

GUIDANCE ON WRITING A COURSE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PERIODIC REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Review of the PARM Processes (2009/2010) consideration was given to the content of and usefulness of the Self Evaluation Document (SED). Consultation with staff across the University confirmed that the SED was often descriptive, largely retrospective and frequently included a great deal of documentation that was not used as a part of the review process. In June 2010 Academic Board supported the proposals for change to the PARM processes. One change was to refine and rename the Self Evaluation Document. The SED will in future be known as the Course Development Plan. The detail below indicates the type of content that should be provided within the Course Development Plan.

THE COURSE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Periodic review of courses normally occurs within six years of the validation or last review event. During this period of time courses will have been developed and refined through minor or major modification. Consideration will have been given, through the Continuous Monitoring Process, to a whole range of factors, such as student and other stakeholder evaluation, government policy, innovations in practice, the employment market, external scrutiny and staffing and other resource issues. Whilst this history is important it is only useful in the Course Development Plan as a succinct analysis of the key issues to inform proposed changes to the courses and to provide an action plan for future development. A single Development Plan should be provided for all courses/routes represented by a single programme specification.

The Course Development Plan should demonstrate that the Team's plans for modifying the course will maintain academic standards and enhance the quality of the student experience. It should provide constructive, critical reflection on the key issues that have affected the course(s) since the last review / validation. It should include a succinct self-critical analysis of the quality of the student experience and the academic development of the course(s) during the period since the last review or since the initial approval in order to set the context for the new proposals under consideration. It is likely that this information can be provided using a small number of key headings that cover the significant issues that have arisen over the years of delivery of the course(s).

THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE COURSE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Section 1: Background and Context

Provide a very brief summary of the history of the course(s) and an overview of how the course(s) is delivered, e.g. full and / or part time, distance / blended learning, traditional taught units or a mixture of theory and practice, PSRB accredited. Identify when the course(s) was validated or last reviewed.

Section 2: The Strategic Approval Form

The proposals for consideration at review should be clearly stated within the Strategic Approval Form, and supported by a sound academic rationale for the developments and a robust business case to ensure their viability. This will also include a costing model, the outcome of market research and evidence of the demand for the course and its sustainability. There should be an analysis of how the proposal fits with other provision across the University and how it fits with the Faculty / MMU strategic direction. There should also be an analysis of what makes this MMU course distinctive / special in relation to the proposal under consideration. Include details of the nature and outcome of consultations with stakeholders.

Section 3: An Analysis of Key Issues

This section provides an assessment of the quality of the course. It must include:

- an analysis of data on course trends (provided through Uniview and external surveys such as PTES, NSS) and the key issues must be addressed through an action plan
- in Section 5.
- an analysis of data of graduate destinations using DLHE¹ data.
- a report, using a thematic approach, on the major issues that occur repeatedly in external examiner, PSRB or other external body reports, in student feedback, from staff or employers. Identify ongoing issues and in Section 5 provide an action plan to address them through review or during the life of the course(s).
- a review of the performance of any collaborative provision (paying particular attention to the tracking of performance to distinguish between MMU and partner cohorts, or between multiple partners; the effectiveness of procedures to monitor the quality of partner staff, student support, learning resources and student evaluation).
- an analysis of the effectiveness of work-based and placement learning (including student exchange).

¹ Information can be obtained, by programme or department, from the Employability and Careers Guidance Team. Contact Nikki Fraser – n.fraser@mmu.ac.uk ext 2309

Section 4: Proposed Changes

Briefly state the intention of any modifications and the proposed date of implementation, e.g. It is proposed to introduce, with effect from September 2012, a new award/route of BA (Hons) Clay Pots within the existing Shiny Pots Undergraduate Course. Provide the justification for any changes proposed and include transitional arrangements for current students transferring onto revised course. Provide outline diagrams of current and proposed course structure. List all changes to the course(s) as part of the proposal.

Note: This information is required for the University academic database and should include any changes to the course structure which will need to be recorded for the student record system and which might not necessarily be captured within a revised programme specification, eg units (ie removed, added, title changes). The information should be briefly outlined in bullet points in an appropriate format to allow the list to be extracted from the Course Development Plan and included in an Appendix to the Review Report

- o *Routes/award titles (final and interim) - amended titles*
- o *Routes/award titles (final and interim) - discontinued*
- o *Unit Specifications - new*
- o *Unit Specifications – amended titles*
- o *Variations to /exemption from University Regulations*
- o *Changes to course structure (eg from 6x20 units to 4x30)*

Section 5: Action Plan

Provide a detailed action plan that addresses the issues raised in Section 3 of the Course Development Plan. This should include details of who is responsible for the action and when and how the plan will be reviewed.

Section 6: Appendix

Provide summary CVs of staff teaching on the course. These will be used to allow an objective judgement to be reached as to the adequacy and appropriateness of staffing expertise and proficiency to deliver the course. For example, staff teaching at postgraduate level would normally be expected to have either a higher degree or significant and extensive professional experience. Particular attention should be paid to the qualifications and expertise of all teaching staff including those at partner organisations.

Where the proposal involves the approval of arrangements with Collaborative Partners the Course Development Plan should also include as appendices:

- Reports on the relevant human resources and the physical resources available at the partner institution for delivery of the proposed arrangement
- Details of course management arrangements, particularly where the course relates to more than one partner

Course teams requiring help and guidance in the developmental review process should contact the Centre for Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement (CASQE) and/or the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CeLT) as early as possible in their preparation for review.

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