

Briefing Note: Updating Modules for Sep 2022

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1. Introduction

Throughout the pandemic, academic staff have worked in collaboration with Professional Services to revise programmes and modules to deliver Hybrid teaching and learning. The last round of Extraordinary Boards of Studies (EBoSs) in April 2021 set the basis on which 2021/22 delivery would be implemented.

It was noted at the time that our experience of delivering Hybrid would inform future practices and that staff would need an opportunity to decide how their modules were to be delivered in the long term. Making sure our module information is accurate with respect to our delivery is also an important part of informing applicant choice, as well as the optional module selection window ahead of the next academic year.

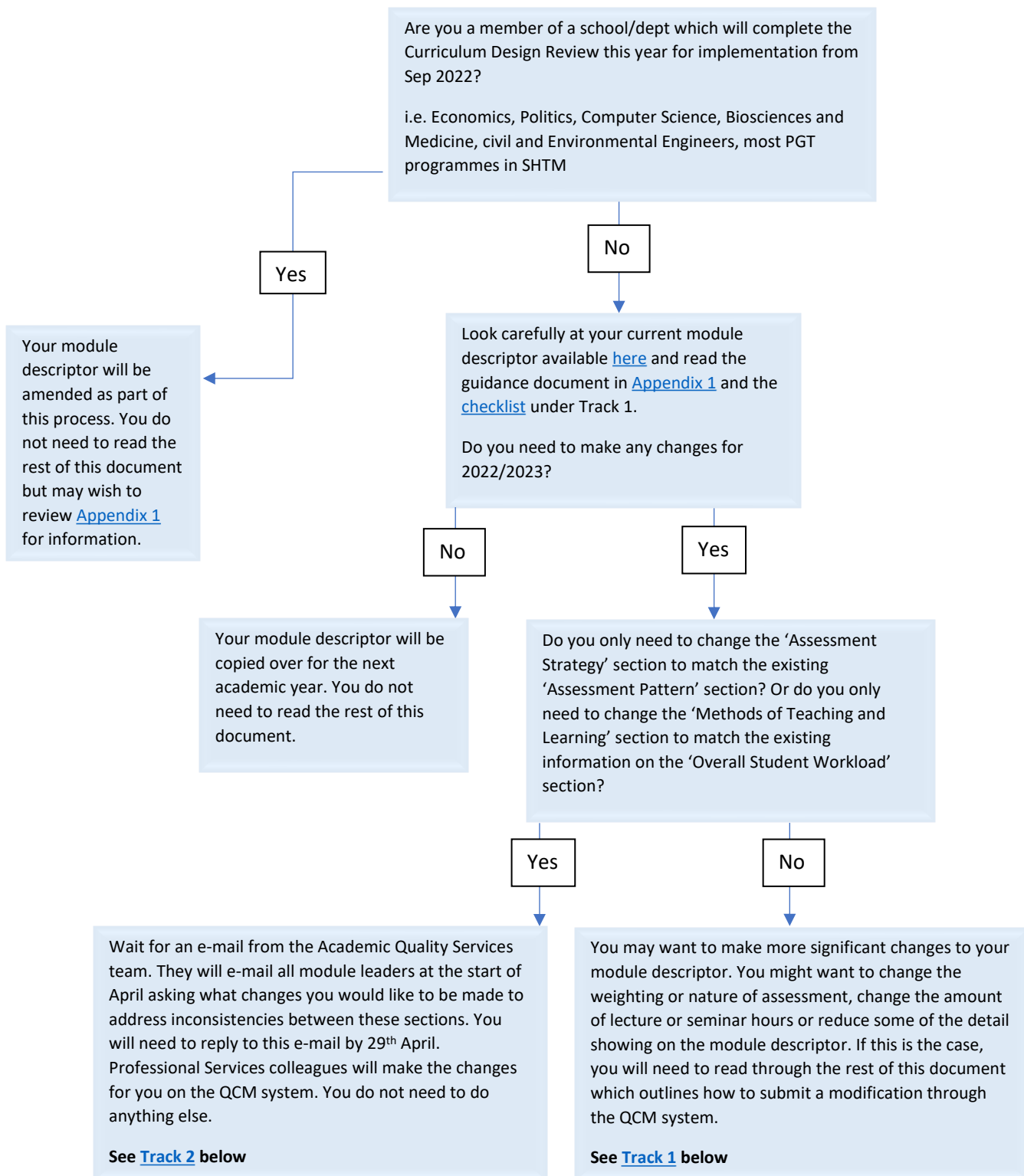
This briefing note provides an overview of the approach for the updating of modules ahead of the start of the 2022/23 academic year. The aims of this work are as follows:

- To facilitate modification of modules/programmes in line with the 'Guidance on Learning and Teaching Provision from 2022/23' (included in this paper as [Appendix 1](#) and referred to as 'the Guidance' in this document)
- To ensure modules are checked and corrected for the purposes of supporting module selection and to facilitate alignment to CMA requirements

In order to minimise the burden on academic staff a two track approach has been defined which distinguishes between modules that require significant changes for next year and those where a simpler set of corrections is needed to align information held in different parts of the module entry within the [module catalogue](#).

Track	Name	Criterion	Change method
1	Standard Modifications process	To be used where substantive revision of the module is needed to ensure appropriate alignment with the Guidance	QCM System/Boards of Study
2	Housekeeping exercise	Where only the 'Assessment Strategy' and 'Methods of Teaching and Learning' parts of the module catalogue entry require correcting to reflect changes made to the learning hours and assessment patterns in earlier Extraordinary Boards of Studies	Email checking facilitated by Academic Quality Services

2. Quick check: what action do I need to take?



3. Track 1: Normal modifications process

Academic staff are asked to review the delivery and content of their modules and to propose modifications where substantive changes to the module are needed to apply the Guidance.

Checklist: Do I need to make a modification?

It is recommended that academic staff consider the following checklist before deciding whether or not a modification is needed for their module. The checklist picks out parts of the Guidance that are addressed specifically in the standard module specification (as opposed to other aspects relating to in-class delivery where the details are not part of the published information).

Numbers in brackets refer to specific points within the Guidance in [Appendix 1](#)

- Does the mix of learning hours in the module specification accurately reflect how the module will be delivered? (2)
- Does the module have at least two hours of live learning each week? (3)
- Is the online assessment used in 2021/22 to remain in place? (9)
- Is the use of tests and exams in the module appropriate? (10)
- Is the assessment for the module acceptable to applicable PSRBs? (11)
- Are the timed elements for tests and exams appropriate now that the standard length for online tests and exams is 4 hours? (12)

If the answer to each of the checklist questions is 'Yes' there is no need to make a modification for the purposes of aligning to the Guidance. Colleagues can opt to progress modifications for other reasons if they wish as part of standard modifications processes.

Modules that are being revised as part of the Curriculum Design Review for September 2022 delivery are also being progressed through the QCM system as per normal periodic enhancement processes. The checklist above is a useful reference point for confirming the alignment of the new versions with the Guidance.

When submitting a modification to the Board of Studies, the content of the whole module should be checked and any other amendments made including the 'Assessment Strategy' and 'Methods of Teaching and Learning' sections. This means that no further updates would be required ahead of the next academic year.

Boards of Studies typically take place in March. The deadline for the **final approval** of modifications for September 2022 first delivery is the **29th April**.

4. Track 2: Housekeeping Exercise

Track 2 applies to any module not being modified through the normal modifications process (Track 1) or Curriculum Design Review.

Changes to the 'Assessment Pattern' and 'Overall Student Workload' (hours) sections of the module descriptors were approved via Extraordinary Board of Studies (EBoS) meetings in April 2021.

Following the approval of the changes, the amendments were inputted into the QCM system for publication in the module catalogue.

Following the completion of this work a need was identified to review the remaining parts of the module descriptors to amend the inconsistencies between the updated and non-updated sections. The free text 'Assessment Strategy' and 'Methods of Teaching / Learning' sections require particular attention.

To do this the Academic Quality Services team will contact each Module Leader through a mail merge in order to collect the correct information we need to update the 'Assessment Strategy' and 'Methods of Teaching / Learning' sections, where errors or inconsistencies are identified. The e-mail would be sent from a shared generic inbox and once responses are received Professional Services staff will log into QCM and update the module descriptor based on the information provided. They would update the latest version of the module held in QCM ready for the next academic year.

We would initiate the mail merge exercise for all modules at the start of April with a deadline for response of the **29th April**. The majority of modifications would have been initiated by that point and module leaders will therefore be aware of whether or not they need to respond to the request specific to their module.

5. Standardising 24 hour exams to 4 hours

Point 12 of the Guidance confirms that the standard length of Tests and Examinations will change from 24 hours to 4 hours. This approach was piloted in FEPS during the 2021/22 academic year and has supported an improved student experience and reduced the opportunities for academic misconduct to occur.

