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# **UCEM Code of Practice**

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## Programme Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

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**UCEM Code of Practice**  
**Programme Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation**

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## Programme Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

### 1. Introduction

UCEM recognises that programme monitoring, evaluation and planning is key to meeting the following expectations for standards and quality as set out by the QAA UK Quality Assurance Agency in the Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA, March 2018):

- *The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.*
- *The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.*
- *Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's 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.*

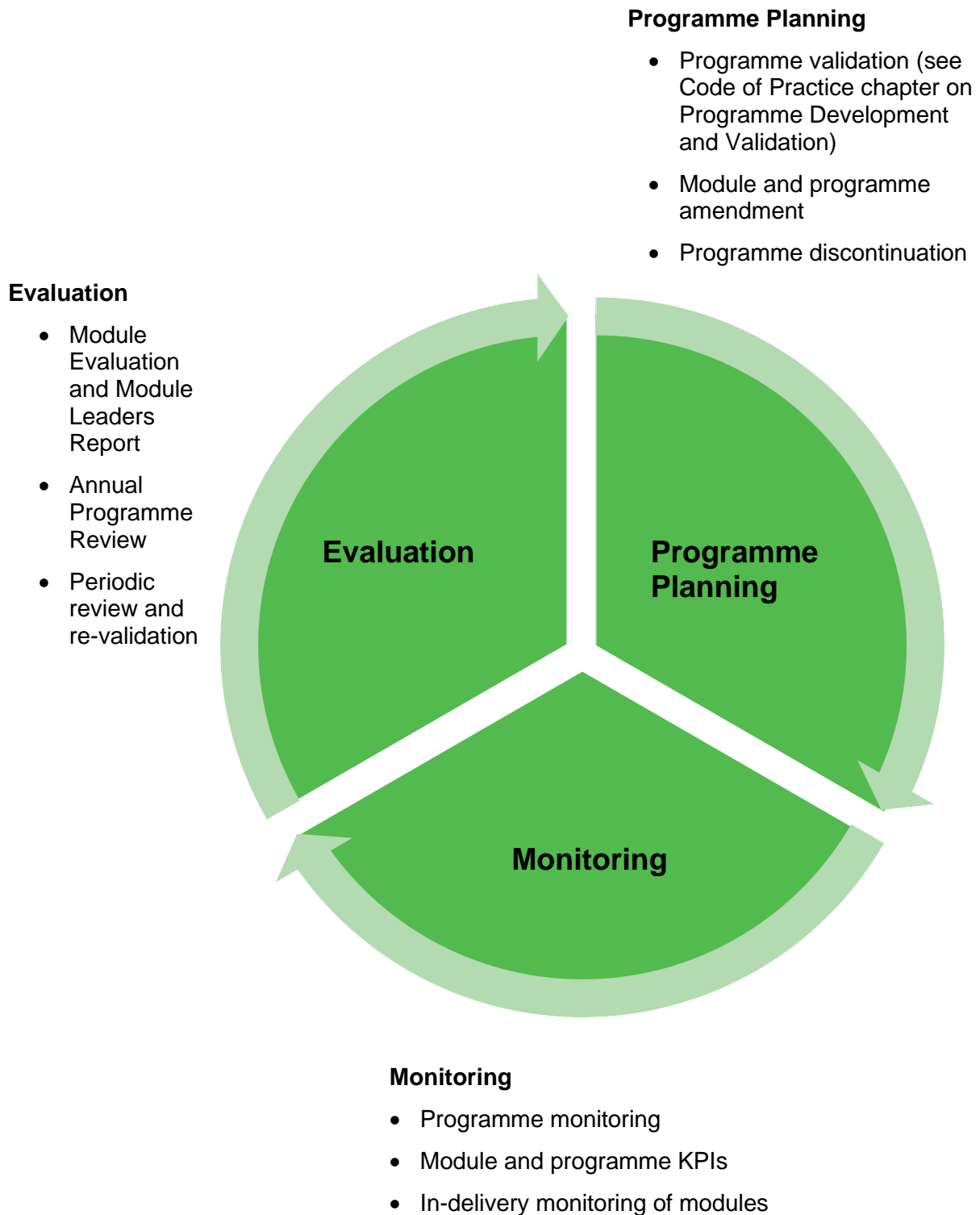
These expectations are supported by the following core practices:

- *The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.*
- *The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonable comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.*
- *The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.*
- *The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.*
- *The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.*

This Code of Practice sets out UCEM's policy on monitoring, evaluation and planning for both further and higher education programmes. The below diagram sets out a high-level diagram of UCEM's cyclical approach to monitoring, evaluation and programme planning.

