

CHAPTER 6

Programme Modification

1. Introduction

Upon successful validation and approval, a new programme is launched. It is normally the case that a new programme is approved subject to a 6-year cycle of programme review. During this period, annual reporting is made to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) on the monitoring of the programme during the year. While a full-scale programme review will normally be carried out a year before the end of the 6-year cycle, it may happen that certain parts of the programme require change or updating without delay.

2. Types of Programme Modifications

In all cases of programme modification, the changes must not affect the academic quality of a programme, as commensurate with the award level of the programme.

Modifications are categorised into major and minor changes with the following samples of programme modifications.

Major Changes*

- (a) Programme or award title;
- (b) QF level of programme;
- (c) Programme objectives;
- (d) Programme intended learning outcomes;
- (e) Programme streams;
- (f) Mode of study;
- (g) Duration;
- (h) Number of credits of programme;
- (i) Syllabus (10% - 25% of total number of programme credits or of the programme contents);
- (j) Minimum entry requirements.

* If only involve editing of e.g. programme and award titles, it is not considered as a major change.

Minor Changes

- (a) Module titles;
- (b) Syllabus (less than 10% of the total number of programme credits or of the programme contents);
- (c) Assessment methods and weightings;
- (d) QF level and/ or credits of modules;
- (e) Objectives and intended learning outcomes of modules.

If modifications to syllabus involve more than 25% of the total number of credits or of the entire programme contents, the programme will be considered as a “new” programme and will undergo a validation process. The purpose is to ensure that if the modification affects the academic value and integrity of the programme, the programme as a whole would be scrutinised. In cases of doubt, the Programme Team shall consult the QAC Chairman.

Changes in the programme budget are separately proposed via the HKU SPACE budget approval procedures, details of which are available from the HKU SPACE Finance Team.

3. The Modification Process

3.1 Timing

To ensure that modifications to a programme are approved in time for implementation, it is advisable to make proposals for programme modification well in advance. The timing for making proposals for modifications should most importantly take into consideration the time needed for programme publicity, notification to teachers, students and other relevant parties, and whether necessary actions can be taken to implement the changes. Modifications should normally be approved at least three months before implementation. There is however flexibility in the timing for some cases, such as sudden changes in government policies.

3.2 Proposal Document

The Programme Team prepares a proposal document for consideration of the Academic Committee (AC). The document shall include information on those aspects of the programme affected by the modification or such information useful in understanding the reasons for the modification. The proposal document normally contains the following information:

- (a) Item(s) requiring modification
- (b) Reason(s) for modification/benefits resulting from modification
- (c) Consultation with academic staff, students, and/or external examiners/advisors, professional bodies, as appropriate

- (d) Implications on current students and/or graduates, if applicable
- (e) Timing for modification and implementation
- (f) Qualifications Framework Level and Credit Assignment Form (QF1 Form)
- (g) Implications on resources, if any (separate budget change requests to be made according to the budget approval process)

Individual members of the AC have the right to ask for further information before considering the modification.

3.3 Approving Criteria

The criteria used by the AC for considering modification proposals include:

- (a) Academic validity of programme after modification
- (b) Feasibility of timing of implementation
- (c) Effects on the current students and/or graduates, if applicable
- (d) Effects on cognate programmes offered in HKU SPACE
- (e) Alignment of QF Level and Intended Learning Outcomes
- (f) Effects on the future development of the programme

The guiding principle is that the current students shall not be disadvantaged as a result of programme modification.

3.4 Approving Parties

For programme requiring modifications before the launching, the AC shall consider and approve such changes.

Major changes described in Section 2 of this Chapter shall be first discussed at AC meetings. The AC comments on and recommends the proposed modifications on subject-wise issues and gives approval or otherwise for the modification, which shall then be submitted to the College Academic Board (CAB) for information and consideration on policy and resources. For changes in award title, the QF level of a programme, or introducing a new stream or a new award, the Programme Team shall submit a paper on the proposed modifications to the SAM for approval, and then to the Board for CPE&LL for final academic approval.

When introducing a new programme stream with new programme and award titles, the Programme Team shall also prepare the QF1 Form in addition to the proposal paper, which are considered and endorsed by the School Vetting Committee prior to seeking final academic approval from the Board for CPE&LL.

For minor changes, the AC Chairman may decide to take Chairman's action or to seek approval by the circulation, which shall be reported to the subsequent AC meeting. All AC decisions shall be reported to the CAB for information.

