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| **POLICY** |
| Policy for course closure, suspension and significant change |
| **Contact Officer** |
| Director of Quality and Educational Development and Academic Registrar |

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| **Purpose** |
| To inform members of the University including students, potential students and other external interested parties, of the principles recognised for closing, suspending or making significant changes to courses or programmes of study.  |
| **Overview** |
| The University regularly reviews and updates the courses and modules offered in order to ensure that they remain current and reflect best practice. In exceptional circumstances this means that a course or programme may cease to exist or the University may no longer be able to teach a programme or an aspect of a programme to a specific group of students, or the University may introduce a significant change which will impact on applicants and/or current students.  |
| **Scope** |
| All members of the University.  |
| **The Policy** |
| 1. In all instances where courses are being considered for closure, suspension or significantchange to an undergraduate or taught postgraduate course, the University will follow a set, published, procedure.[[1]](#footnote-1) These procedures align with the [**UK Quality Code for Higher Education**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code) and take account of the [**Office for Students Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England**](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/the-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/) and **Student Protection Plans** as well as the [**Competition and Markets Authority guidance on consumer law for UK HE providers**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers) (2015).
2. In particular the procedures seek to protect the interests of applicants and students by ensuring clear and transparent processes for the management of course closure, suspension or significant change in relation to the experience of applicants who have accepted an offer of a place, but not yet registered, and those that have deferred their offer; and the experience of students who are current or have temporarily withdrawn from the course. As such, the procedures align with the University [Terms and Conditions for Applicants](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/journey/admission-terms-and-conditions.html).
3. It should be noted that whilst these procedures set out the usual process, the University reserves the right to use discretion in applying these in order to ensure that all obligations are met, particularly if circumstances are complex or deemed to be of high risk.

**Definitions**Course Closure1. Closing a course means that there will be no further intakes to the course and it will no longer be offered by the University (or partner organisation). Those students already registered on the course will continue to progress and complete the course (teach out), or where this is not possible will be offered an alternative course or transfer to another provider.

Course Suspension1. Suspension of a course means that there will be no intake to the course for a specified period (normally the following academic year). Students currently registered on the course will continue to progress and complete the course.

Significant Change1. Significant changes constitute alterations to a course that could potentially affect the decision of an applicant to take up their place and/or significantly vary the information provided to applicants or to students regarding the nature of the course and its component parts.
2. A significant change might include:
* a change to the award title
* a change to the accreditation arrangements
* significant changes to the content of the programme such as adding or removing a mandatory module
* changes to the method of delivery or method of assessment of the programme such that the overall learning outcomes of the programme are fundamentally different
* significant changes to the location which the programme is taught.

**Key Principles**1. For details of how these principles translate into normal operational practice, readers should refer to the University [Procedures for Course Closure, Suspension and Significant Change](https://www2.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/CourseClosureSuspensionSignificantChange_procedures.docx).
2. An academic School (or collaborative partner organisation) cannot close, suspend or make significant changes to a course themselves. Any such decision will only be made by the Academic Planning and Portfolio Group (APPG) who will normally be given sufficient notice to ensure that there have been appropriate consultations and communications with all stakeholders.
3. The only exceptions to this are:
4. where a decision is made to suspend recruitment to a course late in the recruitment cycle (eg after 1st July where the course commences in September). In these instances, the Head of School (or nominee) will liaise directly with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost and Academic Registrar for approval to suspend the course. In such cases a report will be made to the Recruitment Review Group notifying them of the exceptional circumstances requiring such action, with the closure reported to the APPG
5. proposals for significant change relating to changes in accreditation arrangements, and/or to the content of programmes, learning outcomes and or assessment. These proposals for change are subject to the agreement of the College Director LTQE through the College Course and Module Amendments Sub-Group.

 1. Course closure, suspension or significant change will normally be initiated for the following academic year unless there are circumstances beyond the University’s control. In the event of closure or suspension, no new applicants will be recruited. Students already on the course will be supported to complete their course successfully or, if this is not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the University, transitional arrangements will be made in consultation with the student(s) affected.
2. The University will endeavour to mitigate the impact that course closure, suspension or significant change will have on current and prospective students. In the event of course closure, a planned timeline and action plan for managing the closure and for communicating with applicants and current students will be drawn up by the School; this will explicitly consider the experience of current and prospective students.
3. In the case of Joint Honours subject combinations, all Schools involved must agree to the closure or suspension before the procedure commences.
4. In cases where collaborative partners wish to close or suspend courses, assessment of the strategic, contractual and operational implications will still be made and the University procedure will still be followed.
5. Typically, the relevant School (in liaison with the partner organisation where appropriate) will be responsible for communicating course closure, suspension or significant change to current students. Registry Services (in liaison with the partner where relevant) will be responsible for communicating course closure, suspension or significant change to applicants.

**Reinstating courses or removal of suspension**1. Courses that have been suspended will automatically become available at the end of the period for which the suspension was originally agreed unless the School applies for an extension. Where a course has been suspended for two consecutive years, the School should consider whether it would be appropriate to close the course.
2. Should the School wish to reinstate the course before the end of the period of suspension, an application can be made to this effect.
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| **Date Approved** | 26th April 2017 |
| **Approval Authority** | Academic Board |
| **Date of Commencement** | April 2017 |
| **Amendment Dates** | September 2019Changes due to restructure from Institutes to Schools and Colleges, CSG to APPG.Changes to align terminology with the Terms and Conditions for Applicants. |
| **Date for Next Review** | August 2022 |
| **Related Policies, Procedures, Guidance, Forms or Templates** | [Terms and Conditions for Applicants](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/journey/admission-terms-and-conditions.html)[Procedures for Course Closure, Suspension and Significant Change](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/aqu/documents/CourseClosureSuspensionSubstantialChangeProcedures.pdf) |
| **Policy/Policies Superseded by this document** | Course Closure, Suspension and Major Change Policy - May 2017 |

1. [Procedures for Course Closure, Suspension and Significant Change](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/aqu/documents/CourseClosureSuspensionSubstantialChangeProcedures.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)