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This Code of Practice chapter sits alongside the Code of Practice chapter on Programme Development and Validation and is also supported by the detailed procedural documents on Programme Monitoring and Review and Programme Amendment and Discontinuation.

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### 2. Programme planning

UCEM undertakes programme planning linked into the processes of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that its programmes remain fit for purpose. Programme planning encompasses programme validation and apprenticeship programme approval, programme and module amendment and programme or award discontinuation. The principles of programme validation and apprenticeship approval are, however, not covered in this chapter as they are set out in the Code of Practice chapter on Programme Development and Validation. This section sets out UCEM's policy on programme and module / unit amendment and programme discontinuation, the detailed procedures for which are set out in the Programme Amendment and Discontinuation Procedure.

#### 2.1 Programme and module / unit amendment

As part of Programme Review it may have been identified that it is necessary to make changes to a programme or to the module / units within the programme. UCEM operates a window each year where changes can be requested; changes outside of this window will only be approved if they are clearly in the best interests of students and following consultation with students and applicants.

Requests for changes are divided into three categories – editorial, minor and major and then processed accordingly with the correct level of approval.

##### **Editorial changes include:**

- amendments to definitive programme documentation and/or module / unit descriptor(s) to address typographical errors, clarify wording or amend module / unit codes;
- amendments to a programme specification to incorporate items approved under sections minor or major amendments (below);
- alterations to module / unit descriptors to update topics, staff details or other module / unit resources;
- other similar amendments as agreed with AQU.

##### **Minor amendments include:**

- the addition and/or deletion of individual validated option unit / modules within a programme that do not affect mapping against programme learning outcomes, as so long as this does not affect any PSRB accreditation;
- the addition of changes to the learning outcomes of a unit / module that do not affect mapping against programme learning outcomes;
- changes to the assessment methods or weightings for a unit / module;
- changes to the title of a unit / module;
- other similar amendments as agreed with AQU.

AQU is responsible for monitoring the cumulative impact of all changes to a programme and where a series of minor changes exceeds 25% of the total programme credit it will be treated as a major amendment and may trigger a revalidation of the programme (see below\*).

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### Major amendments include:

- a change to the title of a programme;
- the addition of a new pathway within an existing programme;
- changes to the means of delivery affecting either all students or a proportion of them (for example, those within a particular geographical area);
- the deletion of a core module / unit within a programme that may affect mapping against programme learning outcomes and/or any PSRB accreditation;
- the addition of one or more previously un-validated option modules / units;
- the deletion of a group of option modules / units at one time that do not affect mapping against programme learning outcomes, and as long as this does not affect accreditation or pathways accreditation unless this accreditation is no longer available;
- other similar amendments as agreed with AQU.

\*AQU will monitor the cumulative impact of all changes to a programme. In the event of a series of minor and major changes collectively affecting more than approximately 25% of the total programme credits, any further proposal for amendment may require the programme to be reviewed and revalidated following discussion with the Vice Principal Learning, Teaching and Apprenticeships.

All proposed changes must be considered in relation to:

- the impact on students and applicants including those with specific protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010;
- compliance with Competition and Markets Authority Consumer Law;
- timelines for implementation and the impact the changes will have on other UCEM programmes and modules / units;
- UCEM Terms and Conditions of Contract; and
- UCEM Student Protection Plan.

Changes to programmes must not be advertised or implemented until the programme amendment process is successfully completed.

## 2.2 Discontinuation of a module / unit, programme / apprenticeship or award

Programmes / apprenticeship, awards and modules / unit may be either temporarily suspended for a defined period of time or permanently discontinued.

Discontinuation of a programme / apprenticeship normally starts with a decision to suspend recruitment therefore allowing students already enrolled on the programme to complete within the normal timeframe or transfer to another programme.

Any decision to discontinue a programme / apprenticeship will ensure that student interests are considered, and that appropriate student consultation is undertaken. The programme run-out will be undertaken in line with UCEM's Student Protection Plan to ensure that individual students are not disadvantaged.

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The UCEM Student Protection Plan states that in the event of a programme closing a student support plan will be put in place which details how student interests will be protected in line with the institutional student protection, what risks are associated with closing the programme and how the risks will be mitigated, the student and stakeholder communication strategy and any changes to programme management and delivery arrangements during the runout. Oversight of the implementation of the student support plan rests with UCEM's Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee.