As this is a change being applied across the whole institution, the Academic Registry is able to change all references to 24 hour tests and exams so that they refer instead to the new 4 hour length. Academic staff do not need to take any further action to make this change.

Tests and Exams that were timed within a 24 hour window e.g. 2 hours within a 24 hour window, would remain timed but within a 4 hour window. Academic staff should consider whether the timed element remains necessary with the shorter standard window. If the timed element is no longer needed a modification should be made to clarify the timed element will no longer be used (see [Track 1](#) above).

6. Tip: Minimising burden and the need for future modifications

Both Track 1 and Track 2 (as well as the CDR) present an opportunity to simplify the information written into the module descriptor to provide a greater degree of flexibility for on the ground delivery. During the April 2021 round of Extraordinary Boards of Studies we noticed that many module descriptors repeat data shared in the quantitative parts of the module descriptor e.g. learning hours, or add a level of precision that means a formal modification has to be made should the module leader wish to make a minor change to their delivery to maintain accuracy.

Some common examples of things to avoid, aiding simplification include:

- Mapping the topics that will be covered within the module to each specific week of teaching
- Repeating the details of the 'Assessment Pattern' in the open text 'Assessment Strategy'
- Paraphrasing University regulations or codes of practice (in case these change)

- Committing to particular deadlines for assessment in case these need to be amended for future versions of the module
- Stating word counts in the 'Assessment Strategy' where these are not already included as part of the 'Assessment Pattern'.

7. Timelines

Date	Track	Activity
March	Track 1	Boards of Studies typically meet to approve modifications
4 th April	Track 2	Initiation of housekeeping exercise via mail merge to module leaders
8 th April	Track 1	Last allowable date for Boards of Studies
29 th April	Track 1	Deadline for final approval of modifications in QCM
29 th April	Track 2	Deadline for module leader response to mail merge
19 th May	Both	Module fairs commence
30 th May	Both	Expected start date for opening of module selection window
17 th June	Both	Module selection window closes

Appendix 1: Guidance on Learning and Teaching Provision from 2022/23

1. We should continue to make the best use of SurreyLearn. In particular, module pages should continue to adhere to the new design principles adopted during hybrid education.
2. We should continue to offer a range of live, captured, independent and guided learning to support students and prepare them for assessment. Module descriptors should continue to show how many learning hours are allocated to each category.
3. We would normally expect modules to involve at least two hours of live learning each week. This may involve lectures, seminars, workshops, practicals, laboratories and performance work.
4. All planned synchronous lectures will be delivered live and in-person. They will also be recorded and made available on SurreyLearn so that students are able to engage with content again following the session.
5. Workshops, labs, tutorials and seminars will all be held in person but will not usually be recorded because, in many instances, we cannot meaningfully capture all content.
6. Modules that operate primarily based on seminars should provide captured content via SurreyLearn on a weekly basis or, where appropriate, record relevant didactic parts of the seminar and release them via SurreyLearn.
7. Programmes which are formally designated online only would operate an alternative approach to delivery.
8. We will continue to expect students to attend all lectures, tutorials and seminars that are timetabled for them, but we will explore more flexibility through the delivery of online sessions in the future.
9. Where possible, all assessment should continue to be submitted online. All assessment should be marked online using SurreyLearn.
10. We should review the use of tests and exams, on a case by case basis, and consider moving to more authentic types of assessment where appropriate.
11. We should try to limit the use of timed, invigilated, physical exams to instances where this is necessary due to PSRB requirements, or the nature of the discipline.
12. Any online tests and exams should not normally run for more than a four hour period.

Appendix 2: Example of module descriptor discrepancy

An example of the inconsistent information is as follows:

Module code: MANM301

Module name: Data Analytics

Assessment Pattern			
Pattern	Assessment	Type	Weighting (%)
MANM301-002	COURSEWORK A	Coursework	70
MANM301-002	COURSEWORK B	Coursework	30

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy is designed to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate

In order to achieve the threshold standard for the award of credits for this module, the student must meet the following criteria (related to the learning outcomes):

- analysis and manipulate data;
- improve the quality of Big Data;
- present knowledge in a suitable format for the target audience;
- demonstrate evidence of background reading and research of the academic and practitioner literature relevant to big data and data analysis.

Thus, the summative assessment for this module consists of:

- *Two hours unseen exam paper*
- *One piece of project based coursework*

Formative assessment and feedback

Formative assessment will be provided during computer laboratory sessions.

