
Guidance 3xxvi Making changes to published information

Making changes to published information – a guidance note

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has produced advice on the application of UK consumer protection law to students. In relation to programmes, this sets out the need to provide clear, accurate and timely advice to students so that they can make informed decisions about what and where to study. Such programme related information forms part of the pre-contract information, which should not ordinarily be changed. Please also consider the Student Protection Plan - <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/spp-for-students> and the Access and Participation Plan - <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/access-agreement>.

Consumer protection law recognises that programme changes may be necessary, but the scope of such changes needs to be defined and includes requirements to give notice of changes and minimise disruption to students. Making changes to published programme related information (Academic Policy Statement APS28) <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies> aims to strike the balance between the reasonable expectations of students who, based on information given to them, have accepted places on a University programme, or who are progressing through a programme; and changes made to programmes due to the need to keep the curriculum current, enhance learning, teaching and assessment or respond to feedback or student demand, or due to unforeseeable events and/or circumstances that are beyond the University's reasonable control, that has a disruptive effect on the University's ability to deliver academic or other services also known as "Force Majeure Event".

This guidance note provides some practical guidance on managing programme and module change.

Process and timelines

The process for making changes to programmes and modules is detailed in Section 3 of the University's Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook [Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook \(LQEH\) | Middlesex University London \(mdx.ac.uk\)](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/learning-and-quality-enhancement-handbook). Changes requested are detailed in Appendix 3r – Programme change form and Appendix 3s – Module change form (both within the LQEH). Module changes must be approved before the preceding May (for a September start) and October (for a January start). For programmes that have intakes outside of these times, changes should be approved three months in advance of the next intake, any proposed change should normally only be applicable from the next intake.

Student consultation

Student approval must be sought for programme and module changes. No approval is required for minor updates to module content, updates to learning materials, or changes to members of staff delivering the module.

Enrolled students affected by the change must be consulted, with a suggested two-week response time. Consultation may be via email or face-to-face/online meetings. No more than 25% of the students who are enrolled and could potentially be affected by the change should explicitly withhold consent for the changes, although in the case of small cohorts it may be sensible to accept a small variance from this figure, using common sense.

Delivering option modules

It is recognised that given resource and other constraints it is not always possible to offer all option modules. The decision to withdraw an option module for delivery should be made at the earliest possible opportunity when students select their option choices for the following academic year. Students should be advised, ideally prior to making option choices, that not all options may be offered; and should be asked to make choices based on a sub-set of option modules that can be offered.

Should it be necessary to make a decision after students have selected their option choices, if, for example, only a small number of students select an option module, the department should speak to the affected students and explain that it is not possible to run the modules on low numbers, and that the low numbers would not provide a meaningful learning experience. Students should be offered meaningful alternative module choices.

Withdrawal or Suspension of programmes

a) Prospective students

Should a programme be suspended or withdrawn before students are enrolled, as much notice as possible must be given to students expecting to enrol on a programme, in order that prospective students can be supported in identifying an alternative. This decision should be made no later than one month prior to the start of the programme. Programme closure and suspension forms explicitly request details of the communication plan for enquirers or those holding offers. Appendix 2e – Programme suspension form and Appendix 2d – Programme closure form can be found in Section 2 of the University’s Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook [Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook \(LQEH\) | Middlesex University London \(mdx.ac.uk\)](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/academic-quality/handbook/).

b) Current students

Students should be given the opportunity to complete a programme, or explicitly agree to an alternative programme offer, as identified in the programme closure form.