Authority to either to temporary suspend recruitment or to permanently discontinue a programme rests with either the Academic Board, for academic grounds, or the Principal, who has authority to discontinue a programme on grounds of financial viability or resource availability, following consultation with the UCEM Executive. The decision to discontinue a programme on financial grounds must be reported to the Academic Board.

Where several programmes are closing this should be reported to the Deputy Principal so that consideration can be given as to whether this is a reportable event under Regulatory advice 16: Reportable events and the Office for Students must be notified.

Authority to discontinue a module rests with the Vice Principal Learning, Teaching and Apprenticeships and should be reported to the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee, Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee and Academic Board.

### 3. Monitoring

All UCEM modules / units and programmes are subject to monitoring. By monitoring UCEM uses the QAA definition of monitoring which is 'the routine collection and analysis of information that focuses on an area of work, project or programme/course, undertaken while the area of work, project or programme/course is ongoing' (p.1)<sup>1</sup>. Through monitoring UCEM confirms that the standards of UCEM units, modules and programmes are maintained, that their quality is assured, and that opportunities for enhancement are identified and implemented.

Monitoring is evidence based using both qualitative and quantitative data to both identify areas for enhancement as well areas of good practice. This evidence includes student, External Examiner, staff, employer, industry and Professional Statutory Regulatory Body feedback; recruitment, retention and success data; programme KPI data; and recommendations from external review and (re)validation. When using data and other evidence UCEM ensures that it takes account of ethics and data protection requirements and ensures anonymity when using student data and information.

UCEM undertakes monitoring as an ongoing activity throughout the academic cycle at module / unit level through in-delivery monitoring of modules / units, module / unit KPIs and at programme level via Programme Committee meetings and Programme Quality Enhancement Plans.

UCEM sets out clear roles and responsibilities of which members of staff are involved at which stage. Staff involved in monitoring are briefed on their role and provided with opportunities to attend training and development. UCEM also involves key stakeholders such as students in monitoring activities.

The process of monitoring is recorded clearly and is reported into UCEM's deliberative committees, which maintain oversight that monitoring is undertaken effectively and also periodically review monitoring processes to ensure that they remain effective. Monitoring also feeds into the programme evaluation and planning activities (detailed in section 4 below).

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### 4. Evaluation

All UCEM modules / units and programmes are subject to evaluation in line with the QAA definition of evaluation as ‘the periodic, retrospective assessment of an organisation, an area of work, project or course, that might be conducted internally or by external independent evaluators. Evaluation uses information from monitoring, current and historic, to develop an understanding and inform planning.’ (p.1)2

Evaluation is undertaken at module / unit level through Module / Unit Evaluation following the delivery of each module / unit. As well as monitoring at module / unit level for UCEM’s higher education programmes there is also monitoring of modules across academic levels i.e. FHEQ level 4, 5, 6 and 7. This academic level review allows for further investigation into modules that have not met module performance metrics in conjunction with the Module Leaders and helps provide further assurance that appropriate enhancements have been identified to ensure that the module meets performance metrics at the next delivery. For both FE and HE programmes programmes are reviewed on annual basis at the end of the spring semester. Programmes and modules are also reviewed on a cyclical cycle through Periodic Review and Re-validation.

#### 4.1 Module and unit evaluation

Module / Unit evaluation reflects on:

- Academic performance on the module and performance against institutional module KPIs;
- Student feedback;
- Design, content and organisation of resources;
- Tutor resourcing and performance;
- Effectiveness of module enhancements since the last delivery
- Further commentary and recommended enhancements.

The report following module / unit evaluation feeds into the Boards of Examiners and Programme Review. Part of the report includes a review of module / unit resources and identification of any changes required.

#### 4.2 Programme review

Within the UCEM context the purpose of programme review is to:

- Ensure that the programme remains relevant (including in terms of institutional mission) and valid and continues to meet the needs of students and employers;
- Consider the continuing effectiveness of the learning and teaching provision, the assessment regime and student engagement and support mechanisms;
- Consider the appropriateness of the structure and design of the programme in supporting student retention, achievement and progression;
- Monitor trends in student performance, retention and progression over time;
- Reflect upon, and respond to, the views of External Examiners and other external stakeholders;
- Identify opportunities and make recommendations for improvement and enhancement within individual modules / units and at programme level, e.g. in respect of curriculum,



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syllabi, teaching methods, learning materials or unit / module / programme management and administration; and

- Share good practice within and across programmes.