Overall student workload

Independent Learning Hours: 95

Lecture Hours: 22

Laboratory Hours: 20

Guided Learning: 2

Captured Content: 11

Methods of Teaching/Learning
<p>The <u>learning and teaching</u> strategy is designed to:</p> <p>The teaching and learning strategy is designed to: cultivate an understanding of the complex process of big data analysis and understanding of methodical approach of data analysis.</p> <p>This module is delivered as a programme of lectures and lab classes. Web-based learning support and electronic resources will be provided.</p> <p>The <u>learning and teaching</u> methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 hour lecture per week x 11 weeks• 2 hour labs per week x 11 weeks

Common Questions

What will our provision look like from September 2022 onwards? What guidance is available?

[Appendix 1](#) provides the twelve headline guidelines that inform our approach to building on the Hybrid approach used this year.

Are we running another EBoS or are we returning to normal processes?

We are not running Emergency Boards of Study this year. The Hybrid approach developed towards the end of 2020/21 has laid a foundation for future delivery as identified in the 'Guidance' shared as [Appendix 1](#). The task at this stage is to review the modules delivered and make amendments to align with these principles using the normal business as usual modifications process.

In parallel we are asking staff to check and correct any discrepancies between contact hours and assessment data in the module catalogue and the free text sections that outline the strategies for teaching and learning and assessment respectively.

What is the deadline for modifications?

Boards of Studies typically take place in March. The deadline for the approval of modifications is the 29th April. By final approval we mean the Board of Studies has approved the change and the final audit checks have been completed by Academic Quality Services.

Any changes approved after this date will only be considered for September 2023.

Is there any support available if I am unsure about using QCM?

The Academic Quality Services team can assist colleagues who are unfamiliar with QCM or have a query. They can be contacted using qualitysupport@surrey.ac.uk.

The team includes:

Helen Weller, Head of Academic Quality Services
Kim Doyle, Assistant Registrar (Quality)
Henri Going, Assistant Registrar (Quality)
Emma Hardy, Assistant Registrar (Quality)

Introductory information on modifications can also be found at:
<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/academic-quality-services/validations/modifications>

What level of detail should I include in my assessment pattern? Should I include a word count, for example?

See 'Tip: Minimising burden and the need for future modifications' section above.

Why can't we make these changes later in the academic year?

Having a clear understanding of our module and programme delivery helps us prepare for the next academic year. There are several advantages including being able to provide updates to applicants should their course be changing in a significant way (any change to assessment is considered a

significant change) and being able to provide more definitive module information when current students are selecting modules.

What should I do if my only changes are to align the assessment strategy with the assessment pattern or the overall student workload and learning and teaching strategy?

See [Track 2](#): Housekeeping Exercise

The assessment strategy and assessment patterns are arguably the most important information on the module descriptor because assessment will determine the final outcomes of the students. Once the module is set for the academic year this is the version of the module which must be delivered to students and could only change in very exceptional circumstances.

What should I do if my only changes are to align my module with the new guidance, for example, changing a 24 hour exams to a 4 hour exam?

The [checklist](#) under Track 1: Normal Modifications Process is a quick way to work out if your module already aligns sufficiently with the 'Guidance' in [Appendix 1](#) or if a modification is needed.

Exam length is clarified under point 12 of the guidance and the Academic Registry intends to update this for all modules in a way that minimises effort for academic staff, see 'Standardising 24 Hours to 4 hours above'.

What should I do if I want to bring back a more traditional face to face exam or test?

Point 10 of the guidance asks that we limit the use of traditional invigilated exams and tests to the minimum possible, in favour of other forms of more authentic assessment. Where there is a proposal to return to a face to face exam this should be raised with the DLT who in turn should consult with the ADE. These will be considered on a case by case basis by the ADE in consultation with the PVC Education and the Academic Registrar.

Where PSRB requirements are influencing the choice of assessment it is useful to provide the specific regulatory document that requires the use of in person examinations so that this can be considered as justification for the change.

Do I need to do a modification to change my exam length to the new standard of four hours?

No. The Academic Registry will change all references to 24 hours to 4 hours in SITS and QCM to achieve the standardisation.

You would only need to make a modification if you wanted to make another change to the assessment as the 4 hour standard exam length affected the appropriateness of the assessment.

What should I do if I do not want my examination or test to be the standard four hours in length?

Where there is a proposal to use an online test or examination length that is something other than 4 hours this should be raised with the DLT who in turn should consult with the ADE. These will be considered on a case by case basis by the ADE in consultation with the PVC Education and the Academic Registrar.