

Notification Of Curriculum/Module/Course Operation Change Policy

1. To ensure the Voice Study Centre meets the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) regulations and fulfills its legal obligation for registration with the **Office for Students**, it is essential that pre-contractual information should still be accurate on enrolment and throughout the duration of the course.
2. This framework details requirements for consulting and notifying current students of changes being considered as part of the **Curriculum Update** process. It also details good practice for consultation of changes that may occur during the progression of the course.
3. A distinction is drawn in this framework between **student feedback** and **documented student consultation**:

Student Feedback

Inviting and acting on student feedback is a key expectation in all educational provisions, and it is recognised that departments will do this in a wide variety of ways, both formal and informal.

All course development benefits 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 should also have the opportunity to give in-module feedback which can then be used to make in-year adjustments. The student feedback process, is documented in the student feedback policies.

Documented student consultation

However, 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 curriculum update process to meet CMA regulations. In these cases, ensuring effective consultation with students before changes are submitted in the annual Curriculum Update process 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 the VSC can evidence student consultation ahead of changes being submitted.

4. The framework in this document sets out where this applies and where **documented consultation** is required. In these cases, VSC 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 means that students will be impacted by the change in their next or subsequent years of study. Documenting the consultation allows VSC to provide evidence that consultation has taken place and can be used as part of the justification for changes. Departments are required to confirm that consultation has been carried out and evidenced as part of the Curriculum Update process.

5. The minimum standards for documented consultation are as follows:

- All students should receive information about a change. It may relate to a change to a module, curriculum, assessment process, or operational changes that impact learning.
- The Senior Management Team should email all students affected directly.
- The email should set out the proposed amendments and allow students to give feedback on proposals by a certain date.
- The Senior Management Team should then consider any feedback given and make any alterations to planned changes based on this. Emails can then be provided as evidence of consultation.

6. Where *significant changes* take place, Student Voice Groups (SVGs) should be established. The minimum requirements for the agenda of SVGs is as follows:

- The Senior Management Team should ensure that new and revised programme developments are sent to the group for consideration. This allows the group to discuss potential changes and feedback can be sought ahead of time via student representatives for discussion at the meeting.
- Departments should also consider further working with Student Representatives and the Students' Union to gain student feedback.
- Where a change applies to the material information it must be communicated to all affected students in a format that can be saved and provided as supporting evidence.

Where the Senior Management Team chooses 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

7. This framework 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 changes made in response to previous student feedback, even where this does not affect core material information. Please consult the student feedback policies for further guidance.
8. Where students raise concerns about proposed changes to core material information, the Senior Management Team should meet with students and discuss the issues raised to identify how this could be resolved. The Senior Management team 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 that students' concerns are fully addressed wherever possible. It is important to secure consent and to maintain strong student satisfaction outcomes. Where this is not possible, the case should be discussed with the Directorship of VSC and a rationale should be presented in written form even where dialogue takes place. All communications should be noted for evidence.
9. This framework 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.
10. Please also review further documentation on making changes to courses and modules, which includes case studies demonstrating what might constitute significant changes and includes details on the approval required for changes.

Framework for student consultation and notification on course and module changes

CHANGES MADE ON A COURSE OR DEPARTMENT LEVEL

Change	Is documented consultation with affected students required?	How are students notified of changes?	Further notes
Course structure (core and compulsory modules to be taken)	Yes as this affects core information provided to students.	<p>Students are sent their Curriculum Notification communication at enrolment. We have two points of entry: October and April. Where there is a departure from advertised information between offer and enrolment each student must be informed and they must sign the Notification of Contractual Change documentation.</p> <p>Where there is a change to the course documentation during the progression of the course, the guidance documented above must be followed and all email communication and meetings with students must be evidenced.</p>	The important point to note here is that all communication must be evidenced and stored.

