2. Method of student consultation</p> <p>All affected students must be consulted via email. We recommend that a variety of additional methods are also used such as forums via the Online Hub, Course Committee Meetings, the SU, focus groups (via MS Teams or face-to-face), Mid-Module Evaluation Surveys, etc. Please detail all methods used and state why these methods were chosen.</p>
<p>3. Date of student consultation</p> <p>If consultation carried out over a period of time, please give the dates.</p>
<p>4. Which students were consulted</p> <p>Please give name of course and year of study; no actual student names should be provided. For new course proposals, we recommend that you consult students on related/similar courses to ask if they would have been or would be interested in applying for the proposed courses or have any comments on the content, for example. If you are changing your course title, you could ask your current students if they would have applied for the new title.</p>
<p>5. What questions were asked or what were the topics covered?</p> <p><i>Exemplars:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What does the name of the course/module mean to you?</i> • <i>What would you like to see covered in such a course/module?</i> • <i>What aspects of the proposed course/module appeal to you?</i> • <i>How would you like the course/module to prepare you and develop your skills for work and/or study after graduation?</i> • <i>Would you be or would you have been interested in applying for this course/taking this module?</i> • <i>Why wouldn't you choose a course/module like this?</i> • <i>Is there anything else you think should be in this course/module?</i> • <i>Do you have any other comments you would like to make?</i>
<p>6. What were the queries and concerns raised by your students and how you have responded to them?</p> <p>If you have had any negative feedback during your student consultation, please respond directly to the questions and concerns raised and demonstrate how you have either accommodated students' concerns or explain why it would not be possible to achieve what was requested.</p>
<p>7. What was the good/innovative practice highlighted by your students?</p>
<p>8. How have you fed back changes/developments to the students involved?</p>

Please attach the completed Report and any appendices to your Course/Module Amendment Request Form, Course Committee agenda, etc.

Appendix 3



Report on Stakeholder Consultation

SECTION A: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION	
<p>Consultation with internal and external stakeholders should be undertaken for CARM activity as provided via the CARM Stakeholder Consultation Policy. Please ensure that you allow enough time to carry out your student consultation. We advise that you start this process early on in developing your proposal in order to accommodate and respond effectively to stakeholder feedback. When presenting proposals to stakeholders, please consider the likely effect of any changes on service provision/operating procedures/the student experience and specifically include this for stakeholders to comment and feedback on.</p>	
1. Title of course or module undergoing a change	
2. Method of student consultation	
<p>All affected stakeholders must be consulted via email. We recommend that a variety of additional methods are also used in support of partnership working toward contemplating and proposing CARM activity such as regular communication with EEs and UEL ALTs, committee meetings, working groups, etc. Please detail all methods used and state why these methods were chosen.</p>	
3. Date of student consultation	
<p>If consultation carried out over a period of time, please give the dates.</p>	
4. Which Stakeholders were consulted	
<p>Please provide job titles as opposed to individual names.</p>	
Stakeholders	Job Title
Dean(s)	
Academic(s)	
UEL Academic Link Tutor(s)	
PSRB(s)	
External Examiner(s)	
Employer(s)/Industry	
Student Administration	
Library & Learning Development	
Technology & Change	
Admissions	
Marketing & Recruitment	
Student Administration	
Library & Learning Development	
Technology & Change	
Employability & Career Planning	
Student Finance	
Facilities	
Student Support	
Other	

5. What questions were asked or what were the topics covered?
6. What were the queries and concerns raised by your students and how you have responded to them?
If you have had any negative feedback during your stakeholder consultation, please respond directly to the questions and concerns raised and demonstrate how you have either accommodated stakeholder concerns or explain why it would not be possible to achieve what was requested.
7. What was the good/innovative practice highlighted by stakeholders?
8. How have you fed back changes/developments to the stakeholders?

Please attach the completed Report and any appendices to your Course/Module Amendment Request Form, Course Committee agenda, etc.