

# Quality Manual: Quality Assurance Approach to Integrated Foundation Years

This document provides guidance on the approach to quality assurance for Foundation Years

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Foundation Years are designed to support routes into specific courses in higher education. The Foundation Year forms the first year of a four or five year undergraduate degree. Learning is classed as Level 0 after which student progress onto Level 4 often joining other students who have entered directly on to a 3 year version of the course.
- 1.2. As adoption of Foundation Years has grown the approaches to delivery of those foundation years has varied across the University. It is common for courses to share common modules for the Foundation Year, and for the key components of the Foundation Year to be led by a specialist team within a school or Faculty.
- 1.3. Whatever the vehicle for delivery of the Foundation Year, it is essential that the Foundation Year operates as an integral part of a four year degree and that the modules and student support arrangements for that year appropriately serve the attached course. An effective Foundation Year must enable students to successfully achieve the award with comparable results to those who study on the three year version of the course.
- 1.4. The adoption of a common approach to quality assurance procedures for Foundation Years will enable more effective evaluation and delivery of courses with an integrated Foundation Year.

## 2. PLANNING AND APPROVAL

- 2.1. In relation to the planning and approval of courses with an integrated Foundation Year the following standard procedures ensure the information is documented in the appropriate place and that duplication is avoided where courses share common Foundation Year modules:
  - 2.1.1. The course specification/PS1 template should include a box/prompt about whether offered with Foundation Year
  - 2.1.2. The course PS2 should include all relevant level 0 modules to be delivered. Generic intended learning outcomes will be included in a Foundation Year Annex.
  - 2.1.3. Course documentation should include a section where the course team reflects on the role of the Foundation Year offer (including reflection on coherence, integration, and the role of the foundation year in enabling students successfully to enter level 4).
  - 2.1.4. The other details of Foundation Year (structure, modules etc) should be captured in an annex to the course documentation. The annex will be a tailored version of the standard course documentation. It must be submitted with the course documentation when seeking approval of a course with an integrated Foundation Year.
  - 2.1.5. The approved Foundation Year annex should be stored with the relevant course documents. This will mean where there are common modules and delivery of the Foundation for multiple courses the Annex will be stored with multiple courses; however, this could be managed as a link when the share point for course documentation is fully operational.

### 3. COURSE CHANGE, PERIODIC REVIEW AND REAPPROVAL

- 3.1. In relation to the change, periodic review and reapproval of courses with an integrated Foundation Year the following are standard procedure:
- 3.1.1. When a course with Foundation Year seeks major course change or reapproval, the Foundation Year annex should always be submitted with course documentation, where relevant noting any proposed changes to the Foundation Year annex.
  - 3.1.2. Where the Foundation Year annex changes, the Faculty must submit a cover paper indicating that all relevant Course Teams have agreed to the changes proposed in the revised Foundation Year annex.
  - 3.1.3. The currency of the Foundation Year should be reconsidered in the Periodic Course Review of each course which includes an integrated Foundation Year. This process should consider progression through the levels, and the currency of any common/generic modules in relation to the course.
  - 3.1.4. Where structural changes are necessary to the Foundation Year (beyond the addition of subject specific modules) the normal procedures will be that of a major course change. The relevant FPPE should approve a PS1 and PS2 for the Foundation Year, and the revised Foundation Year annex should be submitted to a standing approval panel, along with a statement that all existing Course Teams are content to adopt the revised annex.

### 4. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- 4.1. All Boards of Studies for courses with an integrated Foundation Year must consider the delivery of the Foundation Year and the progression of students from a Foundation Year through the course as a whole. To support this the following standard approach is:
- 3.1.5. An annual report about the Foundation Year should be written. Where there is a separate Foundation Year team this should be written by them (with input from course teams). This report should consider the overall delivery of the Foundation Year and continuation of students onto level 4.
  - 3.1.6. The report should then be considered by all relevant Boards of Studies. Boards of Studies for the courses must consider the extent to which the Foundation Year supports the course, including reflection on the outcomes for Foundation Year students at levels 4, 5 and 6.
  - 3.1.7. The Foundation Year reports and any discussion at Boards of Studies should also be considered by Faculty Quality Committee in its oversight of Boards of Studies activity.

### 5. IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1. These changes are adopted from September 2022 where it is not possible to adopt them sooner. In relation to existing course documentation this should be updated as courses are changed or reapproved.

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