<p>Course aims and outcomes</p>	<p>Yes for a significant change as this affects core information provided to students.</p> <p>If the change is not significant then documented consultation is not required.</p>	<p>Such changes will be sent in the Curriculum Notification communication at enrolment. We have two points of entry: October and April. If it is so significant, that it represents a contractual change then the student must sign:</p> <p>Notification of Contractual Change documentation</p> <p>Where there is a change to the course documentation during the progression of the course, the guidance documented above must be followed and all email communication and meetings with students must be evidenced.</p>	<p>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.</p>
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CHANGES MADE ON A COURSE OR DEPARTMENT LEVEL

Change	Is documented consultation with affected students required?	How are students notified of changes?	Further notes
<p>Information on the following factors across the course and/or department:</p> <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 	<p>Yes for any significant change as this affects core information provided to students.</p>	<p>This would be updated by the Senior Management Team in the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment overview, which is included in the Curriculum Notification communication sent enrolment.</p> <p>If it is so significant, that it represents a contractual change then the student must sign: Notification of Contractual Change documentation</p> <p>Where there is a change to the course documentation during the progression of the course, the guidance documented above must be followed and all email communication and meetings with students must be evidenced.</p>	<p>This refers to information at the course or department level, and would not necessarily be updated as the result of changes to individual modules. Any change of approach across a department, course or subject would, however, need to be consulted upon.</p>

<p>Changing the modules available in option groups or changing the option groups available in a course structure</p>	<p>No, this does not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.</p>	<p>Students are sent their Curriculum Notification communication at enrolment setting out their course structure and programme specification following curriculum update.</p>	<p>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.</p>
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CHANGES MADE ON A COURSE OR DEPARTMENT LEVEL

Change	Is documented consultation with affected students required?	How are students notified of changes?	Further notes
Accreditation by professional, statutory or regulatory organisations	If this is appropriate given the nature of the change.	The senior management team should inform students of any change to the accreditation of their course as soon as this is confirmed. The significance is likely to alter the status of the contract; the student must therefore sign: Notification of Contractual Change documentation	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 senior management team, following consultation, and informed of the options available to them. The significance is likely to alter the status of the contract; the student must therefore sign: Notification of Contractual Change documentation	This should be done as a change applying to current students only exceptionally.
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.	After consultation, students should be notified by the senior management team and informed of the options available to them. The significance is likely to alter the status of the contract; the student must therefore sign:	This should be done as a change applying to current students only exceptionally.

		<u>Notification of Contractual Change documentation</u>	
Other terms and features that students might find surprising	Yes as this affects core information provided to students.	Students should be notified by the Senior Management Team following consultation and informed of the options available to them. If it is so significant, that it represents a contractual change then the student must sign: <u>Notification of Contractual Change documentation</u>	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?	Further notes
Changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Module title ▪ Credit value 	Yes as this affects core information provided to students.	If it is so significant that it represents a contractual change, then the student must sign the following: Notification of Contractual Change documentation	
Aims and outcomes	No , changes for a single module do not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.	This information is included in the module information for each module.	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. If it is so significant that it represents a contractual change, then the student must sign: Notification of Contractual Change documentation

CHANGES MADE TO MODULES

Change	Is documented consultation with affected students required?	How are students notified of changes?	Further notes
<p>Changes to module assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weighting of exams to coursework ▪ Weighting of reassessment exams to coursework ▪ Timing or length of exam ▪ Weighting between existing approved coursework items ▪ Addition or removal of an assessment type 	<p>No, this does not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.</p>	<p>This information is included in the module information for each module.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>If it is so significant that it represents a contractual change, then the student must sign the following:</p> <p>Notification of Contractual Change documentation</p>
<p>Amendment to, or addition/removal of, requisites</p>	<p>No, this does not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.</p>	<p>This information is included in the module information for each module.</p>	<p>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 have already taken or have not taken the requisite modules should only be done exceptionally.</p>

<p>Changes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Term delivered ▪ Availability of module (e.g. outside option, study abroad) ▪ Other items in the Module directory with no impact on information identified as core 	<p>No, this does not affect core information so documented consultation is not required.</p>	<p>This information is included in the module information for each module</p>	
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