The Programme Review process culminates in the production of a Programme Review Report. Programme Review Reports should be evaluative and reflective rather than descriptive. The process uses both qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate how the programmes are operating. Sources of data and evidence will include:

- External Examiner reports and feedback;
- Module Leader Reports;
- Academic Level Reports
- Student and employer feedback;
- Programme performance data, statistics and trends;
- Recommendations from validations or external review events;
- Feedback from Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) or from industry practitioners.

For Higher Education undergraduate and postgraduate programmes the Programme Report is reviewed by the Annual Programme Review Report Panel meeting which reviews and approves the Annual Programme Review Reports ensuring that they have been completed appropriately, with sufficient reflection to lead to enhancement and appropriate enhancements identified on the enhancement plan. The meeting also considers themes noted across the reports and whether any actions need to be raised to the institutional enhancement plan. The Annual Programme Review Report Panel reports into the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee.

For Further Education programmes the Programme Review meeting feeds into the annual Self-Assessment Process and the writing of the institutional Self-Assessment Report (SAR).

### 4.3 Periodic Review and Re-validation

Periodic review refers to the process used to scrutinise existing programmes before a decision is made to revalidate a programme for continuing delivery. Periodic review has a wider remit than programme monitoring as it takes a retrospective view of the programme looking at previous trends but also includes a forward-looking rationale for change and development. Part of the process is to scrutinise the programme to ensure its continuing validity and relevance. The review will consider:

- The quality of the student learning experience including consideration of teaching and learning strategies, learning resources, student support and student feedback.
- Student outcomes and academic standards including review of student retention and success, reference to subject benchmark statements and qualification frameworks, PSRB requirements and External Examiner reports.
- Continuing currency of the programme and fit with institutional strategy.
- Areas of good practice and plans for future development.
- Areas for enhancement.

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The exercise must be evidence based by looking at the previous monitoring and evaluation processes (including feedback from External Examiners, students and employers) to review the quality and standards of the programme and its current fit with employer and sector needs. The review must also ensure that the programme is enhanced in line with institutional requirements and external reference points.

All UCEM programmes are subject to major periodic review before revalidation after being delivered for a period of time as specified at validation. The normal period of validation for UCEM programmes is for a period of five years. Earlier review however can be triggered as a consequence of cumulative programme amendment, by deliberative committees following feedback from External Examiners and PSRBs or Annual Programme Review or on authority of the Principal.

Academic Board retains ultimate authority for the re-approval of all programmes and modules leading to UCEM award or credit. It however delegates the detailed scrutiny and approval of new programmes and modules to a re-validation panel. The periodic review and re-validation panel will decide whether a programme should be re-validated and if it should be subject to conditions and recommendations. Re-validation panels are convened especially for each event with the size and composition of the panel reflecting the scale and complexity of the event. The approval of the composition of re-validation panels rests with the Director of Academic Quality.

Academic Board also fully delegates the detailed scrutiny and re-approval of apprenticeship programmes to an apprenticeship approval event.

Where a programme has a condition attached, Academic Board delegates authority to the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee to monitor and approve the resolution of any such conditions.

Following the detailed scrutiny of the periodic review and re-validation documentation and the subsequent discussion with UCEM staff and students, the panel will come to one of the following conclusions:

- i. Approve the proposals without conditions or recommendations;**
- ii. Approve the proposals either with conditions and/or recommendations;**
- iii. Not to approve the proposals in their present form, with reasons.**

The panel should specify the period of validation of the programme, which is normally for a further five years.

Conditions should only be imposed to rectify significant deficiencies in the programme. More minor issues can be dealt with by recommendations. The panel should also identify any areas of good practice as commendations.

Where conditions are set these must be satisfied before the programme is considered re-validated.

The outcome of all periodic review will culminate in a report and action plan which will be reported to Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee (QSEC) and Academic Board. QSEC will monitor progress with the completion of the action plan.

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# 5. Monitoring of procedures

Reports will be provided to QSEC on the outcomes of Programme Review by the Annual Programme Review Report Panel and by the Academic Quality Unit (AQU) following periodic review and re-validation events. An overview and commentary on the effectiveness of procedures followed will also be provided in the annual Academic Quality and Standards Report.

Training will be arranged by AQU for members of staff that are involved in programme planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that they can effectively discharge their responsibilities.