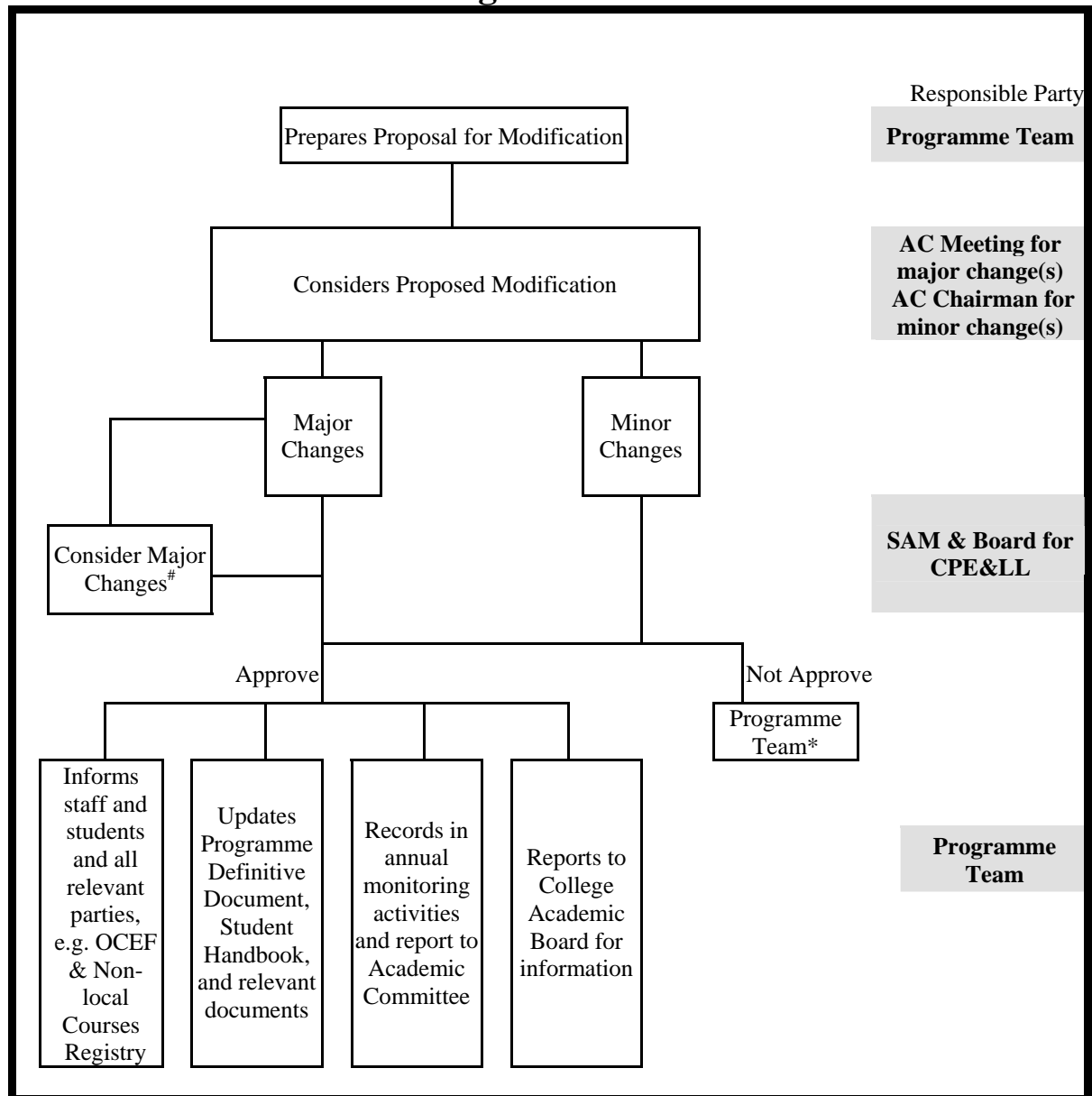
3.5 Follow-Up Action

Upon approval of the Board for CPE&LL, the AC meeting or the AC Chairman as appropriate, the Programme Team shall:

- (a) inform all staff and students and/or graduates concerned of the approved changes in advance;
- (b) make appropriate amendments to the Programme Definitive Document, the Student Handbook and any other relevant information published;
- (c) notify any relevant professional bodies, government departments, public bodies and any other organisations about the modification;
- (d) record the approved modification and the related follow-up action in the annual monitoring activities for the year concerned.

Appendix A provides the flowchart of procedures involved.

Flowchart of Programme Modification



Major Changes: #Programme or award title; #Programme streams; #QF level of programme; Programme objectives; Programme Intended Learning Outcomes; Mode of study; Duration; Number of credits of programme; Syllabus (10% - 25% of total number of programme credits); Minimum entry requirements. Major changes are received by CAB for information and consideration on policy and resources only.

Minor Changes: Module titles; Syllabus (less than 10% of the total number of credits or of the programme contents); Assessment methods and weightings; QF level and/ or credits of modules; Objectives and intended learning outcomes of modules.

* The Programme Team may consider the reasons for failure and re-submit the modification proposal after amendment.